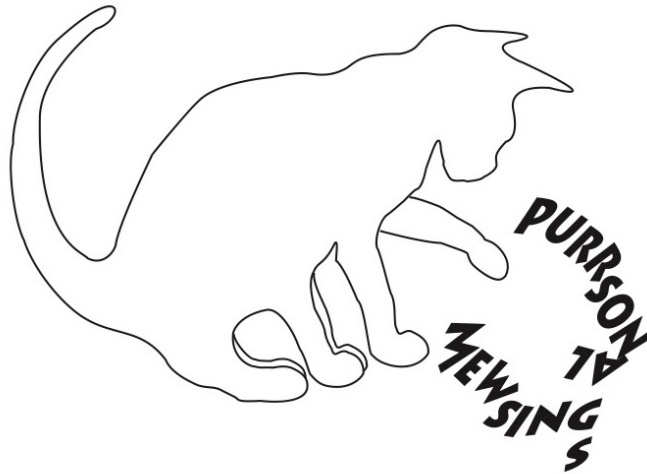


Purrsonal Mewsings #53





#53

July 2016

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* Editorial / Introduction

This issue contains my Antarctica trip report.

Starting this issue, the zine will be combined with my zine for StippleAPA, an amateur press association. I hope this new arrangement will help me from falling behind in my publication schedule.

* * *

* Local Outings

Hamlet: This was a filmed stage production starring Benedict Cumberbatch. It was shown at the Loft in Tucson. I saw it at the end of its run at the end of December 2015. The production was directed by Lyndsey Turner and produced by Sonia Friedman Productions. It was originally broadcast live by National Theatre Live. I've seen many productions of *Hamlet* over the years either live or on film. What struck me about this production is that Cumberbatch portrayed the most emotional Hamlet I've ever seen. The production generally was excellent. If it's made available on DVD or rebroadcast on TV or whatever, I can recommend it.

#

Fences: We saw this play written by August Wilson in early February. I haven't been enthusiastic about any of Wilson's play so far, but this one wasn't too bad. Mike called it a soap opera, and in a way it is. It was about a poor black family in Chicago in the late fifties to the mid-sixties. To me the play revealed the strength of the black woman, but she is that way out of necessity. The men in her family all show various weaknesses of character. It was ably performed by the cast of the Arizona Theatre Company.

#

Of Mice and Men: This Steinbeck work is one I had seen a version of on TV. It might have been a Showtime movie; as I recall it starred Gary Sinise and John Malkovich. I never had much use for Steinbeck; I watched it because I enjoy Gary Sinise's work. As I've grown older though, I seem to be liking Steinbeck's work more. I hadn't known prior to seeing the play at the Arizona Theatre Company that Steinbeck himself had written the script. I also hadn't thought a lot about the fact that many of his works take place in California during the depression. I have some interest in California history. This play is about two migrant workers arriving at a farm in the Salinas Valley after having had to flee their previous place of employment. Their lives are those of people who have no home and dream of having one someday. This particular production travelled here from Milwaukee. The sets are very cleverly done, and the acting was excellent. I have to catch up with all the movie versions, including the one I saw before.

#

Don Quixote: This filmed ballet was shown at a nearby cinema. It was performed by the Bolshoi and filmed in Moscow. It was originally a live broadcast, but a friend and I caught a repeat showing. It was performed in three acts with fairly long intermissions between each. I wish I'd known about the intermissions ahead of time. It made the performance very long. I hadn't had any lunch, but I fortunately had a snack bar with me. Afterward my friend and I had a meal at an odd time at a nearby restaurant. The performance itself was very good, as would be expected of the Bolshoi. The ballet is more about a young couple than Don Quixote himself. The Spanish-themed costumes were quite spectacular.

#

Guided Plant Walk: This was led by a ranger at the Oracle State Park. It was fairly small group, which made it possible to go slowly and tailor it to our needs. I learned quite a bit about the local flora, but I probably have to go on more of them before I can remember everything. One thing I remember is that a bunch grass that grows in the area quite profusely is not native but was brought in by ranchers. Because it is so common, there is no effort to remove it.

#

The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens, & Count Leo Tolstoy:
Discord: This was the last play of the Arizona Theatre Company's 2015-16 season. It was basically a conversation of the three characters in a place where they meet after death. Leo Tolstoy was played by Armin Shimmerman, which was a treat; it was nice to see him again. Unfortunately the subject matter interested me very little. I have to admit being drowsy much of the time. Jefferson was played by Larry Cedar and Dickens by Mark Gagliardi.

#

Independence Day: Resurrection: Mike and I saw this about a week after it opened. We liked it a lot. I found the story touching, and the CGI was excellent. I recommend this for anyone who enjoyed the first movie. Many of the same actors are featured along with younger actors who play most of the action roles. They left an opening at the end for a sequel.

* * *

* **Antarctica Trip (6-19 Jan 2016)**

My husband drove me to Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport Wednesday, 6 January 2015. We left the house about noon. I had some problems with the check-in machines and had to go to a human being for help. After that it was smooth sailing until I boarded the plane. On the flight from Phoenix to Dallas, I met a really interesting stroke doctor. She was living in Birmingham, AL, and had just interviewed for a position at the Mayo Clinic in Phoenix. She's married to an Asian man. Her name is Cara (sp?). They have three dogs and two cats.

I thought I only had a half hour to eat dinner at the Dallas airport, so I scarfed down a salad. I should have checked the gate first. I could have had an hour. I met a woman on the same flight who is also going to Antarctica. She's from Bentonville, AR. Her name is Elizabeth.

A complementary dinner was served on the plane, but there was nothing I could eat other than a small salad and a piece of soft cheese. It's a good thing I'd eaten at the airport. The plane wasn't completely full, and I had an empty seat next to me. Unfortunately its overhead light turned on and off randomly as did the entertainment screen, and not in sync. The entertainment screen for my seat didn't work properly.

Between midnight and 05:00, I slept fitfully. I should have taken a sleep mask.

A mini breakfast was served on the plane. I could only eat part of it—yogurt. It came with orange juice, and I also got tea.

We landed early in Buenos Aires and were met by the tour people. There apparently were about twenty people going on the Antarctic trip who



arrived on the same flight. The drive to the Sofitel Hotel took about forty-five minutes.

We arrived at the hotel in time for a buffet lunch that included a special gluten-free dessert selection. Before we ate we checked in with the tour people and the hotel, though most of our rooms weren't yet ready.

After lunch my room was ready, and I had time to take my luggage up to my room and reorganize a bit before going back down for a bus tour of the city. The tour of the city took about three and a half hours and included a visit to La Recoleta Cemetery where Eva Peron is buried (see photo of the marker on previous page) and the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Cathedral where the current pope used to work. My energy levels started flagging toward the end of that. After we returned to the hotel, I had just enough time to refresh myself before going down for a meeting that turned out to be more of a meet and greet including champagne. I met Lovisa Svaerdmr, who is the daughter of the hotel manager on our ship. There was a short informational announcement. I returned to my room to regroup.

I returned to the lobby about 19:30 to meet Elizabeth, whom I had met at the airport in Dallas, for a light dinner in the hotel. We ate in the bar, which had more appropriate selections for our needs; neither of us felt like a large meal. With the European mentality of the place, it still took almost two hours to finish our meal. At least we didn't have to expend any energy to get anywhere. Sofitel are a French hotel chain, so the menus were in French and Spanish.

Back in the room I prepared my suitcase for pickup early the next morning. Then I showered and washed my hair. With the provided hair blower, that didn't take too long. I was also able to charge my iPhone.

I managed to get to bed by 22:30 but had difficulty falling asleep and slept fitfully if at all. I finally gave up and got up about 04:15 Friday, 8 January 2015. Because I was up so early, I had the chance to touch up my nail polish.

A buffet breakfast was served for our group starting at 05:30, and I got there soon after.

Then we boarded one of two buses to take us to the domestic airport. There was an unexplained delay getting on our flight, which was expected to take approximately three hours. A snack was served, and there were gluten free snacks available. I managed to get a little shuteye on the flight. After we landed in Ushuaia (see photo below) at the southern tip of Argentina, we were taken by bus through a national park for a cruise on a catamaran. The water was somewhat choppy; the watered slopped over one side of the boat, so I avoided going out on that side.

Lunch was served on the catamaran. We had salad and a chicken stew with a choice of beverage.

The catamaran took us to the dock where the National Geographic *Explorer* was docked. We picked up any items that we'd left on the bus, which was also at the dock, and then boarded the ship. Not too long after we boarded, there was a life jacket drill. At 19:15 we had introductions to the ship's personnel.

Buffet dinner service started at 20:00. I was misled into eating some gluten-containing beef dish,



so I ended up having a lot of problems for the first day or so. Only the headwaiter knew what was gluten-free, and he hadn't found me yet. He found me after I'd eaten the gluten-laden food.

After dinner I noticed that the ship had started moving, so I bundled up and went on deck to take a few minutes of video. I decided to make an early night of it.

I retired early about 22:00. About 02:00 I awoke. The seas were definitely rougher as we sailed through the Drake Passage. Eventually I had to get up to use the bathroom. It was obvious that I was suffering from gluten poisoning. I had diarrhoea, alternating hot and cold, and nausea not helped by the ocean movements. After about an hour, I managed to sleep for another hour. Then I was back in the bathroom with the same problems. After I returned to bed, I decided to take some ginger but eventually ended up vomiting it up.

I had set my alarm for 06:30, but it was obvious that I was still sick and also pretty sleepy. I went back to bed until the ship wake up message at 08:00. I was still feeling badly. A couple of hours later, there was a meeting to introduce the scientific team members. It was broadcast on TV, so I listened to that from bed. I was still too sick to sit up.

By the time I woke up again, it was about 13:00. I had missed lunch.

I felt better and could sit up but was still not completely well. There was still some remnant diarrhoea. I took more ginger. I napped again with the TV going in the background and awoke again about 14:30. I finally broke down and called Reception for the doctor. He came about 16:15 and gave me Meclizine. I slept for more than an hour, but the pill hadn't worked. I called the doctor back, and he gave me a shot for nausea. That worked. The doctor also arranged for some broth and rice to be brought to me later. Maria, who takes care of the room, brought me some ginger ale with a straw. Erasmo, the manager in training, also came by and later brought me two bananas.

At dinnertime Maria brought chicken broth and rice. Fortunately I was feeling well enough to sit up in bed to eat. I also drank some of the ginger ale.

There was some confusion when I awoke about 21:00; this is explained by the very long daylight hours at this latitude. I thought I'd slept around the clock. A call to Reception straightened me out. Of course I could have checked my iPhone or iPad, both of which are set to twenty-four hour time; but I didn't think of that in my confused state. The doctor stopped in to check on me. I struggled with the slow Internet to catch up on e-mail and finally gave up about 23:00. Lights out about 23:15.

I briefly awoke about 05:30 Sunday, 10 January 2016 and took my thyroid supplement, though I got the dosage wrong due to confusion about the day of the week. I take a different dosage usually on Sundays, but I made up for the mistake the next morning. I got up about 06:15. I had a little catch up time with Facebook before I went up to breakfast.

Before the dining room opened, there was fruit offered. I sat with the Metz family, three brothers, a wife, and two daughters. We were later joined by Loveisa Svaerdmr, whom I had met in Buenos Aires. She's the daughter of the hotel manager.

At 09:30 there was a mandatory meeting to discuss dos and don'ts. This was followed shortly by a check of used outerwear to prevent contamination of Antarctica. My clothing was all new so didn't have to be checked. The expedition provided us with nice jackets

to use. Then I spent some time back in my cabin on the Internet. All Internet usage had to be paid for but was very slow.

For lunch I had gluten free chicken parmigiana. I had lunch with two Australian sisters, Lisa and Gina. While we ate we could see icebergs and small rocky islands.

After lunch I spent a bit more time on the Internet before preparing for a shore excursion on Half Moon Island. We were each assigned a locker in a dressing area for expeditions. My rental boots and warm pants were kept there to avoid having to carry them up and down the stairs for each outing. The warm pants went over our regular clothing. We left about 15:00 and returned about 18:00, so that was quite an excursion. I went on the uphill hike around the island that ends up in a chinstrap rookery. I saw a seal and some skuas along the way. The snow was deep in many places, so it was a challenge. I think I fell down a few times.

Shore excursions were done in groups. There were three groups. This was to keep too many people from being onshore at the same time.

I was invited to dinner with the hotel manager, Patric Svaerdmr, Lovisa Svaerdmr and six other guests in the chart room. Our table was very lively with lots of conversation. The captain of the ship also had guests. Dinner was multiple courses, all very good, with champagne and a choice of wines. We met for dinner about 19:45, and it was 22:00 when I got back to my cabin.

I didn't do a lot after dinner, because I was too tired. I got to bed by about 23:00.

Monday, 11 January 2016, I got up to my alarm at 06:30. I felt like I could use more sleep.

I made it up to breakfast just after 07:30.

For those of us not going ashore right away, there was a talk on "Top Predators at the Bottom of the World" focusing mostly on orcas. At a little after 10:00, my group got the call to go down to the mud room, where we put on our outerwear. This morning we were on part of the actual Antarctic continent (Brown Bluff) and saw Adélie and Gentoo penguins nesting in close proximity. It was very windy, and I didn't stay ashore for more than about an hour.

I seem to have forgot to make an entry about lunch; it was probably so interesting that I forgot to write about it.

After lunch I had to buy another Internet access card. I got on the Internet until I became sleepy and took a nap for about an hour. I was awakened by the announcement



of a shore excursion to Paulet Island (photo above of Paulet Island shows the Zodiacs we rode on to go ashore; all the critters in the background are penguins). I went on the short walk about 15:45 up a hill from which can be seen a lake. Most of the time we were surrounded by Adélie penguins. The chicks were fairly large but with their brown down coats. It was snowing, and the rocks were quite slippery in places. The ship has a supply of walking sticks for our use, which I wish I'd known the day before. The ship came in fairly close to shore, so the trip in the zodiacs was short. I returned to my cabin about 17:00. I felt like socializing, so I went to the lounge. There were a few people there, so I joined them and stayed through the cocktail hour, when we were served chicken wings. Some talks followed, including one on Shackleton whisky, which we were all allowed to sample. On one of his Antarctic expeditions, Shackleton had brought several cases of whisky that he stashed. This was later found by others and analyzed. The analysis was used to reproduce the product for commercial sale. It's basically very strong whisky. I could only take very small sips.

Then it was time for dinner at 20:00, which was a sit-down affair. I ate with Barbara from NYC and her nephew Adam and a woman named Allie living in Walnut Creek who is an event planner.

After dinner I went to the observation deck to take photos of the ice floe we're sailing through. The wind was too strong to stay very long. I talked later with Loveisa, who'd been out longer. It was getting late, so I returned to my cabin. I read e-mail for a while before turning in.

Tuesday, 12 January 2016, I got up about 05:45. The sun was out in contrast to the cloudy days we'd been having.

Breakfast was served early this morning at 07:00. I enjoyed the company of an engineer from Tennessee.

I returned to my cabin after breakfast and read some e-mail. About 08:30 there was a briefing for people going kayaking, which I attended mostly out of curiosity, as I didn't plan to do any. About 09:30 I went on a shore excursion (see photo at right of Gentoo penguins at Mikkelsen Harbour).



I was seriously overdressed, but I suppose that's better than being underdressed. The sun was bright, and there was no wind. I had problems using my video camera because the sun made it difficult to see the screen, and I ended up switching to my iPhone about half way through; it was marginally better. We saw Weddell seals, an elephant seal, and Gentoo penguins. I also figured out why I was feeling a bit under the weather; I had managed to become dehydrated. Just before lunch, they had a polar plunge, which I took some photos of.

I had lunch with a couple from Connecticut and Allie, whom I met the day before.

In the afternoon there was a Zodiac ride by a glacier formation. We saw a leopard seal, two Weddell seals, a crab-eater seal, a lone Gentoo penguin, some skuas, and

Dominican gulls. Afterward I talked to a woman from Houston and wrote four postcards for posting from Lockport where we'd stop later in the trip.

I had dinner with the Metz family.

I read some e-mail before turning out the lights about 23:00.

On Wednesday, 13 January 2016, I got up to my alarm at 05:30 in order to see some sights about 06:30. We went through the narrow Lemaire Channel shortly thereafter. Besides the spectacular scenery, I saw several crab-eater seals and a humpback whale. It's a sunny and calm morning,

I was starving for breakfast and had a waffle as well as my usual bacon and egg. I was so hungry that I practically inhaled my food until I developed hiccoughs and slowed down. I ate with a family from Calgary.

About 10:00 I went ashore on Booth Island and saw Gentoo penguins. Then I checked Google Plus and Facebook and read some e-mail.

For lunch I joined a couple I met before and was later joined by a young couple from San Diego.

Afterward I did a little shopping at the souvenir shop on board. Then there was a talk about photography with the iPhone. Back in my cabin I took a nap for about forty-five minutes while the ship moved noisily through ice floes (photo at right shows one



of the interesting icebergs we went past). A bit later I went up for tea; while there I took care of paperwork to get a souvenir serving platter sent home. From there I went up to the library briefly for a better view. Then it was time for a talk about Shackleton. After that it was cocktail hour.

Dinner was Philippine night. I joined Barbara and Andy for dinner and were later joined by Erasmo Estipeaux, the hotel manager in training.

At night I went on the Internet until I used up my second card.

I got up to my alarm at 06:00 Thursday, 14 January 2016. Just before I was finished dressing, it was announced that emperor penguins had been spotted. I bundled up and went up to the library. I got pretty good video of an emperor standing on ice near the bow. This was our southernmost stop south of the Antarctic Circle. Most of the emperors were at sea, but a few adolescents were still waiting to shed their baby fuzz.

Then I got breakfast. One of the research divers joined me and a couple from Cincy for a very interesting conversation. The ship climbed up on ice just as I was finishing eating.

About 09:00 I went on a naturalist led ice hike. We saw a crab-eater and Ross seals and an Adélie penguin. The penguin was pretty bold and belligerent. This is probably the warmest day we've had--only around freezing and no wind. I went up to get a new Internet card, after I got out of my hiking gear, and also talked with Barbara.

I went into lunch with her as well. We were later joined by Jamie from Seattle, who was part of the Cornell Ornithology group; he's also an anaesthetist. Barbara left and I continued talking with Jamie.

After lunch I washed my hair and touched up my nails. Later I napped for about forty-five minutes. About 15:30 tea was announced; in addition sausages and beer would be served on deck behind the lounge. First I got my usual tea. Then I got a sausage. About 17:00 there was a talk about James Cameron with plenty of video clips. During the cocktail hour, we enjoyed a recap of the day and a rendition of "All We Need Is Krill" as well as a talk about krill, which is the main food of many penguins and other animals.

Dinner was at 19:00, and I ate with the couple from Cincy.

At night I touched base with Google Plus and Facebook and read e-mail until the Internet became too slow. I retired about 22:30.

In the morning on Friday, 15 January 2016, I got up to my alarm at 05:30.

I got up to breakfast about 06:30 and sat with a man travelling alone from Connecticut.

After breakfast I spent some time on the Internet, but I didn't have a lot of luck. At 08:00 there was a short briefing about Port Lockroy. The place started out as a military outpost during World War II; when the men stationed there went home after the war, they discovered they'd been largely forgotten, since the war never reached Antarctica. Later it was a research station. Then it was closed. More recently a group decided to run a volunteer post office and souvenir shop during Antarctic summer when tourists visited. People can mail postcards home from there, the caveat being that the post cards could take four to six weeks to reach their destination. Mail is sent from there by ship to the Falklands. From there they are put on planes on a space-available basis and flown to England. The ship parked itself on some ice. We were split up into three groups. I was in the group to go to the museum and shop first. After we returned to the ship, I took a walk on the ice. It was harder than the day before, because there's quite a bit of snow. There was time to return to my cabin to use the facilities before the third part of this morning's activities. Before I could have a snack, it was time for the outing to Jougla Point to see more penguins and whale bones.

There was some breathing space before lunch, which I ate with a couple from Virginia and the Svaerdmys.

After lunch I had a short power nap before it was time to go ashore at Danco Island (photo at right shows two seals I saw there). There were hundreds of



penguins on this rather steep-sided island. The weather was too warm and made the path rather slippery. I was too tired to go all the way to the top, but I got enough

pictures. Back on the ship I got some teatime refreshment.

I didn't make any notes about what happened at dinner.

At night the ship captain followed some orcas around for a while before heading out to the Drake Passage. I started not feeling too great, so I retired about 22:30.

I awoke about 01:30 feeling worse Saturday, 16 January 2016. I threw up a couple of times. I think my stomach was not fully recovered from the gluten poisoning a week before; in fact it was several more weeks before my digestive system was back to normal. Eventually I managed to take the remaining Meclizine tablet. That did the trick at least for the short term. I got up to my alarm at 06:30. I managed to do most of my morning exercises until I wasn't feeling too well and took some ginger. After a while I brushed my teeth and washed my hair. Then I didn't feel too good again. I took a second Meclizine, but that didn't seem to work. I finally called the doctor. He gave me a phenergan tablet.

Maria brought me broth, rice, and ginger ale. I made a stab at those without much success. Eventually I got the doctor to give me a phenergan shot. That took a while to work, but I eventually got up again and dressed and ate some more. I spent some time on the Internet.

Maria kindly brought me a bowl of red cabbage soup for lunch.

At 13:30 I attended a meeting to talk about procedures for disembarkation. I then returned to my cabin to get on the Internet until I got sleepy and took a nap for about an hour. At 16:30 Rich Reid, a photographer for National Geographic, made an autobiographical presentation featuring his photography. I ran a couple of errands before cocktail hour, during which was the customary recap.

I had dinner with two couples, one from California and the other from Texas, and another woman.

I couldn't get on the Internet at all after that, the crossword puzzle was beyond me, and I messed up the sudoku. I retired early about 21:30.

Sunday, 17 January 2016, I got up when my alarm went off at 06:30.

I breakfasted with a couple from Calgary, part of a group of eight, named Kathy and Don.

Back in my cabin, I used up my Internet card. About 10:15 I went up to the top deck when we were approaching Cape Horn to take a few pictures. At 11:00 there was a talk about the *Titanic*. Right afterward Allie went down to the Internet room with me to help me transfer photos to the ship's shared folder. Just as we were about to give up, Adam, a naturalist and certified photo instructor, arrived and took no time at all to succeed where we had failed.

Then it was time for lunch, which I had with a couple from Dallas who spend time in Colorado during summer. I was also joined by Jennie, who is a science reporter.

I had my checked luggage more or less packed. I also napped for about fifteen minutes. At 14:30 there was a talk about using GoPro cameras in science. About 16:45 there was a film about Sailing around Cape Horn, made in 1929. About an hour later was a captain-hosted cocktail hour with champagne and other beverages.

This was followed much too soon by a sumptuous dinner that I couldn't finish, simply because I was too full. I ate with Allie, Jamie from Seattle, and a resident artist.

We pulled into Ushuaia shortly thereafter, but we had another night on board. I

finished packing my checked luggage and placed it outside the cabin door. My carryon was mostly packed.

Monday, 18 January 2016, I got up to my alarm at 05:30 after a fitful night of sleep.

I was among the first at breakfast.

There wasn't much to do after breakfast except wait until it was time to disembark and get on buses. I read. We got on buses about 08:00 and were taken to a museum. Many of us stopped walking around when we arrived at an area with tables and chairs. We were just plain tired. From there we were taken to a hotel where we could get coffee or tea and snacks; but there seemed to be no gluten-free snacks. Then we were taken to the airport to fly to Buenos Aires on a charter.

We were served lunch on the plane.

In Buenos Aires we were met by tour reps who led us to the international terminal; we'd probably have got lost without them. That's where things went sour. I had problems getting a boarding pass again (as in Phoenix), but this time an agent was able to fix it on the spot--eventually. But then I had to wait almost two hours to check my luggage. This left no time to get dinner, but there may not have been any restaurants. I would not recommend the Buenos Aires airport to anyone; maybe it's not so bad for Spanish speakers. At least while I was waiting to check luggage, I had an interesting conversation with a couple from Vermont. By the time I got to the gate, there was only about half an hour before boarding. The plane seemed pretty much full.

Dinner was served, of which I was able to eat a portion.

I made valiant efforts to sleep after dinner when it was about 20:00 Dallas time.

I slept fitfully until about an hour before we were awakened for breakfast about 03:30 on Tuesday, 19 January 2016.

I was able to eat a portion of a small breakfast. After I landed in Dallas, went through customs and immigration, and found the gate for my connecting flight, I had a proper breakfast.

We boarded the flight from Dallas to Phoenix starting about 06:30. Just before we should have taken off, we were told there was something wrong with one of the tyres. We were asked to disembark. The estimated time for tyre replacement was ninety minutes. The board showed 08:30 as our new flight time. A number of people rushed to change flights. Just before the time we should have started boarding again, the time was changed to 09:15. More people changed flights. Again just before we should have reboarded, the time was changed to 09:45. About half an hour later, it was divulged that they were still trying to remove the bad tyre. We were given a time of 11:00 for a decision to be made. Fortunately the next message was that the tyre had been successfully replaced, and the new departure time was set for 10:30. During this delay, I was in touch with Mike about our problem. Almost miraculously we finally boarded. So many passengers had been lost, however, that those of us in the first six rows of the main cabin had to move back to rebalance the plane. The wifi on the plane was piss poor. I couldn't send anything out, and I couldn't read e-mail or Facebook. We landed in Phoenix a little after noon. Then I turned on my phone and stayed in touch with Mike until he picked me up. Getting my suitcase was relatively quick.

I had a snack bar lunch in the car about 13:30.

Gateway seemed to have forgot me and took a couple of days before his behaviour

went back to normal.

* * *

* **Kritter Korner**

Annual bird deaths in U. S. by cause

The 3 May 2014 issue of *Science News* published some disturbing figures: Cats kill an estimated 1.3-4.0 billion birds per year. Window collisions cause another 365-988 million. Finally wind turbines cause the deaths of an estimated 573,000. I've been doing my share of trying to get people to keep their pets cats inside.

#

Below is a deer drinking from the ground level birdbath.



* * *

* **Reviews:** reviews without attribution are by the editor

***Blood of the Cosmos*, by Kevin J. Anderson**

I read the first book in the trilogy “The Saga of Shadows”—*The Dark between the Stars*, which was nominated for the Hugo Award a year or two ago. I liked it well enough that I decided to read the sequels. This current book is the second book. The story so far takes place in many places in interstellar space,

including Earth. There are several groups of people originally from Earth. There are also other species. There are a number of subplots, but the larger plot concerns a threat to all life. Anderson writes excellent and interesting characters, and his books have exciting and interesting plots.

#

Fear, by L. Ron Hubbard

I read this fantasy in preparation for nominating in the retro Hugo Award for 1940. I'm not a huge fan of fantasy, especially not of dark fantasy, which this is. Personally I found the ending somewhat of a disappointment. The plot is about a professor who loses four hours of his life and his hat after visiting an old friend. His efforts to find out what happened result in encounters with numerous unEarthy creatures.

#

Ready Player One: a Novel, by Ernest Cline

This is a novel intended for young adults. I understand it's already being made into a movie. The plot revolves around a future in which almost everyone lives virtually, because the real world has become so unbearably bad. The protagonist starts out living in a complex made out of old vehicles stacked up in a large pile. A famous founder of a game company leaves a legacy. Whoever solves a series of puzzles will inherit everything. The problem is that one or more people have organized large companies to solve the puzzles. The protagonist has to fight the large cooperatives along with a few of his peers. I felt that there was some awkward expository lumps at the beginning of the book, but I found the remainder of the book entertaining. The characters were well-written and easy for the reader to identify with.

#

Chicken Run: Hatching the Movie, by Brian Sibley (Harry N. Abrams, Publishers, NY, June 2000, \$35, hardcover, ISBN#: 0-8109-4124-4). <http://www.abramsbooks.com/books.html> http://www.aardman.com/showcase/chick_fr.html <http://www.briansibley.com/>

Brian Sibley, journalist and well-known BBC radio personality, is responsible for writing this beautifully packaged, large-format, coffee-table type book (in print and easily obtainable) about the making of the first feature film from Aardman, England's innovative animation studio.

It's well nigh impossible to write about this project without succumbing to the lure of horrible puns, but fans of Aardman's popular Academy Award-winning Wallace and Gromit short films will cackle with glee as they fly to their nearest bookstore to shell out the not "poultry" sum of \$35 bucks to find their prize is not chicken feed and worth every penny!

Chicken Run: Hatching the Movie, illustrated with hundreds of photos, 2/3 of them in colour: production stills; behind-the-scenes shots; portraits of all the major personalities involved plus loads of conceptual sketches and storyboard drawings---is a sort of everything you ever wanted to know about this film but was afraid to ask; for there's plenty of text too.

Chicken Run's directors, Nick Park and Peter Lord, the premier doyens of stop-motion animation of three-dimensional puppets, use this painstakingly precise, delicate, and slow art-form to create memorable eccentric characters, swift-paced and wildly inventive plots, and exceedingly amusing situations. *Chicken Run*, (think of *Great Escape from Stalag 17* with chickens), is set on the English farm of Mr. and Mrs. Tweedy and is about how a hen named Ginger leads an intrepid band of poultry in repeated escape attempts. Events reach crisis proportions, signalling imminent doom for the flock when the Tweedys acquire a machine that makes chicken pies. Just in the nick of time, an American rooster named Rocky arrives on the scene, a feisty ex-circus performer who seems to be able to fly and is persuaded by Ginger to teach this desirable skill to her fellow prisoners and lead a daring escape.

In addition to a summary of *Chicken Run's* plot, the book offers a brief history of Aardman Studios, an account of the evolution of the concept of *Chicken Run*, and a revealing look at the modus operandi of the directors and the highly skilled artists in their employ, showing how this extremely ambitious film is made (at the rate of 4 seconds per day per animator). An appendix includes the complete credits. Author Sibley, in clear, concise prose devoid of gushing or over-effusiveness, uses extensive interviews to recount how the movie evolved from an idea doodled in a sketchbook to a fully realized feature, revealing the secrets of the model-making shop, the set-design shop, and the animation studios---all this profusely illustrated as mentioned previously. The talented actors who supplied the voices also get their fair share of interviews, too, in this splendid volume that film buffs, chicken fans, animation enthusiasts, and anyone curious about the creative process involved in producing a stop-motion animated movie will

treasure. It's the next best thing to being there every day constructing and playing with model chickens for three years!

—reviewed by Amy Harlib

#

Altered Carbon, by Richard K. Morgan

This is science fiction but is basically a noir mystery set in the future. Noir mysteries are not really books that interest me. I read this for the Oro Valley Science Fiction Book Club. It's set in a future when people can be uploaded into other bodies or stored for future revival. There are some religious sects who do not take advantage of this. The method is also used as punishment for some criminals. The protagonist, whose home is a planet other than Earth, is revived from storage to help in the investigation of an apparent murder. I understand there are other books in the same series.

#

Typewriter in the Sky, by L. Ron Hubbard

I read this in my quest for books to nominate for the Retro Hugo. It's an amusing story in which a real person becomes a character in a story written by a friend, but it's hardly award-worthy.

#

Triggers, by Robert Sawyer

I read after a friend mentioned it. Since Rob Sawyer is one of my favourite authors, I decided to get it from the library. The plot is very interesting and thought-provoking. A man suffering from PTSD is given an experimental treatment. Something goes awry, and everyone within a certain area near the equipment used becomes linked to someone else in the area. In the meantime there has been an attempted presidential assassination with other government people killed. The president was in the same hospital as the PTSD patient. All the linked people are therefore required to stay put during the investigation into the assassination plot. Saying more would give too much away.

#

Seveneves, by Neal Stephenson

This is one of the Hugo nominees this year. Neal Stephenson has been one of my favourite authors. He usually takes some very esoteric subject matter and weaves a novel around it. This book was a disappointment in that regard. The ideas used are not very esoteric. Basically the moon is smashed by a stray object, possibly a black hole. Whatever it is travels very fast and is long gone. After the initial shock of the moon falling into many pieces, scientists project the likely turn of events. It is surmised that many of the pieces will eventually fall onto the Earth and end life as we know it. Two possible solutions are proposed. One is to dig in under the surface. The other is to go into space. Don't get me wrong. The novel is still very good, just not up to the levels I expected. The book covers several thousand years.



* StippleAPA

StippleAPA is an amateur press association. An APA is like a group pen pal. Each distribution includes a fanzine from each member, who usually writes about his or her interests and life and makes comments on the previous issues of the other members. If you're interested in joining, please let me know and I can get you in touch with the person who runs it.

About mid-June, the weather became too hot for much yard work. Much of the time, the highs were in the three-digit range. When it wasn't, it was often too humid after monsoon season started in late June. Whenever I have to do something outside, I usually wait until shortly before sunset.

Occasional wildfires not close to us but close enough have sent smoke our way, wreaking havoc with my allergies.

Monsoon season has so far brought us better than an inch and a half of welcome rain.

Mike has had a setback with his new telescope. There's something wrong with it, and he sent it back to Meade for replacement, which is expected to arrive soon. In the meantime he arranged to have the outdoor carpet at his observatory replaced.

MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #302

Bill Thomasson (Musings from the Gathering Dusk): With regard to the Marcon panel "Human or Robot? Is Manned Spaceflight Necessary?", my opinion is halfway between the two you presented. Until robots are much more sophisticated than they are now, humans are probably required for space exploration beyond a certain point of sophistication. As far as human survival, I tend to think that the trend is toward cyborgs. Until it becomes possible to upload a human brain into a machine, I think flesh-based humans will continue.

I don't believe that translation had anything to do with the voting for the Hugos. I, and many others, were blown away by *The Three-Bodied Problem*. I know this was not a universal opinion, but enough people agreed with me apparently.

So far I've only read two of the Hugo novel nominees. I liked Neal Stephenson's *Seveneves* well enough, but I felt it was not as good as his previous works. The only

other book I've read so far is Ann Leckie's *Ancillary Mercy*. I liked it but felt it was weaker than *Ancillary Sword*. At this point, I would place *Seveneves* above *Ancillary Sword*.

The StarWolf and Chrystine the Little Brazilian Sparrow (Not Unlike a Sparrow's Perspective):

My curiosity is piqued by your description of *Akta Manniskor* (Real Humans) and *Humans*. The latter is available at the library, but it seems I must watch the former on Vimeo; I hate watching video on my computer.

Your description of *Thirteen* makes me want to see this as well. But it looks like I have to watch online. *sigh*

Cy Chauvin (Amazons & Swallows Forever! #48): Regarding my remarks about *Altered Carbon*. Perhaps the way I describe books has something to do with

the fact that I've written reviews off and on for a number of years. I always consider the merits of a work aside from my personal feelings for it.

I agree that *Pax* by Sara Pennypacker sounds interesting. It's in the library system, and I will request it after I'm done reading for the Hugos.

Joyce Maetta Odum (Withiness Ensued):

Our soil is not naturally packed solid. However, the builders packed the soil down around our house, which is as it should be. I've seen subsidence when this was not done, and it's not pretty. The water I used loosened the soil enough for the plants I planted. The only plant I've recently had problems with is a blueberry bush I put in a planter. I will ask about it before I replace it next spring. Everything else seems to be doing okay aside from a cactus that was eaten up by critters.

Have you looked into getting dental insurance? We bought ours through AARP,

but there are other programmes.

Dale Cozort (The Science Fiction Life #14):

I hope your upcoming cataract surgery goes well. My husband and I both have cataracts, but neither of ours has become bad enough to require surgery.

Stephanie Meyer (Monkey Mind):

I hope you were able to resolve the problem of the "new cat".

Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits):

I didn't care for *Altered Carbon*, because noir mysteries are not really my preferred reading. Otherwise it's well written.

Mike has a telephoto lens and can get a lot of good nature photos.

Mike finished the work on his observatory. You are welcome to visit any time, with notice. We have a guest room.

I've been to Biosphere 2 three times. The tour is a bit different each time, as experiments change.

* * * * *

I will probably miss the August collation, since we will be travelling.

* * *

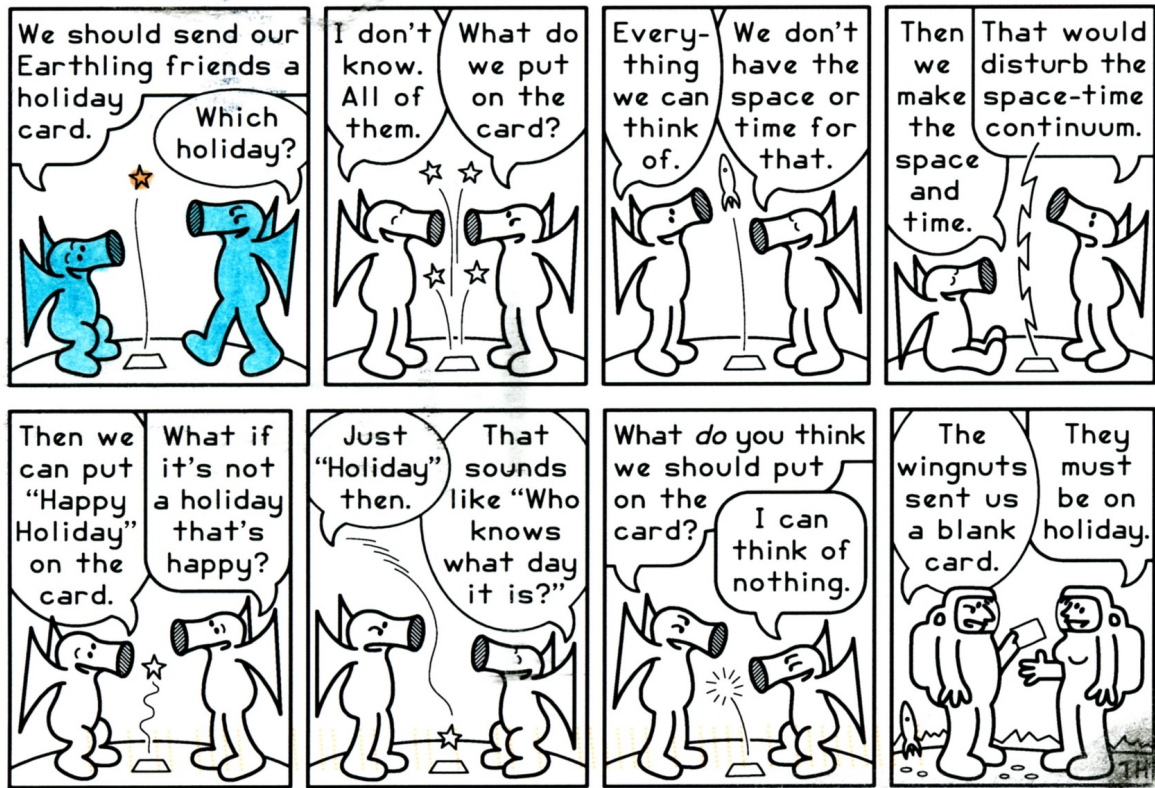
*** Letters to the Editor**

The text of letters received will be in brown. My replies to the letters will be enclosed in double parentheses and will be in black. I will also routinely make editorial corrections in punctuation, spelling, and the like. Deadline for next issue is 15 June 2016.

Teddy Harvia and Diana Thayer, 12341 Band Box Place, Dallas, TX 75244-7001; tharvia at airmail dot net January 2016

The six legged cats in the header of your fanzine were interesting. Our felines cause enough trouble with forelegs; I cannot imagine the damage with six. Have a productive and creative new year.

((His postcard had the following cartoon.))



#

Linda Deneroff, Seattle, WA; lindad at idomedia dot com

5 March 2016

Thanks for the issue. I particularly enjoyed your review of *Sasquan*, since I got to see so little of it myself due to 11 hours' worth of business meeting time, a record. The smoke in Spokane was pretty bad, but I discovered that since I was keeping the air-conditioner off in my room, that it was easier to breathe there than in the convention centre. But I wasn't spending the a lot of time in my room. Oh well.

I quite agree with Mike that *Saturn Run* is Hugo-worthy.

#

Jan Weasner, Bremerton, WA; text message

6 March 2016

Hey, just spent fascinating time perusing your delightful & entertaining issue of *Purrsonal Mewsings*! My, you do get around. Cover photo was National Geographic quality. Your newsletter is top notch and I commend you both.

Both your kitties are ageing gracefully. I am forever grateful to be on your mailing list!

#

Amy Harlib, New York, NY; aharlib at earthlink dot net

9 March 2016

Just finished enjoying *Purrsonal Mewsings* #52.

Are you no longer publishing reviews by others? I have lots more I'm perfectly happy to contribute to each issue.

((Contributions are still very welcome.))

Appreciated the Con reports and the trip reports. Adored the kitty photos!

I am recovering from my right hip replacement. I dislocated it again in April trying to regain movement too fast, a terrible setback far worse than the surgery itself.

It took my dedication and passion to recover my performance skills safely and I was able to do gigs in time for Oct./Halloween. It's an ongoing process – I keep regaining gradually and now almost a year later, I'm almost where I was before the surgery; and there are some moves I may never recover, but I can truthfully promote myself as AMAZING AMY! WORLD'S ONLY KNOWN CONTORTIONIST WITH TWO HIP REPLACEMENTS AT AGE 61!!

Films: liked *Mission Impossible* and *Spectre* but loved *The Martian*! Loved the new *Mad Max: Fury Road* and saw the new Star Wars twice – loved it too as history not quite repeating itself, but rhyming! Enjoyed *Deadpool*, *The Revenant*, *Gods of Egypt* (silly fun), the last Hunger Games, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, *Hail, Caesar!* and lots more.

Please keep publishing my reviews!

#

Amy Harlib, New York, NY; aharlib at earthlink dot net

10 March 2016

The point of all that stuff about my right hip is that I AM RECOVERING and almost a year after dislocating the replacement, I can now perform full CONTORTION ACTS! And I'm still getting better, still regaining more movement skills in an ongoing process.

#

Yvonne and Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd, Etobicoke, ON; penneys at bell dot net

11 March 2016

Hello again! It's been a while since I've responded to one of your zines—my fault, I lost touch entirely. Now I have *Purrsonal Mewsings* 52, and I can get back to it.

I never did see the updated *Man From UNCLE*, and I have no regrets. Some television programmes just don't take updates, IMHO. As Mike said, a period piece might have done better. One old show I did like was *The Wild, Wild West*, mostly because of its fantasy elements (which now might be called steampunk). *The Force Awakens* was fun, and in many ways a nostalgia trip; but there were a lot of similarities to the original SW; and we see so few movies these days, I doubt we will return to see it. I am not even sure it's still in the theatres.

On page eight is the biggest slide rule I've ever seen. That's either a demonstrator model or a teacher's model. I have a couple of slide rules myself, but I think I'd need a refresher on how to use them. We're all too used to push button calculators or simply asking our computers for a solution.

Yvonne and I had a great time guesting at Loscon some years ago now; wish we could go back! They created a lot of programming to match our interests, and we had such a great time. Perhaps we can go on our dime in a few years.

We don't go to Worldcons any more—simply too expensive, and with the various Puppies trying to influence the Hugos, too political. Right now Yvonne and I have made the big decision, and we are going

to England for two weeks the second half of August. We will be tourists for the first week; and then we're up to Lincoln for The Asylum, the biggest steampunk event in the world. We can hardly wait; it's going to be a lot of fun.

Sheryl is right, the Hugo definitions for fanzine and fan artist are not what we all remember them as being in the past. As a result, we might not recognize any of the titles or names in any of the fan Hugo categories. We've been pushed out of these awards for more modern titles and names using more modern technology.

My LoC from 2014: more and more, we are going to conventions as vendors. Around here, the old style SF convention is going away; so as vendors, we go to conventions new to us. In a couple of weeks, we will be vending at the Kitchener Comic Con down Highway 401; and the end of April sees Ad Astra, the convention we worked on for 30 years, and we will have two tables there. Genrecon has gone away unfortunately. Our savings for Loncon is what is getting us to England this year; now we have enough, and we now have the ability to set vacation time. (Well, Yvonne does. Once again, I am on the job hunt. I was disposed of once again last October. It's a bad time to be unemployed, if there is ever a good time.)

All done for the moment. Sorry I missed a few issues, but if you can let me know when new issues are available, I will respond. See you then.

#

Tom Feller, TomFeller at aol dot com

12 March 2016

Thanks for sending the zine. It was nice to chat with you at Worldcon. Anita and I thought it was quite a good convention.

I once visited Albuquerque on a business trip and rode the tram to the top of Sandia Peak. It was a clear day, and the view was beautiful.

We enjoyed the movie version of *Chicago* and had previously seen the stage version in Nashville by a touring company. They had an unusual set design that featured the orchestra appearing on stage. However, the highlight for me occurred when Sandahl Bergman (*Conan the Barbarian*) appeared in one scene. By that time she had retired from full-time acting and dancing and was working as the dance-captain for this production.

I managed to read more short fiction last year and nominated the stories I liked the most for the Hugo. As usual we saw lots of movies, and I had no trouble nominating five of them for the long form Hugo. As for the short form, I nominated episodes of *Doctor Who* and *Game of Thrones*.

#

Milt Stevens, miltstevens at earthlink dot net

13 March 2016

In *Purrsonal Mewsings* #52, you reminded me of something awful. That would be alarm clocks. I always hated alarm clocks. I hated alarm clocks even before the study that indicated bells were linked to heart attacks. Years before I retired, I actually replaced my alarm clock with a clock radio; but the principle was the same. It's a machine that wants to wake me up when I don't want to wake up. I haven't used an alarm of any sort in years. It helps that I seldom have to go anywhere at any particular time. If I absolutely have to go somewhere I schedule it in afternoon, so I'll be up by that time anyway.

((I only use an alarm, usually my iPhone, when I want to be up by a certain time. Sometimes I get up fairly early naturally, but I can't count on that. For instance I insist on having breakfast before I do other things. This means I have to be up to get to breakfast when it's served. At home I have to feed the cats as well as myself before I leave for any appointments.))

I'm always impressed by reports of people doing tourist type things. You and Mike obviously do all sorts of tourist type things and enjoy doing it. I don't know whether it's a lack of energy or curiosity that makes me a terrible tourist. If I know something exists, I don't have any particular urge to see it personally. Teleportation would be my choice for travel if were available.

((Mine too. While I enjoy the activities at the destination, I don't particularly enjoy getting there, especially if it involves flying.))

It's hard to forget the smoke at the Spokane Worldcon. That will definitely peg that worldcon in my memory. I'm glad they had the view from the International Space Station in the lounge area. That was definitely goshwow. When I was a kid reading SF, I don't know whether I really believed I would live to see such things.

I saw two movies in theatres last year—*The Martian* and the Star Wars movie. Of the two *The Martian* would be my choice for the Hugo. I was pleasantly surprised when it was nominated for best picture in the academy awards. It was dramatic, visually interesting, and reasonably realistic. By comparison, the Star Wars movie was entertaining but not really worth as much hype as it received. I doubt there will be as much interest in another Star Wars movie.

Before I read your comments on the movie *Chicago*, the name Roxie Hart hadn't clicked in my memory. I had seen the movie *Roxie Hart* with Ginger Rogers, but I hadn't made the connection. I looked it up and found the Ginger Rogers movie had been based on the play *Chicago* which in turn was based on some real murder trials that happened in Chicago in the twenties. When you think about it basing a musical on a murder trial is a strange idea.

((The review of *Chicago* was written by Amy Harlib. I haven't seen the movie.))

#

Brad Foster, PO Box 165246, Irving, TX 75106; bwfoster at juno dot com 14 March 2016

Zines, both printed and e-ish, have been stacking up here for a couple of months now-- I've got an arrival date of March 6 penciled on the first page of *Purrsonal Mewsings* #52. That's *way* too long for a zine to be here unanswered, but it's been that kind of a crazy year so far. Always seemed to be something that I had to take care of, that got me away from writing, or even drawing-- only done a few pieces this year, and those were ones that had deadlines and had to be done. Not much personal/fun stuff. But, hoping things will get better as year progresses.

This week I'm working hard to get caught up with everyone, and *PM* has moved up to next on the list. My overall impression from this issue was to be amazed at how much travelling you did in that one year time. I was almost worn out by the end of it all, and all I was doing was sitting here comfortably reading it! We used to travel around a lot more years ago, doing art festivals all over the country. These days, I'm more of a homebody, just like to stay here comfortably and do some reading, writing, and drawing. Still places I would like to visit around the country and world, if we get the time/money to do that again. But don't seem to have that "urge" to hit the road I once did. Maybe used up my "quota" of travel by doing so much of it early on?

Loved that photo on page 6. I worked a little bit with a slide rule long ago in junior high, but the pocket calculators were just coming out, and so we moved on to those. I don't recall them being quite as large as shown in the photo, but then my memory is probably at fault.

Thanks for your kind comments about my "presentation" at Worldcon. I've done stuff like the before, usually end up taking way too many images to show, forget what I wanted to say, and am always terrified I am either totally confusing or totally boring the the audience. Glad you did find some of it interesting. I've found talking less about my actual drawings and more about the process of creation makes it easier to do.

Gorgeous photo of your two feline kiddos on page 24. Mercury looks to be twice as big, is that for real, or just a trick of the angle of the photo?

((Mercury is really that big.))

Glad you're still holding on to the "Octo-ballet" fillo to use. I think I sent it after one of your issues where you went to various cultural things, figured eventually some dancing stuff would have to show up! :)

#

John Hertz, 236 S Coronado St, No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057

15 March 2016

Thanks for *Purrsonal Mewsings* 52.

I quite agree with Mike that *Saturn Run* is Hugo-worthy.

Slide rules are neglected now or even scorned but they have virtues. In use and in manufacture, they call for much less power than electronic calculators, in use no batteries, in manufacture less costly material. Their precision to three significant digits (I keep finding people don't know what this means) is good for much of life.

I'm glad you liked the Loscon XLI discussion of *The Stars My Destination*. Milt Stevens was swell as he is in many ways. The book is even better than some of us have noticed.

Regency Dancing at cons seems to necessitate teaching. As you note, many who come have no background. They have to start somewhere. I feel this is a better enrichment of a con than arranging a dance so it's only for people already expert. It goes better when more show up who have done it before.

I was glad to see your report of Operacon (which reminds me, I'd have liked to see more about your Christmas cantata and church choir). Trinlay Khadro sometimes contributes drawings to *Vanamonde*; we've never met in person. I remember Somtow Sucharitkul playing piano with Laura Brodian Kelly-Freas (now L.B.K.F. Beraha) in a hotel lobby.

In your Sasquan report I note a Cheesecake Factory near an Apple store, one of those tasty accidents. The Macintosh has been so popular it almost eclipses the main brand name. There was a Newton but not successfully. There could be a Baldwin someday. Meanwhile apple growers keep breeding Fujis, Opals, Honeycrisps, and who knows what; so perhaps fewer varieties stay long enough for established recognition.

You and Mike have faithfully attended these Classics of SF book talks. Thanks. I try to elicit contributions from attenders, rather than be left to carry the whole discussion myself. Murray Moore says he reads new SF wondering how it will look in ten years. In these book talks, I to some extent am doing that from the other end.

Vanamond mailings are alas still behind. Here are a few issues.

I almost forgot to say how good Mike's photos are. Thanks to him!

#

Rodney Leighton, RR 3, Tatamagouche, NS BoK 1Vo

3 April 2016

Dear Laurraine:

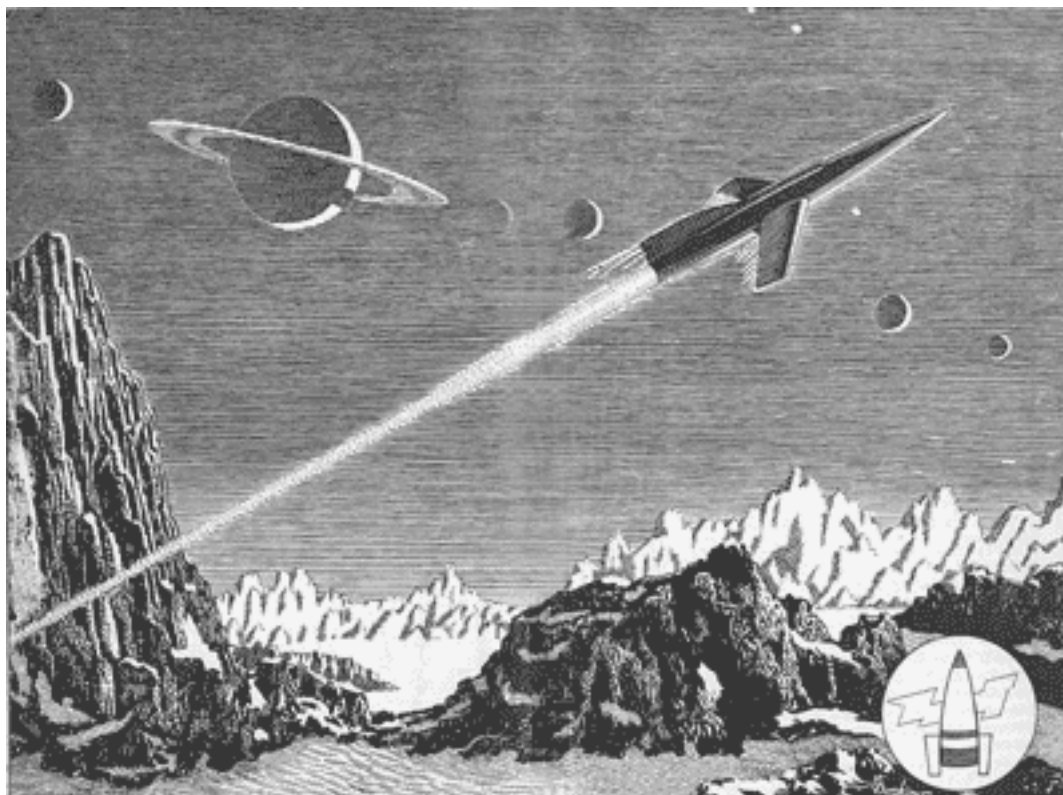
Thank you for *Purrsonal Mewsings* #52 which arrived way back on March 8. Way too long for a response in my view. This heart thing is a nuisance.

But shouldn't it be #1? Unless there have been other issues under this title? I know I should know if there were; the past year has not been kind. Just my view.

It sort of seemed like you and Mike were having some problems for awhile. Maybe just normal couple things. Having never been in a couple, I don't know about things. Like "... Mike refused to go down for dinner, so I went on my own." This was in 2014. Later on it all seemed normal for you folks.

((Mike frequently doesn't stick to the usual three meals a day.))

Some great photos. Quite spectacular picture on page 4. I mailed a letter to a guy in Albuquerque yesterday.



I must admit that the photos were the best part of the extensive con trip reports. Thanks for identifying the people. Lots of faneds don't. It was good to see the photo of John in his elf get up and I was pleased to see the photo of Milt Stevens, whose LoCs I have long admired, not just because he is one of the few people to LoC my lousy little zine but almost all of his LoCs are witty and fun to read.

((I've also always enjoyed Milt Stevens's writing.))

Given that I don't like opera it may be somewhat strange that I found the operacon trip report the most interesting of the lot. Some personal connections: Leah Zeldes may disavow any involvement with me, but in truth she was a large part of me getting involved in this silly hobby. I don't know how long it has been since there was an issue of *Stet* or how long it has been since I heard anything from them, but I still miss seeing that fanzine arrive. And then there is Trinlay looking quite well. Been ages since I have had any contact with her. Back when we were corresponding, it seemed that she was having all kinds of problems. Might still be or might be again. The con was a year ago, and all sorts of stuff can happen in a year.

Can't forget the pampered kitties. I keep thinking I should get a cat. But, well, never seemed to find the right time.

Coming to the letters section, I see that Sheryl Birkhead was finding *Purrsonal Mewsings* in her zine pile way back in Aug. 2014. Ah, I have trouble keeping track of my own things.

I would agree with Jeanne Mealy in that it would be more interesting to read some thoughts and feelings. For instance, if you wrote that you got up between 5:30 and 7:00 each morning, had breakfast alone but gave us a description. I would find that more interesting than reading that same bit for every day. Reminds me, bacon and egg. Does that mean you left out the s or that you had one slice of bacon and one egg?

((One egg but probably more than one slice of bacon.))

I did read this entire zine; and now going over it, I see that the letter column contains answers to many things. Apparently *PM* #1 was back in 2014 sometime and #3 was sometime in the summer last year. Sheesh. Haven't i written you anything for ages?

Of course, August last year was kind of a mess and September kind of evaporated.

I hope you have received RF#7 by now. Chuck started sending them out awhile ago. Haven't seen a mailing list yet.

((Chuck has been e-mailing me copies of your zine.))

#

Charles Rector, crector at myway dot com

4 May 2016

Noticed that you had a deadline for LoCs of March 15th; but since #53 has not come out yet, presumably due to the exactions of your feline overlords, I assume that you are still open to new LoCs.

((I did fall behind with my publishing schedule. It's a problem I've been having for a while. Most of the problem can be attributed to the fact that I have way too many interests for the limited time I have. Thanks for writing.))

Have you ever been a travel writer? Your trip dispatches provide about the right amount of detail, not too much, not too little. Your write-ups make me almost want to travel to some of those places myself. One question though: In the Loscon write-up, prominent mention was made of XCOR Aerospace. Was XCOR one of the sponsors? If not, then why so much attention given to them? Let's face it, the last few years, SPACE-X has been getting most of the coverage in the news media to the point that about the only times that you ever hear about XCOR is because you're on their email list.

((Loscon does not have sponsors. It's a strictly fan-run convention. You'll have to ask the organizers why they are featured. My husband attends almost all programming related to aviation and aeronautics, so that's why they are mentioned in my report.))

There are some other interesting aspects to your fanzine. First, the number of reviews of non SF/Fantasy/Scientific stuff aka the sort of things that an earlier generation of fans would have denounced as "mundane". Your LoC section has quite a number of LoCs by writers that you rarely see in the LoC sections of other fanzines. That really helps to make it interesting.

Finally, I'm interested in finding out why your fanzine is not up on the EFanzines.com website where your zine can become accessible to a wider audience. If you want to find out how to do that, simply email that website's creator Bill Burns, at billb@efanzines.com.

((Somewhere at efanzines should be a link to my site where I store my zines. I notify Bill Burns when I have a new zine.))

Well, that's all for now. See you around the Milky Way.

* * *

*** Closing Remarks**

If the USPS cooperates, this zine will appear in the July StippleAPA and then will subsequently be mailed out to people not in the APA. Deadline for next issue most likely will be 1 September.

Laurraine

5 July 2016