

Purrsonal Mewsings #54



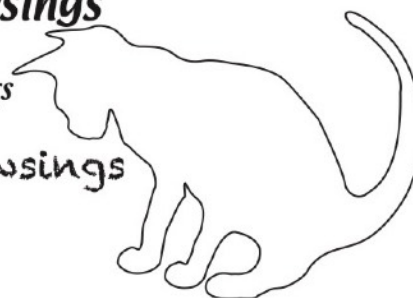
PURRSONAL MEWSINGS

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#54

October 2016

Purrsonal Mewsings, formerly *Feline Journal* and *Feline Mewsings* is a personal/genzine I hope to publish every six weeks by R-Laurraine Tutihasi, PO Box 5323, Oracle, AZ 85623-5323; 520-275-6511, Laurraine@mac.com, <http://www.weasner.com/>. It is distributed through StippleAPA and sent to other friends and family. It is available for the usual (a response of any kind, including letters, e-mail, and phone calls of comment; trade; contributions of illos, fiction, or articles; or even money: \$5.00 per issue). The zine will be placed on the web shortly after paper publication; please let me know if you prefer just to read the web version. I can also e-mail this in Word or rtf format. Kattesmint Press #466. ©2016 R-Laurraine Tutihasi. Permission is granted to reprint or forward any part or all of this newsletter created by the editor provided that it carries the following statement: "Copyright 2016 by R-Laurraine Tutihasi. Originally published in *Purrsonal Mewsings* #54, <http://www.weasner.com/laurraine/Felinemewsings/index.html>." All other material is copyrighted by their respective creators, and they should be contacted for any reprint permission.

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* Editorial / Introduction

This issue contains an account of Mike's and my driving trip to attend his fiftieth high school reunion in Seymour, IN. Reaching Seymour took a few days, and we stayed an extra night in Independence, MO, to visit old friends. We also stopped in Albuquerque both going and returning.

* * *

* Local Outings

National Theatre Live: The Audience : I went with a friend to this special showing of a filmed version of a play recorded in London. This play features Helen Mirren in the part of Queen Elizabeth II. The title refers to the sessions the queen has weekly with the prime minister. The play is not in chronological order. Sessions with each prime minister are frequently intermingled with scenes out of Elizabeth's childhood. There are some clever and smoothly orchestrated costume changes on stage. The transitions from one to to another are very well done. Helen Mirren is excellent in the part. These screenings are sometimes repeated. If this is shown in your neighbourhood, I highly recommend you go see it.

#

Star Trek Beyond: When I saw this it was soon after the unfortunate accidental death of Anton Yelchin. Every time he was on screen, I was emotionally affected. Thus I wasn't really able to judge the quality of the film. I enjoyed it well enough, but the plot seemed rather derivative. The *Enterprise* crew are sent to answer a distress call, but things were not as they first appeared. The ending seemed a bit contrived. I recommend it if you're a hardcore Star Trek fan.

#

Charles III: This was the first play in the Arizona Theatre Company's 2016-17 season. I bought a three-play package with a friend. This play by Mike Bartlett starts after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. As expected Charles is ready to take the throne. Immediately he gets into trouble by having a confrontation with the prime minister. The play is written in a style similar to Shakespeare's, including much use of the iambic pentameter. It even features ghosts. Ironically the issue of contention is freedom of the press. The majority party want it curbed. The new king is against it. My friend and I very much enjoyed this play, infused with comedy and Shakespearian overtones. The play premiered in London. I wonder whether the Prince of Wales saw it.

* * *

* Mike's High School Reunion Trip (12-29 Aug 2016)

I got up about oh dark hundred on Friday, 12 August, the day we started out on our trip to Mike's fiftieth high school reunion. We got on the road about 08:15. We drove straight to the Fairfield Inn in Albuquerque near the airport with only one fuel and comfort stop. The weather there was hot but dry and clear. I successfully checked in using the Marriott app while we were still on the road. The keycard for the room door worked by proximity sensor, the only hotel during our trip to feature this.

There was an Applebee's next to the hotel where we had dinner.

The next day we drove to the Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array radio telescope about two hours south of Albuquerque. We approached the telescope a little after 11:00 and stopped for a panoramic shot. The facility is spread out, but visitors have access only to

the central part. We saw an introductory film narrated by Jodie Foster, went through a small exhibit area, and took a self-guided tour. Afterward we went to the gift shop; Mike bought a T-shirt and mug, and I got three post cards and some almonds to snack on.



We drove back to Socorro about an hour north, where we had lunch at the Bodega restaurant that had an ad in a brochure I picked up at the telescope site. The waiter was from Minnesota, and we chatted for a bit.

We ran into rain and stiff wind on our drive back to Albuquerque.

We had dinner at Applebee's again. I had a really tasty chicken prepared in a Mexican style and served with rice and tortilla strips and a Bahama Mama cocktail. Mike just had a dessert, Triple Chocolate Meltdown.

On Sunday we were back on the road before about 07:45.

Although it was sunny when we left Albuquerque, it turned cloudy and stayed that way for the rest of our drive; and the scenery was decidedly flat. Our Civic GPS system, which we had just downloaded an update for, didn't know about the west side of Wyatt Earp Boulevard in Dodge City, KS, so it led us to the east side. We had to drive a few miles west to find the Townplace Suites hotel. We were upgraded to a really nice suite that included a full kitchen and two separate bedrooms and bathrooms, the nicest accommodations we had during our trip.

We went to dinner at the Bella Italia Ristorante, recommended by the hotel. After determining that they served gluten free items, we went in to eat. The only downside was that they had no liquor license. I ordered a spaghetti with meatballs, sausage, and ham with garlic sauce that was quite tasty. Mike declared his lasagna just okay. I brought leftovers back to our "room".

I ended up eating the food I brought back from dinner as a late night snack.

We were on the road a little after 08:00 on Monday morning. It was rather overcast.

We arrived at the Fairfield Inn in Independence, MO, about 14:15, a bit later than expected due to the car's GPS getting us lost. I used the Map app on the iPad to get us on the right track. When we got to our second-floor room, it was like a meat locker. I quickly raised the temperature on the thermostat, but it would take time to thaw out. We tried turning the heat on, but a horrid odour somewhat like burnt toast but much worse permeated the air in the room. We opened the window in the hope of warming up the room and getting rid of the smell. This only succeeded to a small extent.

We walked over to the nearby 54th Street Grill and Bar after Mike's news show ended at 18:00. As we walked back to the hotel afterwards, we decided that the insect sounds

we heard were created by cicadas. Mike spotted one on a tree trunk. The weather was mostly fair, but the humidity was higher than we were used to.

We left the hotel about 10:00 Tuesday morning to visit the Vaile Victorian mansion. This thirty-one room house was built in 1881 by Colonel and Mrs. Harvey Vaile. Harvey Vaile was a lawyer, who at various times raised cattle and owned a vineyard, among other things. We had a nice guided tour there and finished up about 11:15. Mike took extra time to walk around the block for more photos.

I found a restaurant not too far away called the Courthouse Exchange for lunch. We drove a short distance to it; I had salad and Mike had meatloaf.

Across the street was the Truman Courthouse. We went in there briefly and learned that it had been named after a renovation. Then we drove a short distance to the Truman Museum and Library; Mike got in free because of his military service. Truman and his wife are also buried in the courtyard.

In the evening we went to the Deckert household where Dan and Danise live with their son, Ian, and daughter, Alana. They have a really nice house in a really nice neighbourhood. We got a full tour of the house and met their two young dogs.

Dan and Danise had prepared a really nice meal for us and other invited guests. Lisa Harrigan was the only other person to show up. But we had a good time.

We had to leave relatively early because of an early start the next morning for Seymour.

We got on the road about 07:15 Wednesday morning. Sometime during our drive, the car started giving us occasional bogus driving instructions. Usually, though, the map display was fine.

The sky became increasingly cloudy as we drove east. The Indiana border seemed to be confusing to the car; it vacillated between central and eastern time a few times before settling down. After we reached Seymour, Mike drove to the cemetery where his parents are buried but was unable to find the markers. We got to the Fairfield Inn and Suites about 17:30. We had stayed before in the same general vicinity but apparently in one of the other hotels. Skies were overcast and the humidity was very high.

We got dinner at a nearby Chili's about 18:30.

We both went down Thursday morning to the free hotel breakfast about 08:15. There was no yogurt, which I had become accustomed to seeing at similar hotel breakfasts. We checked out the laundry room, since we planned to use it later during our stay.

We got underway on our drive down to Louisville, KY, about 10:00 and filled up at a Shell station. Unfortunately traffic came to a standstill about a half hour into our drive;



after more than an hour and a half of moving a few feet per minute on the Interstate, all traffic was routed off the freeway. The car's GPS seemed to be confused by the situation. It took another half hour or so to get clear of the traffic mess. We got to the Louisville Zoo about 13:30.

We saw a number of animals before we stopped for lunch about 14:30.

The weather was dreadful. By the thermometer it seemed to be pleasant, but the humidity was apparently supersaturated, so it felt about fifteen degrees hotter. Stopping for the bird show was a relief, since we could sit down and cool off. The show was quite nice--interesting and informative. The man is actually in the bird rescue business and uses the show to educate the public. Afterward we kind of had to rush through the rest of the exhibits, skipping a few entirely, as the zoo was about to close. We arrived at Outback in plenty of time to meet Joe Major and Lisa Photini.



We had a very nice dinner. I had a peach-flavoured cocktail, filet mignon, and chocolate cake that were all delicious. The steak was rare as ordered. The conversation was enjoyable. We were there for a couple of hours until Mike announced we had to leave to start our drive back to Seymour.

The drive back was thankfully uneventful. We got back to our hotel about 22:00. There was one glitch. Our key cards didn't work. I returned to the front desk and was issued new cards.

The next day we met Nancy Mitchell, a first cousin once removed of Mike's for lunch at Applebee's. We were there for a couple of hours. Toward the end of that time, we found out there were a couple of his classmates one table over, also here for the reunion.

In the afternoon we drove around Mike's old neighbourhood and other areas of Seymour. We returned to the cemetery, and Mike found his parents' markers with the

help of the cemetery staff. He'd been confused by a tree that he remembered but that had been removed due to disease. Then we returned to the hotel to chill.

We ordered in from Domino's for dinner.

After dinner Mike left to see if there was anyone home at his old house; no one responded to his knocking on the door in spite of the TV being on. I wondered if the tenants were deaf.

Saturday morning, we left the hotel about 09:30. We could see it had rained after I'd had breakfast. Our first stop was a farmer's market where Mike talked to a classmate who had a stall there. Then we visited the Freeman Army Airfield Museum, which focussed on activities there during and a few years after WWII. It's at the site of a short-lived Army Air Forces base. The mission of the museum is to educate the public about and preserve the history of Freeman Army Airfield as a military training facility and foreign aircraft evaluation centre. They preserve and honour the memory of the World War II veterans who trained and served there, as well as the civilians who helped the base function during and shortly after the war. Exhibits include planes, parts that were dug up from the field, the uniforms of people who served during WWII, and other memorabilia of the era.



After that Mike made another attempt to contact the current residents of his old house and finally hit pay dirt. It started to rain in earnest almost immediately after Mike exited the car, where I waited. He made arrangements to return the next day for a photo shoot.

We went to Larrison's Diner for lunch; it's the site of another diner of a different

name that used to be there when Mike was growing up in Seymour. There were other alumni there, though they all seemed to be female. The rain continued off and on.

In the evening we left the hotel about 17:30 to head to the reunion, which had an official start time of 18:00. We thought we'd be among the first to arrive, but quite a few people were there already. We got embroiled in conversation almost immediately. Eventually we decided to sit with some people we were talking with. Appetizers were served and we got some. I got in line for the main course before Mike, but he joined me just before I reached the food. There was good conversation while we ate. Some of the people had stayed in Seymour and still lived there, but others had travelled there for the reunion like us.

Then the band started playing old timey music quite loudly, and conversation became hard on throats. We kept talking, but it became an effort. I think our throats were all a bit sore. We left a little after 22:00 to get some much needed sleep. It rained quite a bit while we were inside, but it had stopped for a while by the time we got outside.

Sunday morning Mike went down to the front desk to get laundry detergent and dryer sheets. We started laundry before I went down to breakfast.

Breakfast was pretty crowded.

After breakfast we had to run the dryer a second time. Two of Mike's nieces, who live in nearby towns, showed up early for a visit while we were still folding laundry. The dryer left a lot of stuff not quite dry, but we hoped that'd be okay. Mike's nieces, one with a spouse, arrived early, while we were still folding laundry. Then Mike spent about an hour showing them photos on his iPad. The husband went downstairs to smoke outside and then stayed in the lobby. Mike might have shown more photos if I hadn't reminded him that we should leave to get lunch.

Teresa and her husband followed us in our car, where Kathy was a passenger, to Rails restaurant. The name of the restaurant is because it is near the intersection of two rail lines. It is apparently the best restaurant in town, just okay in my view. We had a nice enough meal. We had a photo session after we ate; the waitress took many photos of us.

Afterward we all went to Mike's old house, where more photography was committed. Mike wanted to recreate a photograph of himself with his first telescope, taken in 1962. We noticed a whole bunch of castoff cicada shells on a poplar tree in the yard next door. We parted company with Teresa and her husband shortly thereafter, but Kathy came back to the hotel with us. She and Mike talked for quite a bit. A bit later I started looking in vain for a nice restaurant where we could have dinner.



We finally went to Bonanza Steak and BBQ, a relatively new chain restaurant. It was pretty good actually.

We were on our way to Bloomington about 08:45 Monday morning. There was a lot

of dew on the car. The weather was mostly sunny. We reached IU and found metered parking before 10:00; we had to keep going back to feed the meter, which was only good for two hours. We did a lot of walking around before heading to the Astronomy Department, where Mike studied in the late 1960s for his BS. We ran into Dr. Eileen Friel who's the current head of the Astronomy Department. She showed us around a bit to see the effects of ongoing renovation. Then we met up with Jeff Stuckey, who is Director of Development of the IU College of Arts and Sciences.

The four of us had lunch at Big Wood restaurant, where everyone except Mike had a salad.

We did a bit more walking after we parted from first Jeff and then Eileen. By then temperatures had risen, and it was almost as uncomfortable as the previous Thursday. We left Bloomington about 14:45.

By the time we got back to Seymour, it was 16:30. It didn't seem worthwhile to go all the way to the hotel just to turn around to get dinner, so we stopped for an early dinner at Rails. I had filet mignon with salad and baked potato with a fruity cocktail that didn't seem to contain much alcohol.

Afterward we topped up gas at the nearby Shell station, where I also bought a couple of Kind bars. Back at the hotel I rested a bit before packing as much as I could for our departure the next day.

Tuesday morning we started our drive to St. Louis about 09:30. This was the shortest leg of this trip. The sky became increasingly cloudy as we neared St. Louis. As we drove further west, we encountered a little rain. We reached the Residence Inn by Marriott in St. Louis about 13:45. In retrospect I should have changed our reservation to someplace farther out of the city. On the other hand things had been kind of rushed before we left home because of the storage shed Mike decided we needed almost at the last minute. But the location of our hotel near a shopping mall was nice.

We went to the nearby Cheesecake Factory for dinner about 17:00. We considered walking, but rain seemed a possibility. I started with a gin and tonic and had a gluten free version of Shrimp with Angel Hair, so it wasn't actually angel hair but still good. I followed it up with a mocha latte. Mike had Chicken with Biscuits.

Afterward we went on a vain hunt for a device that allows you to charge more than one mobile device at a time. Mike also got some information he wanted at the Microsoft store. At least we got some exercise.

We were on the road about 08:15 Wednesday morning. We reached the Fairfield Inn Oklahoma City Airport about 16:00. We got a nice spacious room with two queen beds, fridge, and microwave on the fifth floor. The only weird thing was that our room didn't have a number plate; instead there's a paper number taped to the door.

The temperature was much warmer than in St. Louis but also much dryer, so it didn't feel as hot.

We met Mike's best friend from Seymour, Danny Lucas, and his wife, Doris, a little before 18:00 at Cattlemen's Steakhouse. He had been unable to attend the reunion because of having just moved from Indiana. This restaurant doesn't seem to have any connection to the restaurant of the same name in California, but the food is very similar. Mike and Danny had a great time reminiscing and talking about stuff that's happened since they last saw each other back in the 1970s. It was altogether a very enjoyable

dinner.

Thursday morning we set out for Albuquerque about 08:00 and stopped for gas just before we got on the freeway at a Phillips 66 station. We experienced a few raindrops while still in Oklahoma. We arrived at the Albuquerque Marriott about 15:00. The room was on the small side, especially compared to the previous night. The toilet paper disappointed. There were small glass shelves on one side of the bathroom sink, but the third (top) shelf was dangerously slanted.

We went down for dinner at the hotel about 17:00. Service was slow, which I sort of remembered from our previous stay there; but the food was good. Mike abandoned me to watch his news show, which turned out to be pre-empted by a football game, before my dessert showed up.

After dinner I scouted the rest of the lobby floor and found the convention site; it's attached to the hotel. I also ran into Chris Marble from LA checking in.

Bubonicon didn't officially start until 16:00 the next day, but preregistered members could pick up our name badges starting about 13:00.

We had lunch in the hotel after looking through that day's programme items. We finished looking through the rest of it while we waited for the food to appear. I had an oriental salad.

We returned to our room briefly until the hucksters room was scheduled to open. I spent some time talking with Lisa "Auntie M" Harrigan in the hallway, while Mike went in ahead of me. We made it in early to the room where the panel "Soylent Green: It's a Cookbook" would take place. The panel was moderated skilfully by David Lee Summers. The other panellists were J. Lindskold, Laura J. Mixon, Sage Walker, and C. Weaver. The discussion was about food in fiction, the panellists' favourite cook books, and similar topics.

After that I went to "55 Minutes with Robert Vardeman" in a freezing cold room that never warmed up. If you walked past the room, you could feel cold air coming out. Vardeman talked about his writing career. I lost touch with him after I heard him speak at a Star Trek convention in New York City back in the 1970s that inspired me to buy a fantasy trilogy he wrote with Victor Milán that I still haven't read. It sounds like he's returning to his sf roots, but he spent a lot of years writing westerns under one pseudonym or other. There are a lot of western series published under house names.

In the meantime Mike went to "The Shape of Things to Come: Robots in Disguise" with David Gerrold, M. T. Reiten, Jim Sorenson, and Courtney Willis. Discussion included the question of what is a robot. They may include vacuum cleaners, cars, factory devices, and drones. In order to qualify as a robot, they require mobility, the ability to affect their environment, and the ability to be autonomous. Courtney Willis introduced a robot toy [see photo next page] designed after one in *Star Wars: the Force Awakens*. I later saw him demo it in the hallway.

Then I met up with Mike for Opening Ceremonies where the con's guests were introduced.

After that I next went to "55 Minutes with John Maddox Roberts" in another warmer room. This was the man who identified a book for me years ago in response to a question I sent to a column in *Lan's Lantern*. He remembered the incident and the book. Forry Ackerman had identified the book for him earlier.

Mike went to the science talk given by astronaut Sid M. Gutierrez —“Escape to Space”. He spoke about his two missions and living and working in space. He also talked about his company Rocket Crafters.

After that it was back to the freezing room for "55 Minutes with Ben Bova", which Mike also attended, and "55 Minutes with Walter Jon Williams", during which I ran out of battery power for my video camera near the end. It's amazing to me the amount of optimism Ben Bova still has in the human race. During the second session, Mike went to “Spaceships We Have Loved: Sailing Celestial Seas” with Mario Acevedo, Craig Butler, John Maddox Roberts, and Melinda Snodgrass, moderated by Connie Willis; discussion included the panellists’



favourite spaceships; designs, functions, and crew size; and comparisons of fictional and real spaceships. By this time it was almost 21:30. I went back up to our room briefly to recharge one of my camera batteries. Mike was also back to get sleep.

I went back down to get supper. The staff were very flexible, and I had gluten free French onion soup and half a Reuben sandwich. Afterward I talked briefly with John Maddox Roberts, Walter Jon Williams, and Jan Stirling, who is female; they were in the bar drinking.

Saturday morning Mike and both went down to breakfast about 08:30. I had the buffet, and Mike had the All American.

I had to run up to the room afterward to get my iPhone and little yellow bag of meds. My first programme item was "55 Minutes with David Gerrold". Afterward I bought a bunch of David Gerrold books in the hucksters room. Then I did a walk around of the art show. I went back to our hotel room after that.

In the meantime Mike went to “Space Opera: More Than Mind Candy?” with John Maddox Roberts, Sage Walker, Walter Jon Williams, and Connie Willis, moderated by Melinda Snodgrass. Space opera was defined as adventures in space. It also has large empires in conflict. Books, TV shows, and movies that fit the category were discussed.

I skipped lunch, because breakfast seemed to be still sitting in my stomach.

Mike went to “Rockets, Robots, & Rayguns: the Three Rs of SF” with Mario Acevedo, S. M. Stirling, Walter Jon Williams, and Courtney Willis, moderated by Steven Gould. Panellists discussed their favourites, what was available today or soon would be, including cars, bread making robots, and toasters.

Shortly thereafter I went to "How to Add Razzle-Dazzle to Your Writing" with Connie Willis and Melinda Snodgrass. Razzle-dazzle does not mean exciting CGI or epic scenes.

There are five types of razzle-dazzle: making things personal to the main characters, using symbolism and making it real, obstacles in the plot being careful not to overdo, touching moments, and a fifth one I seem to have forgot.

After that I went to "*The Martian*: Fact and Fiction" with Larry Crumpler, Zach Gallegos, Loretta Hall, and C. S. Plesko, moderated by Jayne C. Aubele that discussed Andy Weir's book and the movie made from it. In one instance, the construction of the Martian habitat, the movie did better than the book.

My last programme item of the day was "Artist Guest Slide Show" with Lee Moyer. There were technical problems at the start, but I eventually learned about his work. While he has done book covers, a lot of his work has included posters for plays, logos, art for computer games, and other things.

Mike went to "When Hollywood Comes Knocking: Seeing Your Baby Adapted" with Rachel Caine, David Gerrold, Scott Phillips, Melinda Snodgrass, and Warren Spector, moderated by Steven Gould. Good (some) and bad (lots) experiences with Hollywood were discussed, and panellists gave guidance to up and coming writers.

Mike met me for dinner. He just had dessert. I had Philly cheese steak. He was unhappy about clouds preventing him from seeing a conjunction of Venus and Jupiter.

We returned to our room to wait until seating was planned to open for the masquerade. When we went down, there was a long line of people waiting; and the line just about doubled before we were let in. There were twelve entries. Mike returned to our room to sleep after the presentation. While the judges made their decision, the Green Slime Awards were presented for the worst of many categories. The masquerade winners were for best villain Ming the Merciless, for best presentation Space Marshals, for best workmanship Doctor Who, for best of theme Saturn V, and for best of show



Bender (from *Futurama*).

Afterward I went to the San Jose in 2018 party and had a couple of interesting conversations with a Finnish fan and Steve and Elaine Stiles; the latter are planning to move to Albuquerque. I left the party about 23:30 but didn't get to bed until after midnight.

Sunday at 10:00 I attended "55 Minutes with Connie Willis" at which she talked briefly and then read the beginning of a romantic SF comedy due out in October; it

sounded good.

Then we both went to "Co-guests of Honor Presentation: Rachel Caine & David Gerrold" in which Joe R. Lansdale interviewed them.

Afterward I picked up a couple of snack items at the hotel gift shop.

We both returned to our room to regroup. I lunched on a Rice Krispy Treat.

In the afternoon I went to "55 Minutes with Melinda Snodgrass" in which she read selections from a couple of books and then opened up to questions, which included ones about her horses. She has two horses and rides dressage.

Mike attended "Robo-rally: What Happens to Truck and Taxi Drivers Five Years from Now" with Mario Acevedo, Ben Bova, Craig Butler, and Jim Sorenson, moderated by S. M. Stirling. The discussion was about autonomous vehicles, which are expected by sometime during the next decade. Autonomous cars can function 24/7. This will mean smaller fleets for taxi and other similar companies. Uber uses an app to connect people to drivers. The company is also working on autonomous cars. Ben Bova expressed some doubt that people would accept autonomous cars. The transition period when people-driven cars and autonomous ones are simultaneously on the road may be problematical. It was surmised that people will specifically resist autonomous semis. Google cars drive like grandma, which is not a bad thing. Can autonomous cars network? What happens during power or network outages? They are also susceptible to hacking. Taxi companies will probably be the first to use autonomous vehicles, and emergency services and recreational drivers are expected to be the last. How will autonomous vehicles affect insurance companies? Traffic violation revenues will probably decrease. Cities could end up becoming owners of autonomous cars. Autonomous tractors and other farm equipment are being developed now. Trade union membership will increase. What will people do to earn money? Manual work can be automated; creative work cannot be (yet). Lots of disruptions were predicted.

We returned to our room again and discovered that our room had been made up for the first time in two days.

We went back down for the 15:30 panel "Con Connections: Colleagues As Family" with David Gerrold, Melinda Snodgrass, Joe Lansdale, and George R. R. Martin, moderated by Connie Willis. Discussion revolved around the fact that many of us consider people we mainly see at conventions to be more family than our biological family. That was followed by Closing Ceremonies, which mostly consisted of thanking a long list of people.

We regrouped back in our room, and then we went downstairs for dinner. We both had the really delicious Philly cheesesteak.

Back in our room, I did as much packing as I could before heading up to the con suite for the dead dog party. Mike went to bed after packing. I ended up having an interesting conversation with Tanley, who is a local who worked on the convention. I got to bed about 22:30.

Monday morning I went down to breakfast a little before 06:30 and had to wait for the restaurant doors to open. Connie and Courtney Willis were leaving on their drive home, and I bid them a safe trip home. Mike took some stuff to the car about then and also saw them off.

We were on the road home by 07:30. It's a chilly morning but we expected it to warm up quickly since it's mostly clear. We reached the Tucson area about 14:30. Our plan

had been to pick up the cats before we headed home, but our vet was on a house call. So we kept going in a homeward direction and picked up the mail before coming home to unload the car. Shortly thereafter we left to pick up the cats after checking to make sure the vet was back in his office. Mercury headed straight for the master bath to get water from the faucet. Gateway didn't seem to recognize me for quite a while.

First thing I had to do was irrigate. The temperatures had been rising for the last week or so. The persimmon trees particularly didn't look too good. After I got that started, I also watered the potted plants; the potted hibiscus looked all shrivelled up but wasn't quite dead. I had hoped for monsoon rain to fall while we were away, but there was hardly enough rain to measure.

The DVR was about 70% full when I sat down to watch during dinner. After deleting everything I didn't want, it's only half full.

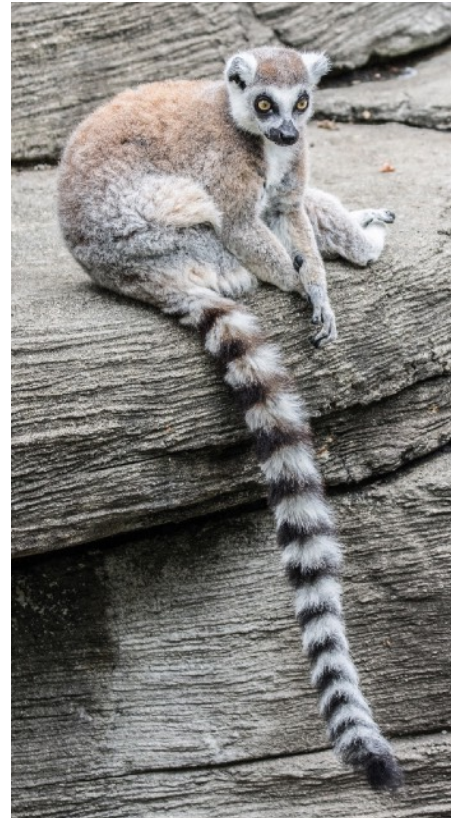
I managed to irrigate most of the fruit trees before dark and finished up the next day. After dinner I sorted mail; at least half went into the circular file. Then I synced my iPhone and iPad and downloaded and printed out the credit card bills, two of which needed to be paid ASAP. Catching up from the trip would take a couple or three weeks.

* * *

* Kritter Korner

During our time at the Louisville Zoo, we saw among others, the following:





#

And below is the obligatory photo of Gateway and Mercury:



* * *

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

The Riverboat, by Philip Jose Farmer

This is a compilation printing of the original novels *To Your Scattered Bodies Go* and *The Fabulous Riverboat*, which are the first two books in the Riverboat series. It was a selection for the Oro Valley SF book club. The first novel centres on Richard Francis Burton, the British archaeologist and translator of the Arabian nights stories. He wakes up in a river on a strange planet. He later wakes up naked along with thousands of other people, some from his historical period and others. In fact there is one alien, but he was on Earth when he died. Puzzling about how and why they are there is fruitless. They are all provided with food regularly. He manages to build a boat and starts sailing up river. However the voyage is interrupted when they are attacked by a belligerent group.

The second novel centres around Samuel Clemens, AKA Mark Twain. He wants to build a riverboat similar to the ones he used to steer on the Mississippi. He succeeds only to have it stolen from him. However, he rebuilds it and sets off up river. He thinks the answer to all their questions will be found at the start of the river.

If not for the mystery contained in the books, I'm not sure I'd have continued reading. The writing style is not great, and sometimes the plot progresses rather slowly. However, I have the other books in the series and will probably continue reading them at some point in time.

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Uprooted, by Naomi Novik

I wasn't sure what to expect from this. It's a fantasy, but it was a Hugo nominated novel. I had vague recollections of having read another book by this author and enjoying it. That was a sort of Regency romance meets dragons. This one is more like a fairy tale, and I like fairy tales. It concerns a peasant girl who is suddenly snatched away by a magician known as the Dragon. She doesn't know what to expect, and the Dragon isn't talking. Eventually she learns that he means her no harm. In fact they end up having to team up to fight a great evil. I enjoyed this quite a bit.

#

Ancillary Mercy, by Ann Leckie

This is the third and final book of a trilogy. I hadn't care much for *Ancillary Justice*; I wasn't really able to identify with any of the characters. I quite liked *Ancillary Sword*, which was the second book. I hoped *Ancillary Mercy* would be as good, but I was somewhat disappointed. Everything seemed to be wrapped up too easily and cleanly. The characters development that was the strong point of the second book was not really present. For readers unacquainted with the series, it takes place in a distant future when people have contacted aliens. There is rampant use of a type of life called ancillaries that uses the basic psyche of real humans implanted in corpses. This can be done multiple times, so there are groups of ancillaries that are in psychic contact with one another. This device is used by the author to explore the psychological effects of human actions.

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* 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.

Although we had good rainfall in late July and early August, it didn't rain worth mentioning while we were gone; and temperatures were on the high side, though under 100° F. I think most of my plants will recover, but I think one of my succulents bit the dust. We didn't get real rain again until September. September's precipitation included a hailstorm that gave us the equivalent of 0.6 inch of rain.

Mike's problem telescope was replaced. He also replaced the outdoor carpet on the pad where his observatory is located.

I bought myself a used chipper. Less than two weeks before our trip, Mike decided that covering the chipper with a tarp was not enough and that we needed to get a shed. We found a reasonably priced shed at Home Depot. It was made by Rubbermaid, and we had to assemble it. We put in most of three days into assembling it in very hot weather. We had to hire a handyman to help finish the work. Some of it required three pairs of hands, despite what the instructions said. Part of the problem was that the pieces didn't fit as well as intended, partly because of the slight unevenness of the ground.

September was the start of a new garden project. For a few years, I've wanted some pathways on our property. We have three acres, and it's difficult to keep pathways clear of weeds. We hired someone to put in flagstone pathways mostly near the house but a couple going into the grounds a bit. [17 Sep]

MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #303

Marge Sehnert (Mamma's Mutterings): So sorry to read that you went all the way to New Hampshire only to get sick.

I'm impressed to be corresponding with Swedish royalty!

We have snow in Arizona, which has a lot of places with elevations over a mile high. We live at an elevation of about 4380 feet. Tucson is at an elevation of about 2500 feet. Even Phoenix has an elevation of about 1000 feet. Phoenix doesn't ordinarily have snow; maybe every tens years, they'll see a few flakes. We have snow most winters. Of the nine years we've been here, we've had snow all but one winter.

The National Geographic ships have about a hundred fifty passengers. Larger ships go down to Antarctica, but their passengers are not allowed to go ashore. The numbers that go ashore at any one time are strictly limited for the sake of the environment. One of the things we did on our ship was sign up for one of three groups. These groups were frequently further subdivided for the sake of shore excursions.

Actually my shingles are not completely gone, but the pain is hardly pain any more and may soon be disappearing.

When I'm really busy, I don't get on Facebook, either.

IMHO means "In My Humble Opinion".

Ocotillo plants (*Fouquieria splendens*) are indigenous to the Sonoran Desert and Chihuahuan Desert in the Southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Although they have spines, the Ocotillo is not a true cactus. Here's a photo of one of ours; it's just a baby yet; they can get as tall as a two-story house. [See photo above] When the plant is a bit bigger and more mature, it will have orangish red flowers at the tip of the canes.



Zika is a very serious disease. Though it seems most dangerous to fetuses, some adults can be affected badly. People are working to find a vaccine, and measures are being taken to control it.

Cy Chauvin (Amazons & Swallows Forever! #49):

You sound like you know something about growing blueberries. Mine died. Maybe you can give me some advice. I initially had problems with harvester ants defoliating the bush. After I provided protections from the ants, I thought the bush would be okay. There were new leaves on it after all. However, eventually the whole plant turned brown and died. I have two theories—that the soil wasn't acidic enough or that I'd watered it too much. On the second one, it may not be so much that I overwatered it but that there was

inadequate drainage. I put the planter right on the ground. I probably should have put it on a stand. What do you think of my theories? [We discussed this by e-mail and decided that I needed more acidic soil.]

I'd hardly say Stephenson's *Seveneves* is a "series of undigested lumps". In fact this book is the most simplistic of his books I've read. That actually disappointed me; I missed the complexity that he's had in his previous books.

Just about the time that I was reading your mention of the *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* episode guest starring Leonard Nimoy and William Shatner, Mike was watching it. We have a lot of the episodes on DVD. Any of the old series can be interesting for the guest stars they had. In fact *UNCLE* predate and overlapped *Star Trek*.

I've placed *The Zookeeper's Wife* on my "Books to Read" list, though who knows when I'll get to it.

J. Boykin for S. Rayne (The APA One Produces When the Computer Goes *poof*!): So sorry to hear about your computer, health, and ceiling woes. I hope all is well now.

Joyce Maetta Odum (Reveries and Ramifications): I had no idea bamboo was so hard to eradicate.

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Stipple-APA #304 arrived in the mail looking like it got mangled in the sorting machinery, but it seems to be all there.

MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #304

Erik Biever (Creative Activities): Congratulations on winning a blue ribbon at the state fair!

I guess any gardening you do will have to be in a container. Maybe you can find a local expert on bamboo eradication.

Erik Biever (DeLuxe Racer): I hope your mother has recovered from her fall or at least is well on her way to full recovery.
Good to hear the CPAP is helping you.

Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits): Congratulations on your new car!
I hope you had a good time at MidAmericon II.

Overwatering plants was one of my weaknesses when I first had plants. How many plants would still be alive were it not for my overwatering?

See my comments to Cy Chauvin about the harvester ants.

My ocotillos are in two places. One is in the middle of the driveway, which is on the north side of the house. The other is against the west wall. They both seem to be doing well.

The Three-Body Problem was a Hugo nominated novel last year. It was written by a Chinese author named Liu Cixin and translated by Ken Liu. It combines recent Chinese history with mathematical and astronomical concepts in a way that many readers loved. It won the Hugo.

Joyce Maetta Odum (Lollipops at the Circus Crush): You don't necessarily need codeine for a cough. I

try to stay away from opiates, myself. Prednisone can be even worse, though okay for short-term use; it has all sorts of terrible side effects. I stay away from steroids as much as possible. Guaifenesin is excellent for bringing up stuff when you have a cough. I don't recall what's used for suppressing for coughs, but it shouldn't be used unless the coughing is bad and uncontrolled. Both are available without a prescription.

Remember that I was in Antarctica during their summer. It gets a lot colder in winter.

During summer in our area, morning is the only time for any sane person to do yard work. Unfortunately I'm not a morning person. By the time I'm ready to do anything, it is frequently too warm already.

I get dental through AARP with Delta Dental. There are two plans. I have the one that covers not only crowns but also implants.

Bill Thomasson (Musings from the Gathering Dusk #3): Point taken about the *Three-Body Problem*. I know that the different culture gave it enough of a novelty to appeal.

The reason the phrase "climate change" was adopted in place of "global warming" is that too many people expected "global warming" meant every place would be warmer. This is not true. The average global temperature is getting warmer, but some places will get colder at

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I hope to see you all next time.

times.

Marge Sehnert (Mamma's Mutterings): I think Ray Bradbury's *Kaleidoscope* was done by the Colony Theatre in Burbank. I remember seeing it but don't recall how they mimicked floating in space.

The only time I walked out on a movie was when they messed up the projection. It took them too long to fix it. We didn't have any trouble getting a refund. We eventually saw the movie elsewhere.

As far as I can tell, we seem to have adequate bees to pollinate our fruit trees. I don't have very many bird feeders yet, but I have plans to get more after the pathways are done.

Yes I took the penguin photos.

I went to Antarctica to see penguins. I love penguins.

And yes, there was daylight almost 24/7. We were only south of the Antarctic circle for a short while, but there would be true midnight sun there.

The Earthlike planet they recently found revolves around Proxima Centauri, the closest star to our sun.

Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits): The zodiacs were fine except for fumes coming from the engine. That's why I didn't ride them any more after the first time.

Anytime we were ashore with the penguins was my favourite time during the trip.

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* 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 2 November 2016.

Jonathan Post, jvospost3 at gmail dot com

29 July 2016

Thank you! I've been busy:

So far this year, not counting my professorships (most recently Adjunct Professor of Astronomy at L.A. Mission College) and 81 works of fiction written this year:

"How often does a bush become a bear?" *Atlas Poetica* #25, Summer 2016. * *Atlas Poetica* #24. "Street Food of East London" for ATPO 24. Interplanetary Small Satellite Conference 2016 25-26 April at Caltech, Pasadena, California

"Magnetic Mirror Math for Antimatter-Matter Rocket" [complete paper, 2 40" x 28" posters]; "Risk Assessment of Freeman Dyson's Noah's Ark Egg strategy" [abstract and bullet chart]

QUANTUM NETWORKS 2016 This workshop took place in Barcelona from 30 March to 1 April, sponsored by the Foundational Questions Institute (FQXI) under the project "Quantum Bayesian networks: the physics of nonlocal events". My poster: "Map Quantum Cellular Automata to Gödel Numbers"

Fifth International Conference on Infectious Disease Dynamics 2015. Poster and paper using science fiction and police procedural to combat Ebola's outbreak, not in Monrovia, Africa, but in Monrovia, Southern California.

FOUR COMPETING THREADS IN THE DISCOURSE ON MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS PEDAGOGY {by Jonathan Vos Post and Dr. Christine Carmichael} ICERI2015, the 8th annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation will be held in Seville (Spain), on the 16th, 17th and 18th of November, 2015.

*"Metasonnet: Day Mom Died" in SGVPQ 67 [Vol.67, San Gabriel Valley *Quarterly*, p.31].

"Bell Letters: 3 Major American authors mutate a famous rhyme about Bells of London" in the Altadena *Poetry Review*. NOMINATED FOR PUSHCART PRIZE.

"Tales from Magic Dragon China #125: Unimpeached", a Tanka sequence as a loose adaptation of an ancient story "Peach Woods" by Tao Qian [317?-420?] Issue #101 (May 2015) of *Dreams & Nightmares :: A Magazine of Fantastic Poetry*

"Dawn of the Holographic Notepad" has been accepted for Issue 3 of *Black Wire*

"Ontological Determinism, Non-locality and Bohmian Quantum Mechanics", by Maurice Passman. Adaptive Risk Technology, Ltd., Philip V. Fellman of American Military University, Charles Town, WV, and Jonathan Vos Post

A chapter in *Conflict and Complexity* [Springer Science+Business Media New York]

"Quantum Nash Equilibria and the Nash Bargaining Problem", by Philip Vos Fellman Southern New Hampshire University Manchester, NH, and Jonathan Vos Post https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267950782_Quantum_Nash_Equilibria_and_the_Nash_Bargaining_Problem

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Amy Harlib, 212-989-8217, aharlib at earthlink dot net, <http://www.reverbnation.com/amazingamycontortionistuniqueyogadancer>

30 July 2016

Just read PM #53 and was blown away by your trip to Antarctica – WOW! I'm glad to get to read your reports about places I will never be able to afford to go to as long as I live. I've seen good documentaries about Antarctica, like one by Wim Wenders that is especially fine; but it's more fun to read about somebody you know doing something so fascinating. When you were there, did anyone have discussions about how climate chaos was affecting the Antarctic ecosystem?

((I travelled to Antarctica in January of this year. Climate change was definitely brought up during the trip. The species mix of penguins that we saw is different from what explorers saw about a half century ago. In addition climate change was mentioned in great detail in some of the recommended reading for the trip. It's becoming clear, unfortunately, that we won't easily be able to reverse these changes. On the other hand, the history of the planet includes eras of drastic changes.))

Just saw the new STAR TREK BEYOND and it's the best of the new Trek films—comes closer in spirit to classic Trek than the first two. The new female alien character, Jayla, steals every scene; and there is hope she may appear in future films in the series. It's tragic that Anton Yelchin, who played Chekov, was killed in a tragic accident and that character will be gone forever. They made a tasteful tribute to the late, lamented Leonard Nimoy/Spock. All the cast members are terrific in embodying younger, alternate versions of the original classic Trek personalities. The visuals are truly dazzling!

((We enjoyed the new Star Trek movie, but I was only too aware throughout of our loss of Anton Yelchin.))

Oh, I also liked the new “Independence Day: Resurgence” – it was better than the first one.

((I quite enjoyed it too, but I don't really remember the first one too well.))

If you want to see my own contortionist homage to classic Trek, YOGA TREK! To Boldly Stretch Where Few Seniors Have Stretched Before! The Only Star Trek Themed Contortion Act in the Galaxy, please visit my website (<https://www.reverbnation.com/amazingamycontortionistuniqueyogadancer>) – version from 2011 is there now, version from July 2016 will be posted soon.

I have recovered so spectacularly from my right hip replacement that I do new moves now that I've never done before in my life!

((I'm happy to hear that you're doing so well. Hard work has its reward.))

Loved the new *Finding Dory* film, the new *Ghostbusters*, the new *Legend of Tarzan*, the new *Jungle Book*, *The BFG* too by the way!

How are the cats? More cat stories and photos please! Fiona is fine – my comfort and joy!

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Linda McMahon, okeylin52 at yahoo dot com

31 July 2016

I liked your synopsis of your trip to Antarctica. Too bad you were sick a couple days. It's terrible to be away & sick!

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Gerri Balter, gerribalter at gmail dot com

5 August 2016

I'm sorry to hear that you weren't feeling well during your trip to Antarctica. Other than that, it was fun to read your trip report. I enjoyed seeing the pictures. I don't know if I told you or not, but a friend of mine and her husband also went to Antarctica earlier this year. She went on a different expedition through the University of Minnesota. Her husband works there. She enjoyed her trip too.

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Mary Manchester, 1297 Monroe Av #2, Rochester, NY 14620-1655

6 August 2016

Antarctica. Wow! I'm still in awe. Just *knowing* someone who has been! Why didn't Mike go, or did I miss that?

((Mike has decided that he doesn't want to leave the country. He also got a new, bigger telescope for his observatory with the money he saved by not going.))

About *Chicago*, you might be interested in a book about the author of the original play and the case she based it on—*The Girls of Murder City* by Douglas Perry, published by Viking in 2016. Maureen Watkins is represented in the movie by the slightly-built young woman in brown who is one of the last to leave the courtroom.

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Jan Weasner, Bremerton, WA

6 August 2016

Hello in Arizona; had a marvellous read concerning your trip to the other side of the world! Per usual, photographs made me feel like I was there too. Thanks for sharing your adventure with me.

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Jerry Kaufman, JAKaufman at aol dot com

7 August 2016

Thanks for sending us your zine. We enjoyed your all-too-brief report on your trip to Antarctica. I especially relished the detail about Shackleton's whisky. I've looked it up on Google, and found it's called MacKinlay's Rare Old Highland Malt, and I can get a bottle for a mere \$134. It might even be worth it, as a conversation starter.

Chicken Run: Hatching the Movie sounds pretty interesting, and is probably available on discount tables at Barnes & Noble. I was rather surprised that you wrote such a long review, as your style is so brief; but once I turned the page, seeing Amy Harlib's name at the end of it, my surprise was curtailed.

I thought our holiday card from the Harvia/Thayer household was unique, but I see that it was not. It's still funny.

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Charles Rector, crector at myway dot com

7 August 2016

Pretty decent issue this time around. Interesting choice for the cover of what sounds like a puddy tat oriented fanzine title. Instead you have a penguin on the cover. The main article was a lengthy travelogue that really conveys a you-are-here feeling for your long voyage. One question that I have from your article is what does penguin meat taste like? Or is it even legal to hunt penguin for game?

((My guess would be that penguins are a protected species. However it's know that many early explorers and whalers ate penguin meat. I don't recall any mention of how it tasted. I don't think it was necessarily by choice that they ate it.))

Really neat photo of a deer drinking from a birdbath. Do deer come by your place often or was this a rare event? Was this at night or in the daytime? The deer in your area must be pretty tame to come into your property like that.

((We get deer a few times a year. The photo was taken in the daytime. I believe deer are diurnal. I don't know how tame they are. I wouldn't try to get too near them.))

You must have a strong local theatre in your area. Here in McHenry County, which has a population of over 300,000, there is practically no local live theatre at all.

((I'm not sure how much theatre we would have here were it not that the Arizona Theatre Company perform in Phoenix as well as Tucson. There are a few smaller companies in Tucson, notably the Gaslight, which does musical comedy. In Oracle we have a small amateur group.))

Well, that's all that I can think of. See you around the galaxy.

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Ken Bausert, NY

10 August 2016

Just finished reading your latest issue; sorry to see you had problems with the food, being sick, and the plane/check-in delays. Must have been a unique place to visit though.

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Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd, Etobicoke, ON, Canada, M9C 2B2, penneys at bell dot net

16 August 2016

Hey, it's been a while since *Purrsonal Mewsings* arrived electronically, but now that it has, and time presents itself, I can whip up a fast loc. Here is some commentary on issue 53.

I must admit that Antarctica isn't really a place I'd be interested in seeing. I think for you, the cold climate is different. I grew up with it, so I guess it isn't any different for me. It's been a long time since I've been in an APA, and I wonder if there is a current list of APAs extant. So many have simply gone away.

((I spent most of my youth in a cold climate—New York State and Massachusetts, though I was born in a climate similar to North Carolina and lived there until I was seven. It's true I left that cold climate for milder weather back in the early 1980s. On the other hand, we do get snow most years here in Oracle. Although the weather was generally fairly pleasant during our time in Antarctica, it can change with little warning.))

Still, the way you got to Antarctica is interesting. I have heard of Ushuaia, Argentina, as the stepping-off point for getting to Antarctica, and that is their means of making a living—tourism as the [ships] head off to the bottom of the world. It's a shame you felt so badly through most of your trip.

((I only felt sick for two days out of eight or so. It wasn't that bad. I felt fine for all the days when we had shore excursions.))

So many people on Facebook are on their way to Kansas City for the Worldcon. It starts tomorrow! However, for us, no Worldcon, and I doubt we will ever return. Tomorrow, though, we do leave... for England! As said in my previous LoC, we will be spending a week in London, doing lots of touring and Harry Potter things; and then afterwards, we will take the train up to Lincoln; and we will be a part of The Asylum, the annual biggest steampunk event in the world. We were looking forward to it so much; but now, it's not a few months away, or a few weeks, but it's now mere hours before we go!

((We did not attend MidAmericon II, because the dates clashed with Mike's high school reunion in Seymour, IN, and our drive to get there and back. I hope you had a great time in England.))

We have been to quite a number of cons this year, but as vendors. As soon as we get back, we have four different cons or craft shows to go to. This has been a fun year, and more's to come.

There are just a few last things to do to be ready for our two weeks in England, so I will fold it up here, say my thanks, and get this ready for you. Take care, and see you with the next issue.

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Tom Feller, TomFeller at aol dot com

8 September 2016

Thanks for sending the zine.

I read *Ready Player One*, *Ancillary Mercy*, and *Seveneves* this year. I had a higher opinion of *Seveneves* than you did and made it my first choice in the Hugo voting. I read four of the five best novel finalists; so of course the one I did not read, *The 5th Season*, was the winner.

This is probably going to be a last hurrah, but traditional fans Mike Glyer and Steve Stiles won in the fan Hugos categories this year.

WAHF: Taral Wayne

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*** Closing Remarks**

Deadline for next issue will be 2 November 2016. Next issue will be on the short side, as I don't have any trips planned before then.

Laurraïne

17 September 2016