

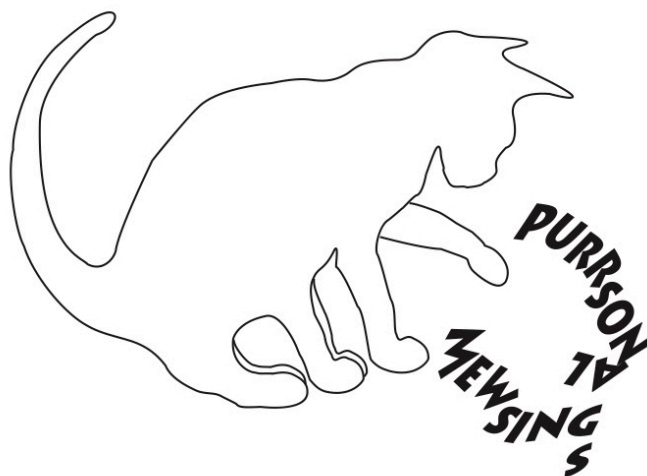
# Purrsonal Mewsings #61



*Purrsonal Mewsings*, formerly *Feline Journal* and *Feline Mewsings* is a personalzine 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 #474. ©2017 R-Laurraine Tutihasi.

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#61

November 2017

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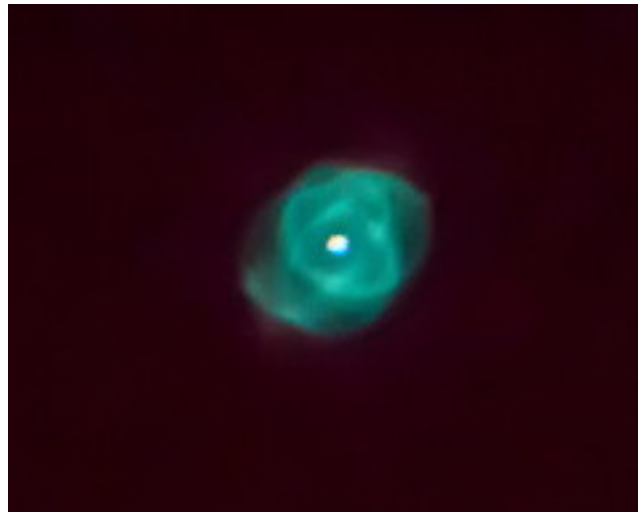
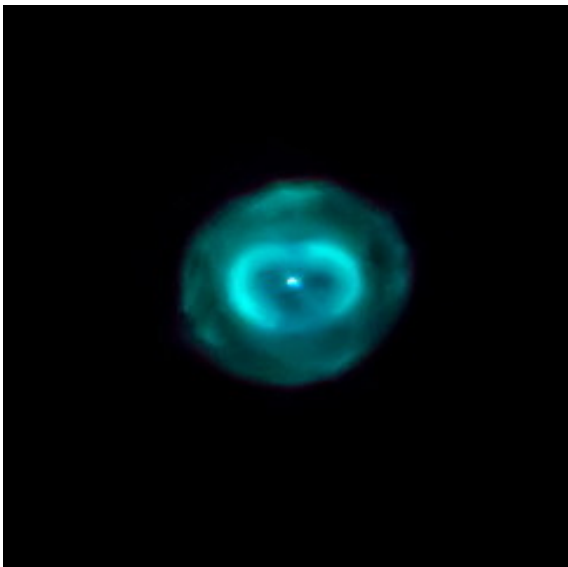
## **\* Editorial / Introduction**

I skipped publishing in October due to travel. There were two trips. The first was centred around the total solar eclipse in August. Another trip in early October was to attend my fiftieth high school reunion.

\* \* \*

## **\* Local Outings**

We had a tenth visit to Kitt Peak's WIYN telescope on 15 September. In the afternoon sky conditions didn't look great, and there was a fair amount of wind, but we managed to see a few things through the 3.5 metre telescope. A few of us saw the green flash at sunset. The objects seen through the telescope included Saturn, M13, NGC891, the Blue Snowball planetary nebula (see below left), the Cat's Eye planetary nebula (see below right), M27, and the Einstein Cross.



\* \* \*

## **\* Total Solar Eclipse Trip Report (7-28 August 2017)**

We got on the road about 07:30 on Monday, 7 August 2017. Because of lack of sleep in three days before our trip, I slept a lot in the car. For lunch I had packed a sandwich.

We reached the Fairfield Inn & Suites Pecos (Texas) a few minutes before 18:00 with only a minor problem with the Lexus GPS. The room only had a shower, not a bath, which was not a problem since neither of us takes baths. The room opened with a proximity key, which may now be the norm. The room seemed well-equipped, but the tissue dispenser was empty. The vegetation (I saw desert willows) in this area is somewhat similar to home, so the climate may be also.

After a fruitless search for a restaurant where I could get a gluten free meal, we finally settled for Denny's. Being a nation-wide chain, their menu includes gluten free choices. The menu was fine, but the service was wanting. Mike was initially served the wrong

entree altogether. Mine came with gluten filled toast sitting on the meal. The place was so cold that the food didn't retain heat for very long. I got so cold waiting for the bill that I left Mike and went outside. The food itself was fine at least as long as it was warm.

The AC in our room was so noisy that I turned it off, but the fan didn't turn off completely.

The next morning we got underway about 07:15. There had been showers earlier, and the car was wet, though the pavement was dry. I saw a number of great-tailed grackles in parking lots during our drive in the early part of the morning. By late morning the landscape changed from desert-like to wooded. I still had fruit from home, so I had that for lunch.

We reached the Fairfield Inn & Suites McAllen Airport a little after 16:00. McAllen, TX, is near the Mexican border. The area appears semitropical with lots of palm trees and generally lush vegetation. There was a Japanese restaurant across the parking lot from the hotel, so we went there for dinner.

Wednesday, 9 August 2017

On Wednesday morning we departed the hotel about 09:00 for the National Butterfly Center. It was a hot day, in the 90s F and humid. There were areas of shade that I took advantage of. Besides several types of butterflies (see photo to right), we saw birds (see photo below right), including some that are only seen in this area of Texas; two armadillo (see photo



below left), and a rabbit. The bug spray I used didn't work; I got a mosquito bite.

We left the Butterfly Center and had lunch at the Red Robin in Pharr, which is right next to McAllen. Food and service were acceptable, but the temperature in the place was freezing cold.

Then we went to visit Quinta Mazatlan, a historic adobe home



with a large garden that is an urban bird sanctuary. We didn't see too many birds, because it was the height of the afternoon heat.

We went to dinner at Logan's Roadhouse, a sort of poor man's Outback, across the street from our hotel. We both had sirloin which, being only USDA choice, was edible but not great. The prickly pear margarita I had was too sweet.

We were on the road shortly after 09:00 on Thursday morning; we had a relatively short drive. We had rain off and on. Despite some problems with Lexus GPS, we



arrived at the Fairfield Inn & Suites Houston Conroe, a northern suburb of Houston about 16:00.

Dinner was at Applebee's in a mall that's across the street from the hotel. We drove, because there really is no pedestrian way to get there. The food and service were both good.

The next morning we left the hotel about 08:30 and headed to Space Center Houston and reached there a bit before 10:00. There were two tram tours available of the Johnson Space Center. We took the one that included the old mission control centre. The tram also stopped at the old exhibit that includes the Saturn V that used to sit on the lawn. It's now sheltered in a building.

After the tour we took a break around noon to refresh ourselves in the food court.

Then we took in the shuttle exhibit made up of a retired Boeing 747 and a mockup of a shuttle that had exhibits inside (see photo to right). After that we took the tram ride that included a stop at an astronaut training building. Finally we looked at the gift shops before we decided to call it a day.



We met Mike's friends, John and Lynn Roulston, at Joe's restaurant in Conroe, just a short ways down the road from our hotel. Their menu included gluten free entrees. We had a nice dinner and chat with our friends.

Saturday morning we left the hotel about 08:00 to go to the Houston Zoo (see right). We got there about an hour later. The zoo is a modest size, somewhat like the one in Tucon. The weather was similar to the previous day—hot and sticky. Early on I took a break for a Minute Maid frozen lemonade.



About noon we stopped for a sort of lunch break. I had potato chips and water; Mike had Coke.

It didn't take us long to finish seeing all the animals. Then we checked out the gift shop; I bought a V-neck tee shirt and donated a stuffy to a good cause.

In the evening we had a lovely dinner with Kim and Richard Yeh at the Costa Brava Bistro in Bellaire, TX. Afterward we visited their lovely home for a short while.

Kim started Carleton College in Northfield, MN, at the same time as I but finished a year earlier. She's one of these brainy people that everyone else wants to hate.

Sunday turned out to be one of those interesting times referred to in the "old Chinese curse". We were supposed to check out and drive to Mississippi. Our Lexus key fobs appeared to be inoperable. Mike said the Lexus battery, the one that starts the car, was dead. We called AAA and waited. AAA was able to jump start the car but was unable to replace the 12-volt battery. We decided to stay over to get the car serviced before

continuing our drive. We didn't trust the battery enough to drive with it. That morning the 12-volt starter battery was effectively dead but charged up again after driving a short distance, so it appeared to be okay. We wouldn't really know until the Lexus dealership checked everything out. In the meantime I contacted Helen Quinn and Kim in case either had time for us.

None of our local friends were free, so we walked over to Applebee's for lunch. The power in the hotel and nearby neighbourhood went out for a while in the late afternoon and into early evening. We ordered dinner from Domino's; they were willing to climb the stairs to our fourth floor room.

Monday morning we were off too early to get the free hotel breakfast, but I was able to grab a banana from the breakfast area. The car started okay. We reached Northside Lexus in Houston about 06:30.

We managed to get on the road about 09:45. with a new 12-volt battery.

We drove straight through Mississippi and arrived at the Marriott in Huntsville, Alabama, shortly before midnight.

Tuesday was a day for resting and doing laundry. We went to the Space and Rocket Center, which is right next door from the hotel and bought tickets for the next day's NASA tour and shopped at the gift shop.

Wednesday morning we arrived at the space and Rocket Center (see photo to right) about fifteen minutes before the doors opened, but there was a lot to see from the outside. We got in minutes after the doors opened and walked around the exhibits.



We stopped for lunch at the Mars Grill. I just had a small salad and a mocha latte. Mike had a sandwich and water.

In the afternoon we took a bus tour of Marshall Space Flight Center. It's located in Redstone Arsenal, which is named for the red rock in the area. Redstone ceded the land for the Space and Rocket Center. Redstone also houses the Army and the FBI. Buildings can be identified by the colour of their roof. NASA buildings have blue roofs. FBI buildings have black roofs. If I remember correctly, Army buildings have brown or grey roofs. All other roof colours indicate common areas. Because it is a government military installation, only US citizens are allowed on the tour. We returned to our hotel after the bus tour.

After a brief rest, we left our hotel to join the Insight eclipse tour, which we would be joining for real in Nashville, for a buffet dinner at the Westin and a visit to the Von Braun Astronomical Society (VBAS).

VBAS have a fairly impressive astronomical observatory and planetarium. The society was started with Dr. Wernher von Braun's help. We returned fairly late to our hotel.

Thursday morning we checked out about 11:15 for our short drive up to Nashville, TN.

We reached the Omni in Nashville about 13:30. After we unpacked we went down to the lobby to check in with the Sky & Telescope people, who organized the eclipse trip.

About 18:00 we went down to the third floor for a pre-dinner reception followed by dinner. I mostly talked with an infectious disease doctor from Houston. It was really cold in the room where we had dinner.

Friday breakfast was part of the tour but on our own. We ate with a couple in our tour group—Leigh Houck and Larry Buc from DC.

After breakfast we were driven to the Vanderbilt University Dyer Observatory, which is mostly used for outreach now. There was a talk about the history of the place, which included the involvement of E. E. Barnard, after whom Barnard's star is named.

We returned to the hotel for a buffet lunch. I was able to get a gluten-free sandwich.

After lunch there was a talk about Pluto given by David Weintraub. I was sleepy and kept nodding off. In mid-afternoon there was another talk, “Earth 2.0: the Quest for Other Worlds” given by Keivan Guadalupe Stassun of Vanderbilt University. He was a great speaker. They should have had him first after lunch.

We had a lovely dinner at Bob’s Steak restaurant at the hotel with science fiction fan friends Tom Feller, Patsy King, and Charlie Williams.

We had to cut the conversation short after dinner, because we had another early morning the next day.

Shortly after breakfast Saturday morning, we were driven to Stones River National Battlefield, where part of the Civil War was fought.

We had a buffet lunch at the Stones River Country Club, the worst meal of the trip insofar as gluten free choices.

After lunch we took a long drive to the University of Tennessee Space Institute in Knoxville. There was a talk given by Mark Whorton titled “Why All the Fuss about Getting to Orbit?” This was followed by a talk about the sun. Then we all went to the dining hall, where we heard a talk about the upcoming eclipse. Some people wanted to leave early, so we had to interrupt the programme to take care of them. We left more or less on time on the second bus to leave.

We were only a few minutes late for our reservation at the Farm House restaurant a short distance from the Omni. The food was great—very tasty. The service was also very good. The cocktail, Nashville ‘75, was great. I posted a review on Facebook.

I was so full, I had to rest before I could move much. I got to bed about 22:45.

Sunday morning after breakfast there were some talks. The first was “Life and Death of Stars” presented by Keivan Stassun. I learned a lot. Then David Weintraub talked about “Chasing Martians: the Search for Life on Mars”, covering the history of Mars observation. Finally Kelly Beatty, senior editor at *Sky & Telescope*, spoke about the history of solar eclipses and specifically about the next day’s total solar eclipse in a talk titled “Making the Most of Your Eclipse Experience”.

Monday was the big day. About 05:30 we went to the ballroom to pick up breakfast. Mike scarfed a sweet roll right there. I grabbed two yogurts and ate one in our room before going down to the buses.



The buses were already at the hotel and boarding. We were still able to get on the first bus. We arrived very early at the community college in Hopkinsville, KY. I was able to scout out part of the small campus. The bookstore sold eclipse souvenirs: tee shirts, sweatshirts, and blankets. There were a half dozen food trucks and other food and drink concessions. After Mike got stuff set up (see photo to right), I sat under the group tent and talked to other people in our tour group.

In late morning, I got hungry and got hot dogs for us. That was effectively lunch.

The eclipse started just before noon, and we serious eclipse watchers dug in for the long haul. Many others were only interested in totality and continued to relax for almost another half hour. A few minutes before totality, the sky began to darken and temperatures started to fall noticeably. When totality finally arrived, most of us were breathtaken. Some of us were profoundly affected by the “diamond ring” effect at the end. I felt a frisson. A bit later I was overtaken by emotion and nearly started crying. The diehards among us watched until



the eclipse was completely over. Three of our five buses had already left by then. Mike rushed to pack and disregarded feelings of thirst and fatigue. Unable to carry all the equipment he had carried in, he started back toward the last bus, while I watched the remainder of his equipment. Kelly Beatty of Sky and Telescope offered to get the rest of his equipment. So I began to walk to the bus. Mike had sat down on a stone wall to rest, but I saw two of our fellow travellers hovering over him. Then he seemed to collapse as he tried to get up. That was upsetting to see. I was just getting to where he was. Three people gave him water, wet a towel down for him, and led him to the last bus. We were placed in the front row right behind the driver, so Mike wouldn't have to walk very far. He drank about a bottle and a half of water and recovered well on the bus, although he was too tired to carry everything back to our room. We had the assistance of a bellhop and luggage cart. We changed and went down to the ballroom level for a reception already in progress. I got some tonic water for Mike; he didn't like it, but he drank it.

At 18:30 we were herded into the Ballroom for dinner. Conversation at our table was less than scintillating, but we were all tired.

Tuesday morning we went down to breakfast about 07:15 and saw a lot of people we had talked to before and did more talking.

We returned to our room to finish packing. Between taking our luggage down and being ready to drive off was about half an hour, mostly because we had so many pieces to put in the car just so, like a jigsaw puzzle. We were finally ready to get on the road just after 09:30.

En route we were alerted to a power outage at home, but it didn't last long.

We drove to Russellville, AR, and arrived at the Fairfield Inn and Suites there about

16:30. Just as with some other hotels, the car GPS had some problems. We were eventually able to find the hotel after the Maps app on my iPad also misled us. Our room had a musty odour that seemed to issue from the AC. After getting our stuff into our room, we did laundry.

We had dinner across the street at the Dixie Cafe.

Our hotel room felt very damp; what appeared to be AC might have been a swamp cooler. Just turning it off didn't seem to help. I turned the heat on in the hope of drying things out, but it didn't stay on very long at a time; still it seemed better than the cooling.

Wednesday morning at checkout I mentioned the problem with the AC, and it appeared to be a systemic problem. They probably need to raze the entire hotel and rebuild.

We reached the Fairfield Inn in Yukon, OK, about 14:15.

About 16:45 we walked over to Johnny Carino's Italian restaurant. We arrived there first and were soon joined by the Lucases; Danny Lucas is Mike's best friend from Seymour, IN. We had a satisfactory dinner and a long conversation.

Thursday morning we got on the road about 09:00 and arrived at the Marriott in Albuquerque (NM) almost exactly at 16:00. The room we got had a really small bathroom.

We went down for dinner about 18:15. We had the Philly cheesesteak, but it wasn't as good as last year.

Friday we went down about 14:45 to pick up our badges for Bubonicon. We also checked out the Flea Market. I checked out the Art Show also, but it wasn't fully set up. On the way back up to our room, I was drawn to pick up two Poul Anderson books on the freebee table that we apparently didn't already have. We returned to the convention floor for Opening Ceremonies, where guests were introduced. Afterward I visited the gift shop to pick up some snack bars.

Then we had dinner. The restaurant was quite a bit more crowded than yesterday, so service was slow. The Thai shrimp bowl I had was pretty good.

After dinner I went to the party floor and found the Royal Manticoran Navy; they had just about any form of liquor and liqueur you could think of. The con suite was slightly more interesting in terms of people. Carolyn Cherryh stopped by for a while, and a few of us had an enjoyable conversation with her. I also saw Tanly, whom I met last year.

After breakfast on Saturday, I went to the art show to look at art that had not yet been put up the previous day. Then I went to the panel "Felines and Feline Aliens in SF/F: the Cat's Meow" with authors C. J. Cherryh, Jane Lindskold, Pati Nagle, and Ursula Vernon moderated by Steven Gould. Then I returned to our room briefly before going to "55 Minutes with Robert E. Vardeman". He inspired me to buy an anthology he was in; David Lee Summers is also in it. Several people had signed the copy I bought.

Mike preceded me downstairs after a short lunch break to attend the panel "Exoplanets: What We've Learned" with Larry Crumpler, Loretta Hall, Kathleen Kitts, and Cathy S. Plesko moderated by David Lee Summers. The consensus of the panel was that Pluto was a planet. In New Mexico Pluto is officially a planet. David had attended Clyde

Tombaugh's 90th birthday party. Several of the panellists were geologists, and they agreed that ice is covered by geology. Advances in astronomy techniques were discussed.

When I went back down, I found Bob Vardeman and got him to sign the anthology. Then I proceeded to "70 Minutes with C. J. Cherryh".

We went down to dinner about 17:30. I had the salmon dinner, which was okay.

A short while after dinner, we went down for the masquerade (see photo to right) and waited in line for about fifteen minutes before we were seated. There were twenty entries, few really great. Afterward I checked out a few parties.



Sunday morning we went down to our complementary breakfast about 08:45.

Mike and I both went to the first programme item, which was "55 Minutes with David Lee Summers". David invited Gene Mederos, who contributed to his anthology *Maximum Velocity: the Best of the Full-throttle Space Tales*. Each of them read his own story from the anthology. The Carlsbad, the room where it took place, was probably the coldest of the programming rooms this year. I held my monopod with one hand while keeping the other in a pocket.

After that I went to the "Co-Guest of Honor Presentation" with Ursula Vernon interviewing the authors C. J. Cherryh and Sherwood Smith in a warmer room.

Next I went to another cold room for "55 Minutes with Victor Milan. I stayed in that room for "Ask a Scientist", for which Mike joined me. The panellists were Dr. Larry Crumpler, David Lee Summers, and Loretta McKibben moderated by Cathy S. Plesko. The talk ended up focusing on science outreach.

After that we returned to our room to thaw out and relax. I had a late snack bar lunch.

We attended the "Closing Ceremonies" at 16:30.

After shedding some stuff in our room, we went down to get dinner. I was so chilled still that I ordered a hot rum toddy. I had to send the filet mignon back to get it cooked properly.

Afterward I called Kim Kum to check on her; hurricane Harvey had struck Houston and her street had three feet of water which was almost up to the door of their house. Later I went up to the dead dog for a couple of hours of conversation. There were a lot of medical horror stories inspired by a local who had to be taken to an emergency room. Just before I left, I talked to Michelle Melendez, a paediatrician from Phoenix.

Monday morning we got on the road about 08:45.

We reached the Oracle PO about 15:30 and picked up mail. Then I returned a book at the library. We reached home before 16:00. A smoke alarm was beeping, and I made a mistake identifying which one, because I didn't see the one in the library. Fortunately

replacing the backup battery fixed it.

\* \* \*

### **\* High School Reunion Trip Report (2-13 October 2017)**

We left the house about 07:30 on Monday, 2 October. The first day we drove to Santa Rosa, NM, where we stayed at a Hampton Inn. There was a nice place for dinner next door--Annie's Restaurant. It's a typical diner type place but no alcohol. I had the pork tips, cooked to a tender perfection. There were so many that I saved some for the next day's breakfast.

The second day we drove to Tulsa, OK, where we stayed at a Fairfield. The hotel was downtown, and there was a steak restaurant under the hotel. It's an excellent restaurant, very classy with very knowledgeable wait staff and great food. I was introduced to FEW gin, which was suggested when I ordered a gin and tonic. I think my taste in gin is completely spoiled now.

The third day's drive took us to the Spring Hill Suites Terre Haute (IN). We lucked out again for dinner. We ate at a nearby Longhorn Steak restaurant, where we had a very good dinner. My steak was done just right and very tender.

On Thursday we took a slight detour to visit a couple who were unable to attend the reunion. We drove to Parkersburg, WV, where we stayed at the Town Place Suites hotel. Parkersburg is just barely in West Virginia. After we'd settled in somewhat, I called Linda Crocker. She and her husband, Bob, were both alumni of the same high school class as I. After talking for a while, she invited us over to their house. We drove over and we sat down over a cup of tea, except Mike didn't have any tea, until Bob got home from work. They have two cats, one ginger and the other dark grey (Brewskie).

Then we rode in their car to CJ's Italian Kitchen, which featured gluten free items. We had a great conversation. Bob treated us, which was very generous of him.

We continued our conversation back at their house. Linda and I looked through our senior year book. Some memories came back. We reminisced over the February 1967 blizzard that closed schools for a week. Mike took pictures of us with our mobile phones. Then we had to return to our hotel.

Friday we had a relatively short drive to the Residence Inn in Henrietta, a suburb of Rochester, NY. An informal gathering was scheduled that evening at a park in Pittsford. We had a bit of trouble finding the park, but it was probably because I made a mistake programming the car's GPS. Still it was not easy to find, because the sign was so small. It turned out better than I expected. The food truck provided really good food, whose cost was apparently covered by an absent alumnus. I had two Italian sausages, and Mike had a cheeseburger and fries. Another absent class member had sent wine from his winery, Fox Run





Vineyards. I hadn't known how well I'd enjoy the event, since my memory of many classmates was rather fuzzy, but I ended up enjoying it very much. I talked with several people, including Ray White, Suzanne Currant, Sue Horner, Sarah Parks, and Betsy Collier. Suzanne Currant organized the reunion with help from three others and sported a manicure to celebrate the event (see photo previous page).

Saturday morning at 10:30 there was a tour of Pittsford Sutherland High School. It's changed a lot, and the pool is now being demolished. I was particularly impressed by the new library (see photo below).



Afterward some of us went to Tom Wahl's in Bushnell's Basin for lunch. There are pictures from school on the wall, many featuring students from our class.

In the evening we met at Monroe's on Monroe Avenue near Clover for dinner with a cash bar. They had a very good German Riesling there. Some people were there who hadn't been around the previous day. There was lots of good conversation and pretty good food.





About 09:00 Sunday morning, we left for Schoen Place in Pittsford for our morning boat ride on the Erie Canal. It was the sesquicentennial of the Canal. The boat ride included one lock. We managed to take a group photo after the ride (see photo previous page). After the canal ride I hung out with Vicki Casarett and Al Emerson.

About 13:00 we met Suzanne Currant, Nancy Straehl, Hans Grashof, Scott Murdoch, and others for lunch at Hicks & McCarthy. I had a very nice Martha's Vineyard salad there. Vicki had the same. The conversation turned to politics, such as the problem of getting rid of discriminatory statues. Scott, a lawyer, plans to retire to Chapel Hill, where I went to grad school.

In the evening a member of the now inactive RSFFA, the Rochester Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, organized a dinner at the Bamboo House Restaurant. In attendance were Gary Schulze, Pat and Peter Frisch, Ann Parsons, and others. One couple we hadn't previously met is considering a move to the Tucson area after retirement.

We stayed over an extra day to see other friends. For lunch we got together with Mary Manchester at Benucci's in Pittsford Plaza, which is completely changed from the last time we saw it.

We had dinner about 18:00 with Liz Lehmann and Dan Kinsella at an Outback just down the street from our hotel.

It's always nice to catch up with old friends.

Our drive back home held no noteworthy highlights. We had problems at a hotel in Arkansas because of smoke that seemed to be in our supposedly smokefree room.

Friday was our last day of driving. We made good enough time that we were able to pick up Gateway and Mercury from the PetSmart Pets Hotel and mail at the PO before getting home.

\* \* \*

### **\* Kritter Korner**

Here are a few more photos from the Houston Zoo:





\* \* \*

### \* Astronomy

Besides the eclipse trip and the Kitt Peak visit, Mike continues to look at the sky from his observatory on clear nights. Here are a few choice photos. First a photo of NGC 891:



Below are photos of M57, the Ring Nebula; the Moon; and Albireo, the well-down double star all taken with his iPhone through a 12-inch telescope:



\* \* \*

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

### ***Victoria and Abdul***

This is based on events that took place during the last decade and a half of Queen Victoria's reign. Two men from India were sent to England to help in a celebration. Events evolved to keep them there, one until his untimely death and the other until after Victoria's death. Abdul is the latter.

These events were deemed unseemly by the royal family, and attempts were made to remove all reference to Abdul from diaries and other records. Fortunately enough information was left behind and were uncovered a hundred years later in the twenty-first century. The clues were paintings of Abdul hung at Victoria's Isle of Wight summer home. The historian Shrabani Basu undertook a lengthy investigation and unearthed Victoria's Urdu workbooks. Victoria had used these as a diary. There was also a diary that Abdul had written.

The film makes obvious the English court's distaste for foreigners of non-anglo-saxon descent. Victoria is portrayed brilliantly by Dame Judi Dench. The relationship between Victoria and Abdul was like that between a mother and son. The movie is excellently done, and I recommend it to anyone interested in the history of the period.

#

### ***Blade Runner 2049***

Just about everyone has seen this, so I won't go into details about the plot. Basically

it's a direct sequel to the original *Blade Runner* film, and Harrison Ford even makes an appearance. I felt it covered questions raised in the original and went further. Mike and I found it to be entertaining and somewhat thought-provoking.

#

***Sleeping Giants*, by Sylvain Neuvel**

I read this book for the sf book club in Oro Valley. It's about the discovery of pieces of a giant robot-like mechanism that is unearthed in various places on Earth. After the first piece is accidentally discovered, a team looks for the other pieces. They have obviously been left here by an extraterrestrial civilization, but it's not clear whether they pose a danger to humanity.

I found the book enjoyable to read, but the ending was troubling. I think it forebodes a sequel. I am a little tired of books that are not standalone. The Internet tells me it's the first novel of a series; the next novel is already out. It has already been made into a movie.

#

***A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, by Mark Twain**

I read this book years ago, and my memory of it was fuzzy. My memory was coloured by derivative works, such as the Bing Crosby movie and the Classics Illustrated comic book version.

Rereading it revealed things I'd long forgot. The beginning of the book includes long passages from *Le Mort d'Arthur* and other works about King Arthur that I found tedious to read. Subsequent events in the book were rather fantastic and hard to believe.

It seems obvious that Twain was criticizing many societal problems of the times, which in many cases unfortunately still exist.

#

***A Dog's Journey*, by W. Bruce Cameron**

This is a direct sequel to *A Dog's Purpose*. After his "boy", Ethan, dies, the dog meets Ethan's, I think, granddaughter, Clarity June. She soon departs the scene, but he meets her again in his next incarnation. A few reincarnations later, the dog is back in CJ's life again. The focus of this book is less the dog and more the human, but it's just as touching as the first book.

\* \* \*

**\* 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.

My apologies for missing the last collation.



## MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #311

**Jeanne Mealy (The Periodic Table of Variable Elements):** Nice that we have a new (again) member in Victor Raymond. Unfortunate to lose another member at the same time.

**Ruth Odren (The Once and Future Zine):** On the whole I would say my summer was good. It was just a bit too busy for my taste.

**Victor J. Raymond, PhD (Leonardo's Marvelous Orrery #1):** Welcome (back).

**Jacky Boykin (Hollywood 101: the "Talk" of the Town):** Enjoyed seeing all your photos.

**Marge Sehnert (Mamma's Mutterings):** I doubt Mike's interview will be shown in Minnesota. It's part of the show called *Arizona Illustrated*, which, as far as I know, is only shown in Tucson. The only way to see it is online, using the link I previously provided. Even we don't get it on, as DirecTV will only give us the Phoenix feed, even though Phoenix is four times as far from us as Tucson.

Our eclipse report is included in this issue.

**Dale Cozort (Space Bats & Butterflies):** Thanks for sharing more of your writing.

**S. Rayne (Wight as Rayne):** The British version of *Primeval* is Connie

Willis's favourite TV show. I have promised her that I would watch it. Now if I can only find the time.

As far as I know, some species of cockroaches can definitely fly.

**Cy Chauvin (Amazons & Swallows Forever! #56):** I wish restaurants would go back to using paper straws. They're much better for the environment than plastic straws.

Except when we travel, Mike and I leave our computers on all the time.

You complain about having to look at the world from a business angle, but the economy is the primary shaper of history. I stopped watching regular news shows years ago and now only watch *Nightly Business Report* on PBS, although recently I started to watch *VICE News Tonight* on weekdays on HBO; it's focus is on international news that everyone should know.

I agree that a good moderator can make a big difference to panels at conventions. I also enjoy moderating and have been told I'm good at it but don't get the chance very much.

I don't care for the hard tofu, but I like the soft version that's used in soup.

I haven't had a chance to read Ted Chiang's "Story of Your Life", but from your description I can say that the movie seems to follow the story pretty well if the emphasis has been changed.

I don't think bush trimming has anything to do with a green thumb. I'm



not sure it's a mechanical ability either. It might be more akin to sculpting.

**Lucy Schmeidler (Don't Ask #3):** I'm not quite sure what you mean when you say *Cinder* grabbed you mostly for the immediate story and that's why you didn't want to read *Scarlet*. The second book furthers the storyline, though it doesn't conclude it. I haven't had a chance to read any more of the series, so I can't say how the story progresses.

**Chrystine Omori (Not Unlike a Sparrow's Perspective):** Like some of the other APA members, I'm not that much into anime; so I can't really

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comment.

**S. Rayne (Wight as Rayne):** So sorry to hear about the problems in your family.

**Joyce Matte Odum (Insane Clown Posse):** There is a Buster Keaton movie about the General, titled *The General*.

**Erik Biever (Time Traveler from the 1970s):** Your summer was as busy as ours. I hope you survived.

**Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits):** Fortunately after I recovered from the acute infection in late May and early June, I got my high notes back.

## MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #312

**Michael Kingsley (Delicious with Sauerkraut #3):** What did you think of *Sense8*? I saw the first season courtesy of a friend with Netflix. Just so you know, I like just about anything Straczynski.

**Joyce Maetta Odum (Masters of the Serpentine):** I have a cover on my sewing machine, so it doesn't need to be dusted. I wish I had time to use it.

You're thinking of the Regency period re Jane Austen.

**Jonathan Goltz (Quick Robin! To the Nerd-Cave!):** Welcome!

**Moi (Purrsonal Mewsings #60):** The hummingbird feeder problem has been solved. The feeder pictured is very leaky, because there are many pieces. I've bought a feeder of a different design. It can leak, but only from one place. I hope to fix the problem with the original feeder using glue.

**Lucy Schmeidler (Don't Ask #4):** One of the cats we lost to cancer was also named Shadow.

I think once you know how to read maps, you don't forget. I've known a few people who were incapable of reading a map. GPS must be great for

them, but GPS is sometimes buggy.

**Chrystine Omori (Not Unlike a Sparrow's Perspective):** Like last issue, I don't really have any comments. Sorry,

**Nicole Bourgoin (A Fool's Errand):** Sorry to hear about the fallen tree. I hope everything's cleaned up by now.

**Erik Biever (Red Ribbon Blues):** Congratulations on your red ribbon! Sorry it wasn't blue.

**Cy Chauvin (Amazons & Swallows Forever! #57):** I've read two of the books you reviewed, but it's been too long since I read them to make any intelligent comments.

**Victor J. Raymond, PhD (Leonardo's Marvelous Orrery #2):** Another Shadow cat!

Let's see what the Supreme Court will have to say about gerrymandering.

**S. Rayne (Wight as Rayne):** You can

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Two questions have been raised about my zine that you should have an input into. The first one was whether I should run the LoC section through StippleAPA. You need to vote on this. The second one was whether the general distribution copy of my zine should include my APA comments. You should vote on this too.

I haven't had a chance to read #313, so I will have comments on that next time. See you all in the next disty.

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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

go to our web site to see Mike's before and after telescope picture (<http://www.weasner.com/co/history.html>)

I think your "bizarre animal on its back" is probably a meerkat.

I believe the Epipen problem is still under litigation.

Poor crickets!

**Marge Sehnert (Mamma's Mutterings):** "Retire from retirement"? What a concept.

**Bill Thomasson (Musings from the Gathering Dusk #10):** You were lucky to be in Puerto Rico before the island was ripped up by hurricanes.

**Ruth Odren (The Once and Future Zine):** Mount St. Helens helped celebrate my birthday in 1980.

**Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits):** I look forward to seeing you in San Jose next year.

Thanks for your photo of your snow creations.

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 probably mid-January 2018.

First I must apologize to Cathy Palmer-Lister for typoing her name last issue.

**Sheryl Birkhead, catsmeouch at yahoo dot com**

**4 August 2017**

((She replied to the question of steampunk cat thank you cards and sent some links.))

<http://thebestcardcompany.com/steampunk-cats-assorted-card-pack/>

[https://www.ebay.com/itm/M6554TYG-Steampunk-Cats-10-Assorted-Thank-You-Note-Cards-With-White-Envelopes/291924928669?ssPageName=STRK%3AMEBIDX%3AIT&\\_trksid=p2055119.m1438.l2649](https://www.ebay.com/itm/M6554TYG-Steampunk-Cats-10-Assorted-Thank-You-Note-Cards-With-White-Envelopes/291924928669?ssPageName=STRK%3AMEBIDX%3AIT&_trksid=p2055119.m1438.l2649)

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**Tom Feller**

**14 September 2017**

Thank you for continuing to send your zine. I am enclosing my most recent FAPazine in trade.

Although we were invited to several [eclipse watching] parties, my wife, Anita, and I elected to watch the eclipse from the comfort of the patio in our backyard. We had checked the position of the sun at 1:27 PM a few days previously and verified that there were no trees or structures that would obscure our view. After positioning two chairs to maximize the shade and two to maximize the view, we went back and forth between the shaded chairs and the viewing chairs. We saw a good portion of the partial pre-totality eclipse and used the solar glasses we received from a Vanderbilt astronomy professor at one of our classes this spring. About fifteen minutes before totality, a cloud obscured our view but it moved out of the way just in the nick in time. We saw both the "Bailey's Beads" and "Diamond Ring" phenomena. The corona was very bright; but between it and the clouds, we could see no planets and only one star, Sirius. We kept watching the partial post-totality eclipse until a large cloud came over. It was an unforgettable experience.

I hope you had a good view in Hopkinsville.

I read *The Mote in God's Eye* when I was in college, and it must have made such a strong impression that I can remember much of it. I agree with your assessment that it is good science fiction but not great literature. You'll see in my FAPazine that I ranked *All the Birds in the Sky* #3 on my Hugo ballot. I also read *Journey to the Center of the Earth* in, I think, junior high. I believe that the 1960 film version starring James Mason is the first science fiction movie I actually saw in a movie theatre.

I was puzzled by the inclusion of the *Ghostbusters* remake on the Hugo finalist list. For a comedy, it was painfully unfunny. *Arrival* was my number one choice on the Hugo ballot, and I see that it was the winner.

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**Jerry Kaufman, [jakaufman at aol dot com](mailto:jakaufman@aol.com)**

**13 October 2017**

Thanks for continuing to send *Purrsonal Mewsings*. Mike's photos and your Westercon report made this an interesting issue.

I found Mike's shot of the Harris's Hawk right where you left it, on the front cover. It's wonderful and well framed against the blue sky.

Thanks for including descriptions of panels and presentations in your Westercon memories. I would have loved attending the "What Made the Golden Age Golden?" panel. Of course, there are different definitions of the Golden Age: 1939 to 1946; 1939 to 1950; 1950 to 1959. In some of these, Judith Merrill's anthologies would have been too late to be part of that Golden Age. (It was Peter Graham, fan writer, who said, "The Golden Age of Science Fiction is twelve," which subverts the whole idea.)

I haven't read any of the books you discuss and hardly any of the movies Amy Harlib mentions (except *Guardians of the Galaxy 2*), so I can't do much with those parts of the zine except to say that there are a few I intend to watch someday and that Amy is admirably flexible.

I'll be on the alert for your next issue.

#

**John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845, [askance73 at gmail dot com](mailto:askance73@gmail.com)**

**13 October 2017**

Well, I don't think this is your most current APAzine for Stipple-Apa (the April 2017 issue); but since it is in my to LoC stack, I am going to write about it anyway. So there.

As always, I enjoyed reading your brief reviews and comments, Laurraine; and Michael's pictures are really delightful. It blows me away that you two can see an abundance of wildlife so close to home that I am envious. Then to top it all off, he takes such wonderful photographs. Thank you for sharing them. Just last night, shortly after 9:00 PM, Valerie and I went for a walk with our Labrador, Duckie; and not even a block from our house, we heard an owl hooting above our heads. Turning around, we followed the sound up to the top of a streetlamp where a good-sized barn owl sat out on the arm near the brightly burning bulb. We couldn't see him that clearly until we covered the lamp from our view with a hand. He definitely had a good view from there for scoping out a meal. As he hooted, another owl answered back; sure enough, about six feet away from the first owl another one - probably the mate - was perched atop the lamppost itself. That was pretty cool. We couldn't get any good pictures of them thanks to the glare from the street light, but it was definitely a cool sight. Usually we come across a lot of

frogs on these evening walks around the park, so we suspect that's what those owls were after. Tasty treats!

Mike's picture of the Needle Galaxy on page 4 reminds me that we still have our son's backyard telescope in our possession. It's in the closet of what is now our spare bedroom; since Daniel moved out, we are empty nesters and are turning that room into a bedroom for our grandson when he visits for an overnight stay. Brian is now four and a half years old; and I think when he's old enough (in a couple more years), he'd enjoy looking at the moon and such through that telescope. Start them young, I say.

And with that, I do believe I have run out of things to say here. Still, great to hear from you, and I trust you have received your copy of the WOOF #42 disty we put together at Worldcon 75. Thank you for contributing! If anybody else here would like to have a copy, there are still a half dozen left that I brought back from Helsinki. Then again, three are going to library collections: the University of California Irvine's Eaton Collection, Texas A&M University's SF & F Collection, and the Horvat Collection up at the University of Iowa. That leaves three copies unclaimed. Act now! Postage costs are only \$2.43 to send it first class mail.

Take care, and I look forward to seeing another issue very soon.

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**Tom Feller**

**20 October 2017**

Thank you for sending *Purrsonal Mewsings* #60. I am enclosing my latest zine for the Southern Fandom Press Alliance (SFPA) in trade. It includes my final report on the eclipse.

We saw *Dunkirk* and liked it very much. There is a review in my SFPazine.

I remember reading *2001: A Space Odyssey* just when it came out but before I ever saw the movie. Then I re-read it decades later and was struck by how dystopian it was when it described life on Earth.

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**Bill Wright, bilw at iprimus dot com dot au**

**4 November 2017**

My on-line perzines from 2008 to 2014 are on eFancines at: <http://efanzines.com/IRS/>.

I homed in on your Westercon (1-4 July 2017) report, because it was written from a local (Arizona) perspective and I never did get to visit Phoenix on my DUFF trip to LoneStarCon3, the 71st Worldcon in 2013.

((And I was unable to attend that worldcon for reasons I no longer remember.))

As expected it contains the usual gripes about the slapdash way in which things seem to be organised at conventions. My sympathy goes out to you; but it's part of the nature of



SF fandom, which is in a self-help bubble where everything is run by volunteers without much by way of control by luckless committees and individuals who are charged with the responsibility for running things. Fans like to take their ego for an an extended run.

They do things their way at conventions. Very often they haven't much of a clue about what they are up to.



That works fine in the milieu of cheerful anarchy that is SF fandom. Indeed, the best fun to be had at conventions comes from treating the program as a fallback position and hanging around the hot spots to meet fans you know and interesting people you don't know for purposes ranging from getting companionably drunk together to extending the quality of one's cultural horizons or not, depending on circumstance (see illustration at left).

Forgive me if I presume, but I wish to raise a point of fannish etiquette. I notice that you have taken to publishing your Stipple-APazine online as a perzine for general consumption. Now, it's hard to say there are any inflexible rules in fandom, but it used to be understood that if one republishes an APazine for general consumption, any mailing comments are excised before doing so. The reason is that mailing comments are private conversations among members of the APA and, therefore, confidentiality is an issue.

((No one in StippleAPA has complained about that, though I've had a question raised about publishing the LoCs in StippleAPA. The reason I include the StippleAPA section for general consumption is in the hopes of recruiting more members for the APA. The LoC question is still under advisement for the moment. I was once in an invitational APA where things published there were assumed to be confidential, but StippleAPA is not understood to be that kind of group.))

You may care to discuss that point in the privacy of Stipple-APA.

Having said which, I very much enjoyed the mailing comment from my good friend Jeanne Mealy (St Paul, Minnesota). Her steampunk cat thank you cards appeal to me as an abstract idea, as did naming the 33rd Aussie Natcon in April 1994 "Constantinople", after the winner of an otherwise undistinguished award for Best Fannish Cat.

Best wishes for success of your perzine. May your lettercol grow in joy, wisdom and length. May I suggest you consider posting it on eFanzines, even if you first post it elsewhere?

((I'll contact Bill Burns about it.))

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**Linda Deneroff, lindah at isomedia dot com**

**5 November 2017**

Thank you! I enjoyed reading about your experience at Westercon. (I saw very little programming - mostly the Trek panels.) I always enjoy reading other people's experience at conventions, if only to learn what I missed. I guess the next time I see you will be Worldcon.

Enjoy your winter. We've had two snowfalls (can't call them storms, really) this week (the second one is as I type this), which is highly unusual here. Luckily, both times, they didn't stick around.

((Summer is barely ended here in southern Arizona. It'll be a while before we see anything wintry.))

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**Amy Harlib, amyharlib@gmail.com**

**4 November 2017**

Another enjoyable zine! #60's Harris Hawk cover photo is stunning! Also love the wildlife and the astronomy photos. Here in NYC the light pollution is so bad it's impossible to see anything other than the moon in the night sky!

So glad to read the Westercon Report. Since I never can afford to go to cons, I love to read about them in your reports!

My right hip continues to function at optimum! A 6-month post hip brace removal visit to Dr. Padgett had him marveling at my recovery, and we're all hoping my right hip replacement never dislocates again!

Oct. is a good month for gigs! I get a lot of bookings to perform my Halloween themed contortion act Spectral Stretch! Frighteningly Flexible! And I even got a chance to create and perform a new act: The Limber Log Lady! Twin Peaks Will Never be the Same! to beautiful Angelo Badalamente theme music – it was a big success!

Recent films I loved:

*Bladerunner 2047* – a worthy sequel – dazzling and thoughtful and excellent acting.

*Tulip Fever* – dazzling period drama set in 17th cent. Holland.

*Polina* – for dance lovers, a drama about a ballerina who leaves success in Russia to become a free-er modern dancer in France; and a real dancer starred – all the dancing she performed beautifully.

*Lego Ninjago Movie* – fun animated spoof of martial art movie cliches (spoiler alert), in which a real cat was the “kaiju” that threatens to wreck the Lego city until the heroes make friends with the kitty who becomes a giant purr machine – adorable!

*Kingsman: The Golden Circle* – a good sequel continuing the over the top antics of secret crime fighting agents from the UK, here teaming up with their American counterparts to defeat a lady drug cartel ruler played with scenery chewing glee by Julianne Moore.

*Victoria and Abdul* – fine historical drama about real events towards the end of Queen Victoria’s reign – Judy Dench is marvelous!

*Goodbye Christopher Robin* – fine historical drama about what happened to A. A. Milne’s son, made famous at a young age by his father’s writing the classic *Winnie the Pooh*.

*Loving Vincent* – awesome drama about the aftermath of the artist Vincent Van Gogh’s death, animated in a style that looks like the artist’s paintings! Truly dazzling to behold.

*Professor Marston and the Wonder Women* – excellent historical drama about the psychologist who invented the polygraph lie detector machine and created the famous Wonder Woman comics, who was involved in a gleesome threesome relationship with two women – very scandalous in the 1940s and 1950s.

Fiona the fluff is doing great at 14! Hope your kitties are fine and everybody is well.

((The news is not great about Mercury and Gateway. Mercury at seventeen has been diagnosed with hyperthyroidism. We are trying a drug approach first but are in early stages of determining the dosage and whether drugs will work at all. Gateway, aged fourteen, is badly in need of a dental appointment, which has been set up. He has been diagnosed with kidney disease. Feeding him has been difficult, because he is a very fussy eater. He is not fond of the Science Diet renal selections; Royal Canin got even worse marks from him. I’m trying Purina, which so far seems to be working better.))

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**Linda Deneroff, lindad at isomedia dot com**

**5 November 2017**

Thank you! I enjoyed reading about your experience at Westercon. (I saw very little programming - mostly the Trek panels.) I always enjoy reading other people’s experience at conventions, if only to learn what I missed. I guess the next time I see you will be Worldcon.

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((Summer is barely ended here in southern Arizona. It'll be a while before we see anything wintry.))

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**IAHF:** Linda McMahon, Mary Manchester

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**\* Closing Remarks**

Deadline for next issue will be approximately 18 January 2018.

*Laurraine*

*7 November 2017*