

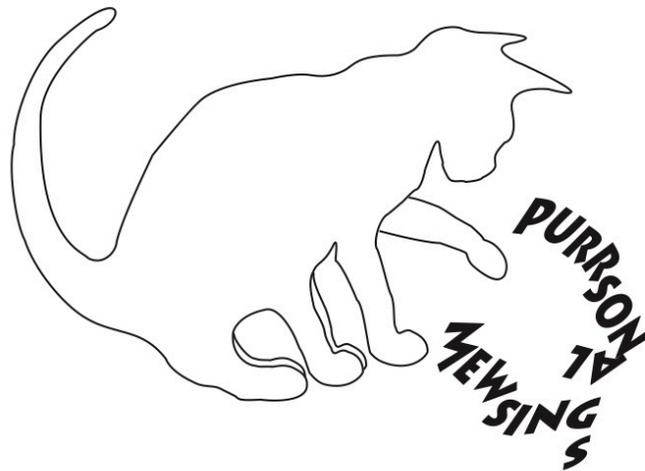
# Purrsonal Mewsings #68



*Purrsonal Mewsings*, formerly *Feline Journal* and *Feline Mewsings* is a personalzine by R-Laurraine Tutihasi, PO Box 5323, Oracle, AZ 85623-5323; 520-275-6511, Laurraine@mac.com, <http://www.weasner.com/>. I hope to publish every six weeks.

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 #482. ©2019 R-Laurraine Tutihasi.

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#68

June 2019

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## **Art and Photo Credits**

Cover illo—photo of cactus in my garden  
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mailing list.

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please let me know. Or vice versa.

## \* Editorial / Introduction

I'm mostly recovered from my fall. A friend said she had a similar fall several years ago, and it took three years for her to be comfortable sitting for any length of time; I hope it doesn't take me that long. I went to see *Cats* with that friend, and that made my pain/discomfort increase again, but I returned to where I was before going to the play after a couple of weeks.

The oral surgeon has been seen, and the implant did not take. Since this was the third attempt, I'll just have to do without that tooth.

May has been cooler than usual. Apparently some plants' blooming is governed by temperature. The yuccas in this area usually bloom in April, but they barely started blooming in mid-May. The saguaro, on the other hand, are blooming in May as usual.

The cold I had when I finished my last issue went away a short while after. Then Mike had his turn with the cold.

Sanding for my shelving has been finished. I've started varnishing the pieces.

Our mattress had reached the age when a replacement is recommended. This became absolutely clear in mid-May. Fortunately we were able to take advantage of the Memorial Day sales and save some money.

We are in the middle of having a backup battery installed for our solar power. This will allow us to run key equipment during power outages. The planning work has been done and we're waiting for the installation to happen; it's currently scheduled for the first week of June.

\* \* \*

## \* Kritter Korner

Cato's fur has all grown back. I've discovered some food he doesn't like. He prefers poultry to fish and paté to chunky. I found out that Petco no longer carries food with artificial ingredients, which I consider to be a good thing.

Here's a recent photo of Cato:



Here's a photo of a rattlesnake Mike saw recently:



\* \* \*

### \* **Astronomy**

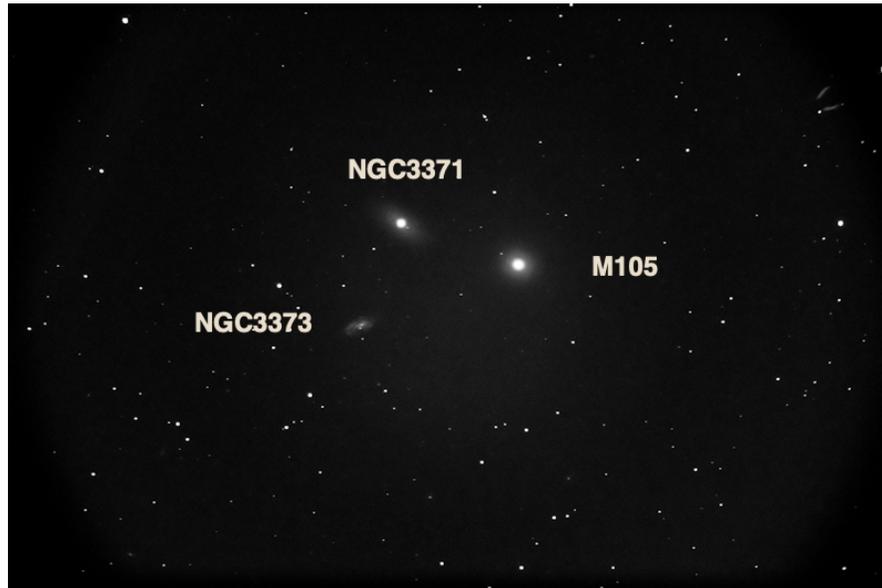
Mike's astronomical efforts continue although the weather has not been fully cooperative.



He got a nice photo of the full moon recently from Oracle State Park.



And here's a photo with labels:



\* \* \*

### **\* Worldcon 76 in San Jose, August 2018**

We drove to Worldcon in San Jose, leaving home on Tuesday, 14 August 2018. We drove as far as Loma Linda that first day. We had left Mercury and Gateway at PetSmart's PetsHotel. We got a call from them at night that Mercury had had a seizure and been taken to the Veterinary Specialty Center where he would spend rest of our vacation trip. He had no further seizures during his stay there.

Wednesday, 15 August 2018, we left Loma Linda about 07:45. We reached the San Jose Marriott about 17:30. We were able to register for the convention at the convention centre next door. We had dinner that night with St. Paul fan Gerri Balter and her friend Polly at McCormick and Schmick's at the Fairmont a couple of blocks away. We ran into various fans on the walk back to our hotel and after we returned to the hotel, including author Bob Silverberg and LA fans Beverly Warren and Sandy Cohen.

At breakfast the next morning, we accepted Nikki Lynch's invitation to join her and Richard for the free breakfast in the concierge lounge. The Lynchi live near DC.

When we went over to the convention centre about noon when things were scheduled to start, I ran into StippleAPAn Cy Chauvin. We talked for a while until the site selection table opened up. Mike and I voted for the 2020

worldcon. I had a bit of time to start looking through the dealers room. I said hello to David Gerrold. I only made it about halfway around the outer aisle of the room before I had to go downstairs to meet Dan Deckert, previously of LA and now living near Kansas City, and Mike for lunch.

We ate at the Hilton on the other side of the convention centre, where there was a nice selection of salads and sandwiches. I had a strawberry and spinach salad with blue cheese.

At 15:00 Mike and I went to a panel titled "Astounding: the Golden Age of Science Fiction" presented by Alec Nevala-Lee who has written a new book about John W. Campbell that focuses on Heinlein, Asimov, and L. Ron Hubbard that sounded quite interesting. Mike has since read the book, and it has been nominated for the Hugo.

After that I was hoping to go around more of the dealers room but ended up talking more with Cy Chauvin. Mike and I attended the opening ceremonies.

Then we met Bay Area fan Alan Winston for dinner. Il Fornaio had a very long wait, so we ate at the Marriott instead. The food was quite good. I had scallop.

Later I headed over to the Fairmont, where the parties were. There were four parties happening. I ran into various friends, including the Ontells from San Diego; LA fans Sean Smith, Kyla, Beverly Warren, and Ruth Judkowitz; David Schlosser and Kay McCutcheon from northern California; and Jeanne Mealy and John Stanley from St. Paul. I walked back part way with the last two, who were staying at the Hyatt across the street from the Hilton.

Friday, 17 August 2018, I joined Michael and Allison Siladi of the Bay Area for breakfast.

Later I joined a Dancersize group for some exercise. After that I went to John Hertz's discussion of Leigh Brackett's *Sword of Rhiannon*. The novel is a fantasy time travel story that takes place on Mars.

During a free hour, I bought a salad for lunch in the convention centre and sat down to eat. Jeanne Mealy came around, and we talked for a while. After I ate she wanted to introduce me to StippleAPAn John Thomason. As we started heading toward the stairs, we saw him walking toward us, so the task became much easier.

I had trouble getting to "History of Online Fandom" that I was on the panel for, because I'd mistyped the room number on my calendar. It turned out that we were in an overly large room. Luckily the microphones worked well. It was moderated by David D. Levine. The other participants were Mike Wilmoth and Ruhan Zhao.

I had quite a bit of free time after that, so I finished going through the dealers room, including making a couple of purchases. I also looked at and photographed some exhibits. I interrupted my tour to sign up for a Kaffeeklatsch. Afterward I looked at more exhibits and most of the art

show.

Then I attended a Kaffeeklatsch for Ctein, a fan known for photography who has recently added writing to his accomplishments.

About 18:00 I went down to meet Mike and his friends for dinner at Il Fornaio. I saw Minneapolis fan Dean Gahlon and LA fan Sasa at the restaurant as well. I had a nice steak and a coffee sundae.

On our way back to our hotel, we ran into LA fan John Hertz and had a fairly lengthy conversation.

Saturday, 18 August 2018, a bit before 10:00, we walked over to the convention centre for a discussion of *A Mirror for Observers* by Edgar Pangborn.

A bit later Mike attended a Kaffeeklatsch for Alec Nevala-Lee, the author of the *Astounding* book. He acquired a copy of the book there.

I had a snack bar for lunch about 12:00. Local fan David Bratman came by as I was finishing up, and we discussed the sightseeing activities I had planned for the following week.

Then I went to the Harlan Ellison Memorial. The room was inadequate, and many people had to stand. I learned there about a definitive biography, so I asked Mike to pick up a copy. Following that I attended an interview of guest of honour Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and a presentation by artist guest of honour John Picacio. I tried to go to a Phil Foglio reading after that, but it took me too long to find the room, and it was standing room only by then, so I left.

While I was at Picacio's presentation, Mike went to "Houston, We Have a Problem", moderated by Bridget Landry. Other panellists were Holly Griffith, Kjell Lindgren, and Norman Sperling. Discussion was about trying to eliminate problems but also about dealing with them when they do occur.

I met Mike for dinner at the hotel, but the restaurant was closed. Fortunately the Hilton restaurant was open, so we ate there; NYC fan Andy Porter was at the next table, so we talked until he finished his dinner.

It was still early, but there was already a line for the masquerade, so we joined it. It was about ten minutes late when the doors were finally opened.



There were about thirty-six entries that were all good. Unfortunately my camera battery died about entry twenty-eight. It was too dark to change batteries, so I let Mike take the pictures. The half time show was belly dancing; apparently there were other acts that followed that we missed. Mike left shortly after it started. I stayed a bit longer. As I was leaving, Jeanne Mealy called me over; she wanted me to meet StippleAPAn Jackie Boykin. Photos were taken (see right). Then I returned to my room to recharge camera batteries. After that I went over to the Fairmont for a bit of partying. Most of the ones I found were crowded, noisy, and hot. The last I went to was less crowded, not noisy, and comfortable.



I talked to Sean Smith and Seattle area fan Allyson Abramowitz at some length. When I realised it was after midnight, I headed back to the Marriott. I walked part of the way back with Jeanne Mealy, John Stanley, and Jacky Boykin.

Sunday, 19 August 2018, I was invited to join Regina Reynante at her table with her daughter and husband for breakfast.

A bit later I went to the convention centre for John Hertz's discussion of Heinlein's *Red Planet*. In the large area occupied by the dealers room, art show, and various exhibits and tables, Mike and I bumped into Jeanne Mealy and found out about a bookcase full of free books. I grabbed three titles and took them back up to our room before returning to the convention centre. At noon we attended "SETI: What Do We Do When We Find Them?"; I went mostly because of Brother Guy (Consolmagno), whom I'd not seen before. I had intended to attend another panel after that but managed to get lost and got there too late to get into the room.

We decided instead to get a proper lunch, since we wouldn't have time for a proper dinner. We ate in the Marriott.

In the afternoon I went to the Karen Anderson memorial, which I left after about an hour to attend a panel titled "Impact of Evolutionary Theory" that included David Brin among the panellists. After the panel I spoke to LA fan Gavin Claypool for a while.

I met Mike at the concierge level to grab a bite of hors d'oeuvre for dinner. Mike got a good shot of the Lick Observatory from there.

Then we went to the Hugo ceremony after a long wait in line. The Hugos went fairly quickly. Afterward Mike found an Android phone and a pen that someone dropped. Lost and Found was closed, so we had to take them in the following day.

Monday, 20 August 2018, I joined Bryan Barrett for breakfast; it was a nice opportunity to catch up. I met Bryan when I lived for a few months in the Bay Area. Since then we only run into each other at conventions.

The first panel I went to was "Science Fiction and Future Studies", comparing the different ways in which future prediction is done in the two fields and how those predictions are used by different groups. Then I attended a reading by David Levine; his reading talent was almost as good as Harlan's, and I told him so. After that I went to a reading by Lawrence Schoen. His upcoming work sounds interesting.

Later that day Elise Levenson Scher, whom I originally met in LA when she was with her first husband, drove over to meet us. There was no more badge monitoring, so Elise was able to sit with us for closing ceremonies. After the official end of the con, we decided to sit down for coffee and conversation. Mike returned to our room. While Elyse and I were talking over our Starbucks coffee, Alyson Abramowitz came by; Elise and Alyson are longtime friends.

Elyse couldn't stay but Alyson wanted to join Mike and me for dinner. After some discussion we decided on Il Fornaio. Among other things we talked about Mike's efforts concerning the FCC, and Mike thinks he got some useful pointers from Alyson. A brief explanation: even though we live a short distance north of Tucson, we get the Phoenix feed as our "local" TV stations on our satellite service. This is because of an arcane agreement made some time ago that all of our county receive Phoenix stations. Our county is exactly between the counties containing Phoenix and Tucson. It takes us only about twenty minutes to drive to the outskirts of Tucson; while it takes about ninety minutes to reach the Phoenix suburbs. Because we live in such a small community, almost all of our in-store shopping is done in the same county as Tucson, which means we pay a lot of sales tax there. Mike has been trying unsuccessfully to persuade the powers that be to give us the Tucson feed for TV.

I went to the Dead Dog with Alyson, while Mike returned to our room. There I mostly talked with Andy Porter. When he wanted to leave, I went with him.

Tuesday, 21 August 2018, I went up to the concierge level for breakfast about 07:45. I found Bryan Barrett there so joined him. When I was leaving the area, I passed the Lynchi and spoke briefly with them.

We left the hotel about 09:00; it was 09:15 when we left the convention centre parking garage. It took about an hour to get to the San Francisco

Zoo. It was a nice cool day. The fog never completely went away.

After seeing most of the exhibits, we stopped for lunch at the Lemur Cafe about 12:30.

Then we looked at the remaining exhibits before leaving about 15:30. Mike got on the 101 with its heavy traffic, so it took a couple of hours to get back to the hotel.

We had dinner at the hotel. I had sea bass that was passable. Mike ordered a peach cobbler and was not too happy with it. I followed my dinner with a cappuccino. For whatever reason service was not very good that night.



Wednesday, 22 August 2018, we left the hotel about 08:30 and drove to the Walt Disney Family Museum, which is in the San Francisco Presidio. There was a special exhibit about the "Nine Old Men" animators, which we saw first.

Then we had lunch at the cafe.

We spent until about 16:00 viewing the regular exhibits. There were many videos. The exhibits climaxed with a large model of Disneyland. Afterward Mike took photos of the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz before we headed back to San Jose. We chose to follow Maps rather than the Lexus GPS. I noticed that the voice messages from Maps was in a British accent, presumably because the language is set to UK English.

I had made 18:30 dinner reservations at McCormick and Schmick's; we reached there a few minutes before and were seated soon after.

Thursday, 23 August 2018, We left the hotel about 08:30 for the Apple Visitors Centre in Cupertino. We arrived a bit late due to a combination of traffic and difficulty finding the correct building. We met David Bratman outside. David had to leave after looking over the place to run some urgent errands. Mike bought a T-shirt. We left there shortly before 11:00 to head to the Lick Observatory. There were some displays and a gift shop in the main building as well as a tour of the 36-inch refractor (see below). The 120-inch reflector in a separate building had an observation room.

We had dinner that night at Il Fornaio.

Friday, 24 August 2018, we left the hotel about 09:00 to drive to the Oakland Zoo. We arrived at the zoo shortly after it opened. It's divided into three sections: the main section, a California Trail, and the Australian Outback. The California Trail is reached by a free gondola and is populated by animals native to California, now or in the past. We went there first when it was still pretty chilly.



After looking at all the animals, we had lunch up there.

Then we rode back to the main part of the zoo; it's a bit tricky to see, because some trails don't loop back, and other trails are easy to miss. I think we saw all the animals. The sky cleared up, and it became much warmer than expected. The Australian Outback can only be seen on a train ride at extra expense; there were emus and kangaroos. It was after 15:00 when we left there, and traffic was busy. We reached our hotel just before 17:00. We had not too long to drop off our cameras and other excess baggage and leave for dinner.

We met David Bratman and Berni Phillips in Sunnyvale for dinner. The food was wholesome, and the conversation good.

Saturday, 25 August 2018, we left San Jose and drove east to the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge. This is probably the poorest time of year for seeing wildlife, but we saw two herds of elk, a fox, a great blue heron, and a number of squirrels. In addition I saw hummingbirds, a rabbit, and a few small birds on a walking trail.



We stayed that night at a nearby La Quinta and drove home the next day and to arrive about 20:00.

\* \* \*

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

***Spider-Man, into the Spider-Verse, starring the voices of Jake Johnson, Lily Tomlin, Zoë Kravitz, Nicolas Cage, Liev Schreiber, Chris Pine, Stan Lee, and others***

This is an animated version of Spider-Man in which Doc Ock manages to open a portal to other dimensions. Many versions of Spider-Man work together to seal the portal and destroy the machine invented by Doc Ock.

I wasn't terribly impressed by it, though it was entertaining enough. I watched it because it had been nominated for the Hugo.

#

***Black Panther, starring Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o, Danai Gurira, Martin Freeman, Angela Bassett, Forest Whitaker, Andy Serkis, and others***

This is a new character in Marvel's Avengers universe. There is an Africa nation called Wakanda that has been hidden with the use of technology based on an alien metal called vibranium. The metal fell near the kingdom in the form of a meteorite. As events develop in the movie, there are threats to Wakanda from outside.

I enjoyed this quite a bit, as the story is centred on a few characters, providing people for the viewer to identify with. This movie was also nominated for the Hugo.

#

***Beasts of Extraordinary Circumstance, by Ruth Emmie Lang***

This is an interesting first novel about extraordinary people. The main character is a man who was orphaned and raised by wolves. Weylyn Grey also has strange powers that he cannot always control. The book follows him as he meets various people. The story is told from the perspective of those people. It's written very well, and it will be interesting to see what the author writes in future.

I read this for the Oro Valley Science Fiction Book Club.

#

***Sorry to Bother You, starring LaKeith Stanfield, Tessa Thompson, Jermaine Fowler, Danny Glover, Armie Hammer, Lily James, Forest Whitaker, and others***

In a vague future in Oakland, Cassius Green is unemployed and finds a job making cold sales calls from a call centre. Most of the characters are black, and the most successful sales people find their White voice (played by other actors).

Entrepreneur Steve Lift (a white man), has a company called WorryFree that provides labour at a low price to other companies. He has a secret. Because Cassius has been so successful, Steve Lift is wooing him to come work for him. While at Lift's mansion,

Cassius inadvertently stumbles on a secret that frightens him.

For a movie I'd never heard of, I found it impressive. It's a commentary on a lot of today's social woes. It was nominated for the Hugo.

#

***Avengers: Infinity War*, starring Robert Downey, Jr.; Chris Hemsworth; Mark Ruffalo; Chris Evans; Scarlett Johansson; Don Cheadle; Benedict Cumberbatch; Tom Holland; Chadwick Boseman; Zoe Saldana; Karen Gillan; Tom Hiddleston; and others**

All the heroes in the Avengers universe find themselves at war with Thanos.

The movie is basically a series of fight scenes.

I found it rather a bore. This was nominated for the Hugo.

#

***Cats*, starring members of the *Cats* company**

This was part of Broadway in Tucson, where travelling actors bring various Broadway productions here. The programme says it's put on by the Schubert Organization.

I had seen this many years ago in LA and more recently on TV. I didn't care much for the one on TV, possibly because the camera angles limited our view of it.

The friend I saw it with and I both thought the first half was rather boring but found the second half quite good. It had more pizzazz and better musical numbers in it.

For those few who might not know, this musical was inspired by T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. The music is by Andrew Lloyd Webber.

#

***The Calculating Stars*, by Mary Robinette Kowal**

I admit this is the first novel I've ever read by this author. If the rest of her work is this good, I need to read more of it.

The premise is that there was a massive meteorite strike just off the eastern seaboard of the US in the 1950s. Most of the coastline was completely destroyed and inundated, including the nation's capital. Few people who lived there survived, mostly because they were not at home when it happened. Elma York and her husband were camping in the Adirondacks when it happened. Although they didn't escape unscathed, they did survive, in part because they were able to fly out of the area in her plane.

As the worst of the immediate disaster subsides, it becomes obvious that all of Earth will suffer in not too many years. People propose fleeing to the Moon. This means gearing up a space programme in its infancy.

Because of the time period in which the story takes place, the author tackles the issues of inequality regarding women and minorities. In some ways the book reminded me strongly of the movie *Hidden Figures*.

The author writes excellently, and I enjoyed the book a lot. This was nominated for the Hugo.

#

***Phantom of the Opera*, starring Nelson Eddy, Susanna Foster, Claude**

### **Rains, Leo Carillo, Hume Cronyn, and others**

This version of the classic story was released in 1943. I had never seen it before and found it quite nice, though it did differ in parts from the original.

This was nominated for the retro Hugo.

#

### ***The Glass Bead Game*, by Herman Hesse**

This novel translated from the original German was nominated for a retro Hugo. I found it a bit slow reading; but if you know German at all, you will understand how that might be, especially since it was written starting in 1931 and published in 1943.

Joseph Knecht lives in an unspecified future some time in the 25th century. There is a province in Europe called Castalia that is devoted to cerebral development. The game of the title is an activity that is valued by the Castalians.

The book follows the life of Knecht. It's slow reading because it is almost all narrative with very little conversation and resembles a history book.

Despite the problems I had reading it, I found it very satisfying. It has a lot to say about human society and its development.

#

### ***I Walked with a Zombie*, starring Frances Dee, Tom Conway, James Ellison, and others**

The title sounded familiar to me, but I had never seen this short movie. It's really an exploration of voodoo and the relationship of two brothers, actually half brothers. The main character is a nurse who is hired to take care of one brother's wife who seems to be in a catatonic state. The brothers do not have a good relationship. They live on a Caribbean island where voodoo is practiced.

I found it quite good. The film was nominated for the retro Hugo.

\* \* \*

### **\* 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.

### **MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #325**

**Jeanne Mealy (The Periodic Table of Variable Elements):** Good to see a new and a returning member. Welcome to Garth Spencer and welcome back to Marge Sehnert!

**Joyce Maetta Odum (Sneezy Haiku):** The incident you describe happening to your son reinforces my belief that stricter enforcement is needed on gun ownership. Some people are not mentally stable enough

to be allowed to own or operate them.

Chris was in a cage when she went on the shark dive.

### **Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits):**

Saguaro are not native to our area. I planted the one I have. Especially when they're young, they are sensitive to cold. Only the tips need to be covered. We live on the warm side of Oracle, so I hope it will be okay. Climate change can only help.

We don't often get more than an inch or two of snow. Maybe once in ten years we will have more.

Cato is a bit on the large side. He is full grown. He is affectionate, active, and mischievous, depending on his mood. I have two kinds of puzzle dishes now. I'm just going to take photos; it's too difficult to explain. See below:



I use this one for dry food.



I use this one for wet food.

The white rhino was given this name, because the Dutch word for wide was mistranslated. It has a wide mouth for grazing, unlike the black rhino that has a pointed lip with browsing.

I had water with me. I just didn't drink enough of it. It's not always easy to know how much to drink. I live in a hot, dry climate; so I theoretically know this. If you wait until you're thirsty, it's probably too late. Also we were moving pretty fast and didn't always have a chance to drink.

Personally my interest in petroglyphs has not been great.

Many cacti can live in relatively cool climates. One of the common cacti here are the prickly pear. There are varieties of prickly pear growing in every state in this country. The other cactus common here are a variety of cholla. There are others but not as common. This area used to be covered with oak, not the same species as you have, until most of them were cut down for lumber.

Good luck with your implant.

I missed Jacky's appearances on TV, because I didn't read your e-mail until too late.

**Garth Spencer (Mission Creep #1):**

Welcome to Stippleapa!

Your cat is really cute. Is she a tuxedo cat?

**S. Rayne (Wright As Rayne):** Oryx tasted more like beef.

*Glory Road* takes a relatively green young man. Although he fought in a war, he hasn't had many other life experiences. The female lead needs someone like him who is brave and doesn't really give much thought to the whys and wherefores. At the end our hero realizes that he isn't ready for a life with the heroine and returns to Earth. These things are truths that apply to all of us.

**Erik Biever (Push Button to Cross Delaware):** My sympathies about the eye gel shortage. Before my caeliac disease was properly diagnosed, I had problems with severe dryness of the eyes. I had to give up wearing contact lenses and had to resort to eye gel at least until I got a prescription for Restasis. I haven't used eye gel in many years now. The last time I bought some was for Fluffy cat, who had eye problems toward the end of his life. My best wishes to you and Paula.

**Bill Thomasson (Musings from the Gathering Dusk #23):** Two weekends in a row! I could never handle that. Two

months in a row is too much for me as I discovered last year. I prefer to have two to three months between trips. There may be a few exceptions.

I take plenty of other meds for asthma.

See my comments above to S. Rayne about *Glory Road*. John Hertz led a discussion; so I think the group came to our conclusions, not just John.

**Lucy Schmeidler (Don't Ask #15):**

Cato is pronounced with long vowel sounds and a hard C.

The mirrors we saw were twenty to thirty feet across. Yes, the backing is honeycombed. It's made of borosilicate glass, which must be manufactured to exact specifications. It's all one piece but the back is honeycombed to keep the mirror from being too heavy.

See my comments to Jeanne Mealy above about the white rhinos.

The leopard photo was taken with a telephoto lens, but the leopard was relatively close to us—twenty or thirty feet away.



**Cy Chauvin (Amazons and Swallows Forever! #68):** Above is a photo of some of the petroglyphs.

\*\*\*\*\*

See you all in the August disty. I expect to miss the next one due to Westercon.

\*\*\*

### **\* 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. I use Oxford standards of spelling and punctuation.

**Rich Dengrove, 2651 Arlington Dr #302, Alexandria, VA 22306**  
**postmarked 19 April 2019**

Back again. I read *Purrsonal Mewsings* #66. Here's what I found of interest to comment on.

You took a trip to African and you went by way of Frankfort. While there, you were suffering from lack of sleep yet didn't have time to find out where you could rent rooms by the hour to sleep before your plane. You certainly can't sleep on the plane - not really. I hear you can't sleep on the train either I hear the train is rocky and there are sounds. You can't sleep on the bus either. I know from personal experience. Or, at least, I know I can't. Of course, depending how much the airport was charging, you might choose to remain awake.

((It's not that I lacked any time to find those "airport hotels", as I later found out they were called. I remember seeing those signs. I just didn't realize what the signs meant until too late. I can sleep on planes, trains, buses, and other modes of transportation. I can't sleep when I'm over-excited or anxious as I often am at the start of a trip. It's not even clear how much I could have slept at an airport hotel.))

Up above was what was missing, sleep. However, the peculiarities of life often include what is there. In your case in Africa, the rock hyrax. How can a creature as small as a mouse be the animal most closely related to the elephant? According to my trusty Wikipedia, the elephant is more closely related to the sea cow. However, it also remains closely related to the hyrax. In prehistoric times, the glade Paenungulata came in all sizes but you don't get much choice now.

The rock hyrax was just the most curious of the many curious animals in Southern Africa. Altogether, you definitely knew you were away from home. I envy you going to so many far-flung places. On the other hand, I have only myself to blame. What can I

say? I am a natural stay-at-home. I do most of my traveling in books. While science fiction gets me far away. I can see why you might want to visit places like Africa in the flesh.

Let us go to Mailing Comments for StippleAPA. I envy Bill Thomasson living in a rural town in Arizona. It seems as far away to me as Africa. I bet real estate is cheap there. As opposed to DC, where few people can afford a house. And, if you are especially well-heeled a townhouse. New York City is worse: the streets may not be paved with gold but the houses may as well be walled with gold.

((It's not Bill Thomasson who lives in rural Arizona. It's me. I was commenting to him. I don't know that real estate is cheap. It's all relative. It certainly is more affordable than most of California.))

On the other hand, it sounds like Bill has problems with mail. How about the internet? Since I'm an internet addict, I may as well forget about living in a rural area.

((As above I was talking to Bill about myself. We get Internet through HughesNet. The only other alternative is DSL. It may be less expensive, but it's unreliable and very slow. HughesNet is expensive and limited. You get a monthly allowance and have to pay more to get more.))

Now for Letters to the Editor. Speaking of far out things far beyond rural areas in Arizona, Timothy Lane mentions the Monkey Head Nebula. He says it doesn't look anything like a monkey head. With constellations, like that, you aren't supposed to see anything real. You are supposed to use your imagination. If you actually see them, you're supposed to lie down and hope the hallucination goes away.

((The Monkey Head Nebula is not a constellation. Mike tells me the photo was printed upside-down for the purposes of seeing the shape.))

With delusions - I hope not mine - that's about it for *Purrsonal Mewsings* 66. Bring on *Purrsonal Mewsings* 67.

#

**Timothy Lane, timothyane51 at gmail dot com**

**15 May 2019**

Nice getting issue 67. This and Joseph Major's *Alexiad* are my only remaining contacts with SF fandom. As such, it's nice seeing con trip reports.

Elizabeth fell onto her back a couple of decades back when a rickety chair she was using as a footstool (to change a light bulb) collapsed under her. Fortunately she didn't have any broken bones, though I had to help her out of the bath tub for a while.

One of the nursing aides here told me about her experience with a couple of cats that kept running off after she moved. After three times going back to the old place, she decided they wanted to live there.

Elizabeth got a lot of toys for our cats, most of which received little use. Too bad they were all left behind when we sold the house and its contents. We could have sent you some.

I believe Isaac Asimov had a picture of the Horsehead Nebula on the paperback cover of his book *The Universe*. At any rate, I know I've seen it before. A very apt name for it.

It's never a good sign when your most notable sightseeing on the way to a convention is a pair of large fires.

I think the worst experience of bad restaurant service I can recall is when we were seated and then the waitress went off duty. It was a long time before we finally got waited on, and we probably got some sort of freebie (though this was decades ago and I don't recall what). It was a very long time before we went back there, but eventually we did and had much better service.

I would probably find Erik Larson's *In the Garden of the Beasts* very interesting; perhaps I should add it to my list of books as possible acquisitions. (My sister gave me an Amazon gift card for Christmas, and I haven't used it yet because I was hoping to coordinate buys with Elizabeth. Now she's in a different assisted living/nursing home with no car, and we may never see each other again. I do hope to get a workable phone sometime so we can at least talk with each other.) I have a long fascination with Germany (perhaps natural for an Army brat) and took a couple of history courses about it in college.



I rather enjoyed Robert Kennedy's description of his first experience with snow.

#

**Nola Frame-Gray, av300 at ktb dot net**

**16 May 2019**

Thanks so much for sending me a PDF copy of *Purrsonal Mewsings* #67, especially since I'd never written to you before. Thanks for your patience! Happily, I now have JAWS, a "screen reader". What it does is read out loud what is on my computer monitor. This includes PDF files.

I too am big fan of *A Quiet Place*. The fact that production [features] a deaf actress and apparently they followed her advice knocked the movie out of the ballpark. That and the fact this movie give us a reason to care out this family. I wasn't too bothered about how only our guys discovered the singular weakness of the E.T.s. For me, they were so

implausible to begin with, what's one more impossibility? What I found a major fault was not the fact that the feedback loop hurt the creatures' hearing, but the fact that she heard it too. We know that because she would crumple in pain when the device malfunctioned. To me, this crossed the threshold of believability. If she was deaf, then how did she hear the feedback? When I was in school, I would alert the deaf students when their hearing aides were misbehaving. They would thank me since they couldn't hear it themselves. A feedback loop is a good way to drain hearing aid batteries.

((Thanks for the clarification on how hearing aids work. I simply assumed that the girl was feeling the feedback rather than hearing it.))

From someone who is near blind and having a twin brother who is blind, I found the sightless aliens totally unbelievable. Think of a totally blind person walking without a white cane to guide him/her, no bat echolocation, and walking on tall stilts.

((Nothing was said in the movie about whether the aliens used echo location.))

#

**Joy V. Smith, pagadan at aol dot com**

**17 May 2019**

I hope your tailbone is feeling better! And I know how worrisome looking for an escaped pet is. I'm glad you found him--and that you had help looking. Thanks for sharing the photo of Cato on your shoulder; it made me feel nostalgic. (I had two cats who liked to perch on my shoulder; one was small enough to just sit there; the other one had to spread out over two shoulders.)

((My tailbone has improved greatly. Thanks for your concern.))

Imaginative cover. I especially like the little critter. And I love Mike's photos. Btw, I have two galaxy prints hanging in my office--one above the other. They're the first things you see when you come into the office. What a busy time you had at Westercon! Lots of interesting panels and concerts and meetings with friends.

Thanks for the reviews; I'd like to read Erik Larsen's book about the American ambassador in Germany in Hitler's time. The movie *A Quiet Place* sounds really scary--suspenseful premise.

Thank you--and the letter writers--for an enjoyable issue.

#

**Murray Moore, murraymoore at gmail dot com**

**22 May 2019**

We have been cat-less for years, so we depend on wild animals to be interesting. Today I saw a rare daylight raccoon across the street from our house, going away from me. Less recently I pointed Mary Ellen to the sight of three young rabbits chasing each other in

the yard of our east-side neighbour. They looked to be last-year-born rabbits; too big to be born this spring.

I have not and do not expect to be a book club member, because I am not interested in reading to a deadline a book not of my choice that might not interest me.

I use Oxford standards of spelling and punctuation except when I don't.

*A Time for the Stars* is your favourite Heinlein book. I am reading Farah Mendlesohn's survey of Heinlein's fiction. She makes me want to re-read the Heinlein that I have read and to read the Heinlein that I have not read. My rural southwestern Ontario village (pop. 1,200) library did not have Heinlein's juvenile novels, novels which I understand were introductions to SF for many readers.

Interlibrary loan is an option for me no more. The current, Conservative, provincial government has cut it. I live now in a city of approx. 700,000, and I use the city library system. More affected by this change will be rural and small town Ontarians, who tend to elect Conservative provincial representatives. Ontario's Conservative leader is a native of Toronto, however, also sibling of his better-known brother, the sometime mayor of Toronto, the late Rob Ford.

#

**Amy Harlib, amyharlib at e-activism dot com**

**23 May 2019**

Delighted to see my artwork on the cover!

Love the updates about Cato. Hope your back is fully recovered. Enjoyed the Westercon Report.

((A friend of mine told me it took her three years to recover from a fall on her tailbone. I hope it doesn't take me that long. I've reached the point where mostly it bothers me when I sit down but only on certain surfaces. I find it more comfortable to sit on a hard chair than an upholstered one. I'm still using ice packs.))

Saw the *Avengers: Endgame* film (I've been following all the Marvel films from the get go); and while the time travel plot was whacky, the way time travel plots always seem to be, I really loved the character interactions and appreciated some irrevocable closures; and yet there were also openings for further developments. Visually it was ultra dazzling!

Been seeing not many films lately. When I'm not performing, I am too frantic about saving the world from the Trumpocalypse or too depressed about the Trumpocalypse to enjoy much of anything.

And my 16-year-old cat Fiona the Fluff is anaemic and hiding a lot more and approaching the end and that compounds misery.

((My sympathies. I lived through that last year.))

Do please check out this video which went live on May 2nd and has not yet generated any more gigs: AS SEEN IN THE NY POST EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE SHORT DOC SERIES! AMAZING AMY! <https://nypost.com/video/at-63-amazing-amy-is-more-flexible-than-you/>

#

**Jerry Kaufman, jkaufman at aol dot com**

**28 May 2019**

Thanks for another issue of PM. Your cat Cato sounds like a handful - whenever, that is, you can actually get your hands on him. Maybe what you need to tire him out is a Roomba or a windup mouse toy to chase?

((I do have a Roomba, but I haven't used it in a while. I do have my eye on a cat toy.))

What's the object in the photo on page 4? It looks like a water pump, but I presume it's nothing so simple. Based on the panels you or Mike attended, I'm guessing it was an "All Science" convention.

((I'm not sure about the object in the photo. It was some sort of steam punk gadget. Mike tends to attend mostly the science programming. There was certainly other programming.))

Regarding your reviews, if you think *Annihilation* left too many questions unanswered, you should read the book it was based on, by Jeff Vandermeer and its two sequels. Compared to them the movie left many questions answered but with puzzling answers. Nonetheless, I enjoyed both the written and the screened experiences.

I don't have any responses to the letters in this issue, but really like the spirit of Ray Nelson's cat on page 14.

#

**Robert Kennedy, robertk at cipcug dot org**

**30 May 2019**

The photos of Cato and your comments concerning him were quite enjoyable. Mike's astronomy photos were, as usual, very much appreciated.

Excellent report on Westercon 71 and good see that you received two free breakfasts as a result of poor service at dinner.

My niece Sheilah, who also read #67, and I are interested in your comment about how you "learned the proper way to eat an artichoke". The way in which we, and everyone we know, eat an artichoke is as follows. Pull off a leaf (or a couple of leaves), dip them in

a sauce, scrape off the pulp part with our teeth, and eat the pulp. When we get down to the end we take the heart, dip it in the sauce, and eat it. So, our question is – What way did you learn to eat an artichoke?

((Eating an artichoke—exactly as you say.))

Your comment to Mary Manchester concerning the Shoe comic was much appreciated. This was especially the case because of my recent experience returning from a U. S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Reunion in Houston, Texas, and having to spend the night in the Dallas Airport. Travelling coach is bad enough.

((Flying is still pretty much okay if you fly business or first class except for the airport security part.))

I'm old enough to remember when flying was fun. Lots of room, plane usually not full, meals, no baggage check charge. A number of years ago a neighbour boy who had never flown asked me what it was like. I told him it was like riding a bus. You get on and sit down. Awhile later you get up and get off.

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**WAHF (We Also Heard From): Gary Mattingly, Linda Deneroff, Ray Nelson who sent a bunch of fillos.**

\* \* \*

**\* Closing Remarks**

Next time I hope to have a report on my trip to the missions in central California.

Deadline for next issue is expected to be on or about 15 August 2019. I will be busy in July going to Westercon in Salt Lake City.

*Laurraine*

*1 June 2019*