Feline Mewsings

#2 August 2000

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Editorial / Introduction

Welcome to the second issue of *Feline Mewsings.* This issue is late, because I wanted to do the Westercon report right with photographs. I also wanted to have Mike read it over for accuracy, etc. I apologize for this, but sometimes it can't be helped.

I had one artist respond with a contribution of some outstanding illos. Once again, please let me ask other artists and readers to contribute illos, letters of comment, book reviews, and other items. If you would like to write a longer article, please check with me first.

I intend to produce the web version as an Acrobat file. This should be readable by more people, since the Acrobat reader can be downloaded for free and, I believe, runs on all platforms.

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Mike

The publication date of the book for which he wrote a chapter about the ETX telescope has been delayed. We believe it will be later this year, but we do not have a definite date.

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Hawaii Vacation: Westercon and More

Friday, 30 June was kind of crazy. I managed to finish my packing. I also had to go to the credit union to deposit some cheques and to the drug store to pick up a couple of prescriptions.

The Supershuttle picked us up at 14h00. They made two more stops that took us over circuitous routes, so we really arrived just in time at LAX. The check-in line was long at the United Airlines counter but fortunately moved fairly quickly. There was a short wait time at the gate before we started boarding the plane. I started the Vernor Vinge book that's up for a Hugo but didn't get very far.

We thought we had an aisle seat but found ourselves trapped in the middle of four seats. The chap next to me was fairly amiable, however. Dinner was served and was quite good. I had a pasta meal, and Mike had beef. I managed to get some shuteye on the flight. I had got up earlier than normal, so that was nice. The worst thing about the flight was the warmth and dryness.

We landed about 19h30. By the time we got to the Sheraton Waikiki and settled in, it was about 21h30. We had a problem at check-in, because the first room assigned to us reeked of smoke. We were quite tired and called it a day.

Registration didn't open until ten on Saturday, so we went down to have a real breakfast. That turned out to be our only real breakfast of the entire trip.

Me with Diamond Head in background, behind hotel

At 13h00, we attended a kafeeklatch for Larry Niven. It was interesting in that the conversation frequently went into discussing technology rather than his writing.

Larry Niven with new book

Then we made our first pass through the hucksters' room. Mike ordered a tie from a Bay Area artist who hand-paints astronomical designs on them. There is more information about this dealer at Mike's web site. We also cast our site selection ballots for the 2002 Westercon. Los Angeles won over Phoenix.

At 16h00, we attended Ctein's (Fan Guest of Honour) demonstration of how he creates his dye transfer prints. It was quite interesting. This is a dying art, since none of the material used is manufactured any longer. He made many references to Rochester, NY, where I lived for a number of years, and Kodak, where I worked one summer while I was in college.

I had earlier posted a sign for the observatory tour people to gather before the opening ceremonies and I successfully met with all the members of the tour except one who didn't arrive at the con till the following day. Actually, I'd been spending quite a bit of time throughout the day talking to some of the members of the tour to go over details of logistics and such.

I started organizing this tour back last fall. I first got the idea for the tour when I was talking to an acquaintance in the world of Regency dancing who is an astronomer at JPL. I spent many months contacting the people at the Mauna Kea observatories, the rental car agency that rents 4WD vehicles that can be driven up to the summit, and possible sources of box lunches. It was not at all an easy task. I learned a lot from the experience of doing this.

We hadn't managed to get lunch, so went to the shopping centre across from the hotel and found a great Italian restaurant called the Villa Paradiso for dinner. They serve northern Italian cuisine, and it was wonderful.

We dropped in briefly at the Regency dancing afterward, but I was too tired to do much. Also, I had broken a toe shortly before the trip, so I could not dance anything except the slow dances.

Sometime during the day, I also managed to call Mary Lee Tsuffis, who had been my supervisor at my very first job out of school. She moved out here years ago, and it turned out that the phone number I had got years ago was still good. She wasn't home when I called, but she returned my call later.

On Sunday, I breakfasted on Macadamia nuts I had picked up at a little snack shop in the lobby the day before. This became a routine for the remainder of the trip.

We attended the 11h00 "Presentations of Upcoming Westercon Bids." I had actually hoped that it would cover more than just the 2002 bids, but I was disappointed in that hope. There were no representatives at the con for future Westercon bids beyond 2002.

We had lunch after that at a little take-out restaurant in the lobby. They served a wide variety of foods, from sushi to hot dogs.

Dan Simmons giving Guest of Honour speech

I managed to get to the last bit of Dan Simmons's reading and had the chance to talk with him a bit. This was followed by a presentation about the Mars Pathfinder by Bridget Landry of JPL. She was wearing a wonderful dress that blended Hawaiian and Victorian. Then we heard Dan Simmons's Guest of Honour speech. It was an anecdotal speech and quite entertaining.

After that, we revisited the hucksters' room, bought a few more items, and also looked at Ctein's photographic art show. We also finally met up with Paul Allwood, the member of our tour group that hadn't made it to the meeting the previous day, who had been attending Dragoncon in Atlanta. He suggested that it made better sense for the Kona contingent to meet us in Hilo. We told him we'd look into it and later decided it was the only thing that made sense due to the artillery range on the Kona side of Saddle Road.

We had a short break to change for the Locus Awards Banquet. We sat with Julie Dickinson, Ctein, Paula Butler, Mary Kay Kare, and Lisa Harrigan and her husband. With the presentation of the awards, this event lasted until 21h30. We were too tired to party.

Roast pig at Locus Awards banquet

The Locus award winners were:

Best Science Fiction Novel: *Cryptonomicon*, Neal Stephenson (Avon)

Best Fantasy Novel: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, J.K. Rowling Bloomsbury; Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine)

Best First Novel: *The Silk Code*, Paul Levinson (Tor)

Dessert table at Locus Awards banquet

Best Novella: ''Orphans of the Helix'', Dan Simmons (Far Horizons)

Best Novelette [tie]: ''Huddle'', Stephen Baxter (*F&SF*, May 1999) and ''Border Guards'', Greg Egan (*Interzone*, Oct 1999)

Best Short Story: ''macs'', Terry Bisson (*F&SF*, Oct/Nov 1999)

Best Non-Fiction Book: *Sixty Years of Arkham House*, S.T. Joshi (Arkham House)

Best Art Book: *Science Fiction of the Twentieth Century*, Frank M. Robinson (Collectors Press)

Best Collection: *The Martians*, Kim Stanley Robinson (HarperCollins Voyager; Bantam Spectra)

Best Anthology: *Far Horizons*, Robert Silverberg, ed. (Avon)

Best Artist: Michael Whelan

Best Editor: Gardner Dozois

Best Magazine: *Asimov's*

Best Book Publisher: Tor

Winners received plaques, and publishers of the winning works received certificates. Dan Simmons, Gardner Dozois, and Tom Doherty were on hand to

accept their honours.
Sometime that day, we made it up to the con suite on the top floor. The view was magnificent. We could see turtles coming up out of the water. They came up daily around 15h00 or 16h00.

Turtles at Waikiki Beach

I had hoped Monday would be a slower paced day, but we ended up spending lots of time going over the logistics of the observatory tour and deciding that driving to Kona to pick up people was imprudent in view of the artillery range on the west half of the Saddle Road that leads to the bottom of Mauna Kea.
At noon, we attended Hugh Gregory's presentation of "Soviet Space Disasters." I thought I might find it boring, having seen it in Australia; but I had apparently forgotten most of it in the interim.
At 16h00, we attended the John Lorentz Guest of Honour interview. I learned a lot about him. This was followed by the "Upcoming Worldcon Bid Presentations." Half of it turned out to be focussed on the cons that have already been decided I guess partly because there were not too many people there to represent the undecided ones.
In the evening, we dined again at Villa Paradiso. Then we shopped. I wanted muumuus, and Mike wanted souvenirs for family members. I had some luck, but he was still looking.
After we got back from that, I finally had a chance to talk to Mary Lee about getting together the next day.
Mary Lee called a little after nine on Tuesday to say she was on her way. Since Mike had asked what her car looked like, I didn't have much trouble recognizing her as she stood outside her car, looking around. She drove us to her home first. It is more like an office than a home, as she runs her bed and breakfast business from there. Basically, she books rooms for people wanting to stay at such accommodations. We met her husband, Gene Bridges. After talking for a while, we left on a long scenic drive to a restaurant called Jameson's that seems to have been named after the Irish whisky. We made a couple of photographic stops on the way. There was some spectacular scenery. At Jameson's, I had Mahi Mahi coated with macadamia nuts. Mike had a fish sandwich, but the fish was the same as mine. We drove a little further where Mary Lee took care of a bit of business. It turned out that this bed and breakfast had been used as a location for an upcoming episode of "Baywatch." Then they drove us back to our hotel, taking the faster inland route. We managed to get a couple of photos when they let us off.

Mary Lee and I

Unfortunately, I started to develop a headache as we were entering the Waikiki area. By the time we got up to our room, it was really pounding. I could not move without excruciating pain, so I lay down and slept. We had planned to do laundry. I had to send Mike down alone to do it. I gave him my bag of quarters, five dollars worth. He used it all up and some. I guess it was still cheaper than the hotel laundry service, though. Just before he returned, the phone rang. It was Lisa Harrigan. I told her about changes to our plan for Mauna Kea. Mike returned while I was talking with her. I was just glad my head hadn't started pounding again. I guess the nap worked. Mike urged me to get off the phone so we could go see the fireworks. As it turned out, we probably would have had a better view from our room. Oh, well. Live and learn.
I thought this might be a good time for dinner, but Mike said we should check the con suite in case we could pass the word about our plans for Mauna Kea. We met up with Ed Green, Liz Mortensen, and Lisa Harrigan. After we all agreed on a plan, Mike went back to our room and I continued talking with Lisa. I returned to the room quite late, decided that it was best to do as much packing as possible before I went to bed and didn't get to sleep till about one.
We checked out of our hotel Wednesday morning about ten. There was a slight mix-up about our pick-up shuttle, but all turned out okay in the end.

On the short Aloha Airlines flight to Hilo, I had some guava juice and didn't have time to finish the crossword puzzle in the in-flight magazine. Yes, I'm one of those crossword addicts.

We took a cab to the Hilo Hawaiian Hotel. Our room there was not ready. We had a small lunch at a bakery just to the left front of the hotel after checking our bags with the bell captain. While we were eating, Sean Smith, another Regency dance friend, came by. He had arrived a short while before we did. He had a rental car and offered us the chance to go to the botanical gardens with him. We thanked him and declined. We had to reserve our energy for the next day.

We managed to get a room by about 15h00. Then, I started making phone calls to finalize our Mauna Kea plans after unpacking to a reasonable extent. The view from our room was beautiful, and I also took a video of that.

Harper's Car and Truck Rental could not supply us with the 15-passenger van that we'd reserved. However, they were able to supply us with a 9- and 7- passenger vehicles. Now we needed two drivers. I was willing but was worried that I might be too small to drive such a large vehicle. Mike was down with a cold and didn't think he'd be up to it. Fortunately, it looked as though Paul Allwood might be a good candidate. He makes frequent trips to the US and has much driving experience in this country. I was thinking now that Mike need not even go with us to pick up the cars. We'd see how he felt in the morning.

At this point, the only people I was not absolutely certain got the message about the changes were the Kares and Darin Briskman and Vickie Gray. Darin and Vickie were just flying over to the Big Island for the tour and returning to Honolulu. Darin did say he would check his cell phone for messages after he landed in Hilo, but I don't trust those gadgets entirely. I left voicemail for the Kares, and ditto.

Sean kindly agreed to pick up Darin and Vickie at the airport and bring them back to the hotel.

For dinner, we ate at the hotel restaurant, which was quite good and also very inexpensive.

Thursday morning, we met up with Mark Dakins and Paul Allwood in the lobby a little after 9h30. The Harper's shuttle arrived a little after. After the insurance was explained to me, I decided to decline. We decided that Mark and Paul would be the primary drivers, but Mike and I also signed up as drivers. I sat in the seats to make sure I'd be able to handle them. It was okay. Then we headed across the street to the Big Island Mini Mart. After seeing the size of the coolers, I knew they wouldn't fit in the SUVs, so I asked Spencer to put our lunches in cardboard boxes. It worked okay, though it was somewhat of a tight fit. When we thought we had everyone who was supposed to meet us there, we drove back to the hotel. It turned out we had missed one, but he pulled in just as we pulled out, saw us, and followed; so all was all right. Back at the hotel, Sean joined our party; as his driver bailed out on him. Fortunately, we had room for him since we had two vehicles.

The day was rainy. We hoped that the summit of Mauna Kea was above the clouds, but this turned out not to be the case. We reached the Onizuka Visitors' Information Station just about on time. Most of us rushed to put on our warm clothes and use the rest rooms. We met our guide, Paul Sears, inside the station. There was a film of about an hour's length. This was designed to acclimate us to the elevation of approximately nine thousand feet. Paula Butler and Mary Kay Kare elected to stay at the VIS. After the video and lunch, we followed Paul Sears's pickup truck up to the summit, which is approximately fourteen thousand feet. There we were shown the NASA Infrared Telescope and the Keck I, which is jointly operated by Caltech and UCLA. At the first facility, we were actually let into the room where the scope was located. We took group photos there. We also did some short walking outside in the drizzle. Quite a few other observatories were visible.

Tour group (minus two who stayed at visitors' centre) plus one of the facility personnel

Back at the VIS, we had our supper, waited for darkness to descend, and hoped that the clouds would dissipate. Unfortunately, one of our party was quite ill with altitude sickness and had to descend. We found enough volunteers to descend with her in the smaller vehicle with Paul driving. Though holes in the clouds developed, the clouds never completely went away; so we did not see very much. We saw the quarter phase moon, Alpha and Beta Centauri, and some other stars. Mike showed me the double star in the Big Dipper through his binoculars. Towards 21h00, we felt that we

had seen just about everything that was probably to be seen that night and returned to Hilo. It could have been a better experience in better weather, but I believe we all appreciated the chance to see the observatories at the summit.

I got up early Friday morning, so we could return the cars to Harper's. Mike's cold was much worse, so I called Mark Dakins for help. We asked the people at the front desk of the hotel about the locations of filling stations. I asked Mark to lead, since I'm not very good at driving in places I'm unfamiliar with. Mark had also done some walking in the area to familiarize himself with it. We went to a filling station near the airport and filled the tanks in both vehicles. Then we returned the cars to Harper's, who drove us back to our hotel.

There was a bit of leftover food from the tour, mostly fruit and brownies. Since Mike was sick and didn't even feel well enough to eat in the hotel restaurant, we just stayed in our room and ate the leftovers. In the afternoon, I spoke on the phone with Torun Almer, a local fan I met via e-mail in Sime~Gen fandom. The Sime~Gen universe was invented by author Jacqueline Lichtenberg. A few other authors have also written stories that take place in that universe. If you would like to know more, ask.

We ended up not going out at all that day.

We had to get up very early Saturday, which turned out to be clear enough to see the summit of Mauna Kea from our hotel room, to catch our plane to Maui. However, after we got to the airport, we discovered that we could take an even earlier flight; so we did. We ran into the Kares as we were boarding, but they were waiting for a later flight to take them back to the mainland. Mary Kay said she was fully recovered from altitude sickness.

Our flight was uneventful and very short. We were offered guava juice that I took but Mike declined. Mike tried taking some pictures out the plane window, and some came out well enough to keep.

We picked our rental car in Maui so early that we thought we would probably have to pay for an extra day when we returned it. The drive to the Westin Maui Prince Hotel was not too bad, though it seems to be near the end of the road before it becomes a 4WD drive only road.

We were given an upgraded room with an ocean view. After settling into our room, we had lunch at Café Kiowai, which is located right next to a beautiful oriental-style garden. I took pictures while we waited for our food. The pond in the garden is filled with hungry carp (koi).

After we ate, we did a little souvenir shopping in the hotel. Among other things, I found a pair of sunglasses that I love.

I took a nap for about ninety minutes before dinner, which we had at 19h00 at Prince Court, one of the nice restaurants in the hotel. Mike wanted to check out the night sky afterwards. The moon was about half full, so it tended to block most of the faint objects in the sky. He had signed up for a Star Gazing session for Monday but cancelled it later.

We slept in Sunday morning. I munched on some cookies for breakfast. We decided to drive into Kihei to see what was there. I bought two more muumuus. Mike found a nice glasses case that can be hung up in a car or elsewhere. We had seen one in Australia in one of the tour buses, and Mike had wanted one like that ever since but never saw one until now. He also bought a couple of other knick-knacks.

We had lunch at a Jack-in-the-Box. I'd never been to one before. I had a teriyaki bowl, which I'm not sure is available in their restaurants in California.

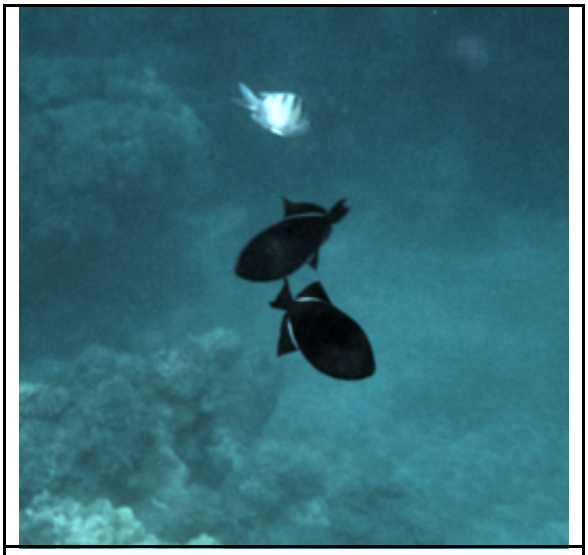
We also made a couple of stops just to take pictures. Mike also bought a supply of snack food for our stay.

At night, we had dinner again at the Prince Court restaurant in the hotel.

We got up sufficiently early on Monday to get everything together for our Trilogy Discover Molikini cruise. We found the dive shop I'd called from home; they had changed names two years ago, but the listing on the Internet hadn't been updated. I rented an underwater camera there. We reached the Trilogy departure pier early. We found out that the afternoon cruise rarely goes to Molikini because of heavy winds. Instead, we went to a place off Olowalu. I tried scuba diving but panicked after I was in the water, due to the pressure on my chest. It felt just like an asthma attack. I probably should have stuck it out but went snorkelling instead. I did have to come up from the water at one point. I had tried to empty the water from my mask but ended up swallowing water instead. Probably sometime during that ordeal, I managed to turn off the flash unit on the camera; but I didn't notice that until afterward. We would find out if any of the photos were any good after we get home. After the pictures were processed, I couldn't tell when the flash unit had been turned off. Only about half the pictures were worth keeping at all, though we still have them on the photo CD. About five were pretty good and will be better with a little editing.

Laurraine in scuba gear

Since our cruise was over before 18h00, we were able to return the camera before returning to the hotel.

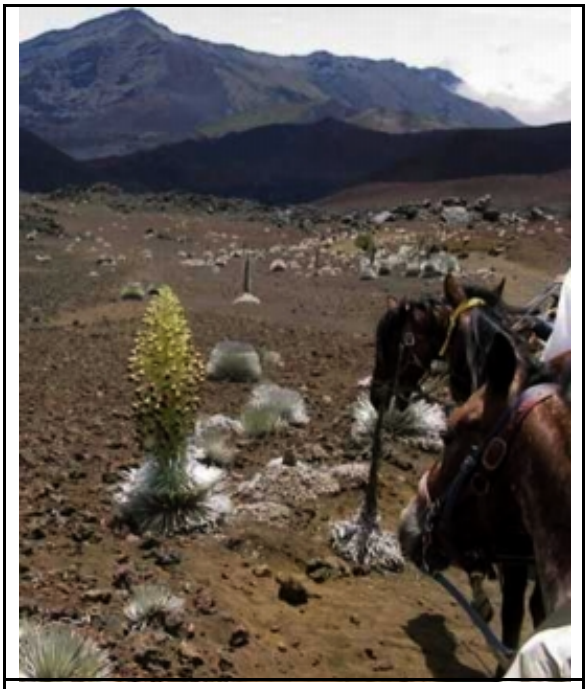


A few underwater fish

After we got back to the hotel, I had to shower to get all the salt water off me. We were too tired to eat at a restaurant and weren't very hungry anyway, so we ordered room service.

We got up quite early on Tuesday for an excursion to the Seven Sacred Pools. The map we had showed that we had to drive almost all the way around the eastern half of Maui. It took us over three hours to reach the pools. The road is winding and narrow in many places. Mike drove on the way, and I drove back. A map we purchased at the pools shows that we might have been able to get to the pools by a slightly shorter route. However, the route we took would mean less backtracking the next day. Besides, the scenery was very beautiful. After we left the pools, we stopped at Hana for lunch. I didn't eat all my lunch and brought the leftovers back with me to the hotel. On our drive back, we stopped for many photo opportunities. Unfortunately, it was no longer sunny as it had been in the morning. Also on our drive back, we stopped for gas to ensure we had enough for the next day's drive to Haleakala.

We did not return to the hotel till 18h30, and it was too late to get any dinner before 20h00. We ordered room service -- a dinner for Mike and a dessert for me. I also ate my leftovers from lunch.



Silversword

Wednesday morning, I got up at the crack of dawn. At 7h00, I called to confirm the Haleakala half-day horse ride with Pony Express Tours. They said the weather was great. So we started off. We made one stop at the first Visitors' Information Center of the park and still reached the meeting point (the second Visitors' Information Center) for the ride in plenty of time. Unfortunately, not all their customers were so prompt; and we ended up waiting for an hour. However, as we hadn't planned anything else for the day, it was okay.

It took about two hours to get to the bottom of the

large crater, which our guide said was created by erosion. The crater contains eight cinder cones. We had a picnic lunch there. We got back to our starting point about 15h30, which was about an hour later than originally scheduled. It was a beautiful ride. There were many silversword plants, quite a few in bloom. The scenery was breathtaking. The day was so clear that from the summit of Haleakala we could even see Mauna Kea on the island of Hawaii.

I had planned to drive back to the hotel, but I got too sleepy and Mike had to take over. Mike suffered from saddle sores galore, and we ended up cancelling our dinner reservations for the hotel's Japanese restaurant. He wasn't really hungry. I ordered room service. I also went down to the hotel shop for more postcards.

I did most of my packing for our return trip home before retiring.

Thursday morning, I got up about 9h30, had breakfast, and finished packing. I tried to do electronic checkout but messed up, because some expenses were in my name and some in Mike's, and the system wouldn't allow me to do mine. The registration desk straightened everything out, though. The rental car return was very easy. We were at the airport early. I wanted to have lunch, but the line was so long that I ate some chips I had saved from the Haleakala ride instead. The day would be short anyway, since we were flying east. Dinner was served on the flight. While we waited to board, I wrote several post cards and mailed them from the airport.

I was able to get some sleep on the plane. We arrived at LAX about 11h30. However, it was about 1h00 the next day before we got home and about 2h00 before we got to bed.

More photos of our trip can be accessed through my web site.

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Mailing Comments on FAPA #251: Note to non-FAPA members: FAPA is an APA of people in science fiction and fantasy fandom. It has a large membership, currently about fifty. There are openings right now. If you are interested in joining, let me know and I can send you the relevant information.

Keith A. Walker (Going Back): The first time I was faced with the concept of "thinking in a language" was in a French class in junior high. I thought it was strange, because I don't mostly think in any language but rather in images, sounds, smells, and other sensory output. For a while, I tried thinking in English; but it slowed down my thinking process, so I went back to my original method of thinking. I have read some studies somewhere that assure me I'm not alone in this.

Ken Forman (So You Say): The Ken Forman I met in Las Vegas was not scruffy. Are you the same person?

In many fannish outings to Chinese restaurants, I have been the token Western barbarian using a fork instead of chopsticks.

Roy Tackett (Eleen's Zine No. 41): Either the man sitting next to me wrong or I misremembered. I recently had the opportunity to see *The Country Girl* starring Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly. I'm happy for Kelly that she won an Oscar. I found the movie to be uneven. There were some parts I found to be less convincing than the play we saw and some parts that were equal or better.

Moi (Convention Log #68): Unfortunately, although Mike was able to rewind the tape on the damaged cassette, we were unable to recover any footage from it. I had some wonderful pictures of birds we never saw again on our Australian trip. I guess we have to go back.

I bought two nose clips to use in swimming and took one to Hawaii with me. On the snorkel/scuba trip we took, however, the instructors told me I could not use them with the diving masks. This is because, one must be able to blow air out of one's nose in the event that water gets into the mask. The group we went with in Hawaii had equipment superior to the one we used in Australia. Although my attempt at diving turned out to be a bust, I had quite a bit of time in the water with snorkel gear. I am learning more about this sort of sport. It is important to have equipment that fits you well. I think I will get my own mask at the local dive shop before I engage in this sort of activity again.

Eric Lindsay (For FAPA): I don't think you necessarily have t o publish a fanzine to be a fanzine fan. You can write LoCs (letters of comment) and you can contribute to fanzines, either in written or artistic form. I think that would qualify a person as a fanzine fan.

A friend of mine retired about five years before she was qualified to receive any retirement funds. She said she would be willing to take on some work if necessary, but it did not prove so.

Harry Warner, Jr. (Horizons, vol. 61, no. 2): I don't consider unemployment insurance or social security benefits to be any form of charity since I contributed from my salary to them.

My understanding is that Japan had intentions of surrendering before the atom bombs were dropped.

You said you had problems understanding the recording of "Coronation Street" that was on the used videotape you purchased. Is this because of the quality of the recording or the accent? I'm curious because I have discovered that some Americans have problems understanding some types of British accents.

To be continued next issue.

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Letters of Comment (For the uninitiated, these are letters commenting on previous issues of my fanzine [newsletter])

My replies to the letters will be enclosed in double parentheses. I will also routinely make editorial corrections in punctuation, spelling, and so forth.

Eric Lindsay, eric@wrevenge.com.au **20 June 2000**

Many thanks for the zines.

It was good to see your write up of your La Vegas visit, The Star Trek Experience, and your marriage. Can you get Mike to explain to me who Kareem Abdul-Jabar is? A basketball player, I guess, from your description. ((Mike says, "I believe he was a UCLA basketball star MANY years ago. His name at that time was Lew Alcinder (or something like that). He turned pro and played many years for the Los Angeles Lakers where he was also a star player. He is TALL.

That is about all I know about him."))

I also enjoyed your Aussiecon report, although I hadn't realised you had been feeling poor for so much of the trip time. It was good to see you both, albeit all too briefly. It is always interesting to see the little items that two similar cultures do in a different way.

We don't know how much more overseas travel we will be doing. Not having work, and the decline of the Australian dollar are both acting against us travelling as often as we would like. ((Eric retired after experiencing a heart attack.))

We set off tomorrow in our motor home, and may be out of contact for a while. ((Eric and his significant other have a wonderful web site about travelling in Australia. If anyone out there would like to know more, let me know.))

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Mary Manchester, Apartment 2, 1297 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620-1655 22 June 2000

((Mary sent an anniversary card with the following comments.))

Thanks for the *Convention Log* and *Feline Mewsings*. I feel quite caught up with your life and doings.

Hope this finds you both well (within the known limits) and happy.

((She also enclosed a cartoon about the letter "G" complaining about feeling useless when "H" is around and an article about Rochester digging up a time capsule that had been buried in 1873. It is interesting to note that Rochester was once prominent as a horticultural centre. The seed industry sparked a colour industry, which is still present in the form of Kodak.

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Sally Syrjala, P. O. Box 149, Centerville, MA 02632 **12 June 2000**

Photo of Sally's garden

Thanks for the zines. The cat verses were something that was particularly enjoyable. Thanks for including them.

This spring, I've spent a good deal of time in the garden. I've enclosed a photo of my statue of St. Francis in our back yard. The sedum and other plants have grown lush since this was taken.

The job is in its busy season, and the volunteer tasks are growing. I'm slated to take over the presidency of the Cape Cod Human Resources Association at the June meeting. I'm currently vice president and membership Chair. Ike ((her husband)) and I are part of a group of ten who appealed a conservative department decision to allow herbicide use in Bearse's Pond. When I brought some orphan birds to Wild Care, I came out their development person. I'm putting together a great proposal now. Ike and I petitioned to have a new chapter of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society to run the Robbins Museum. I guess I'm supposed to be treasurer. I'm trying to redo a pamphlet for Green CAPE (Cape Alliance for Pesticide Education), and I said I'd do some press releases for the Boyine Historical Society.

Hope you are doing better.

((I hope I got the spelling of all the place names correct. I had some difficulty making out the handwriting.))

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Kim Huett, P. O. Box 679, Woden, ACT 2606, Australia **28 June 2000**

I don't think I've ever locced an issue of *Convention Log* before this, though you have sent me quite a few over the years, mostly because there usually isn't anything in it that inspires me to comment. I do find descriptions of US conventions and what happens there interesting but as an outsider with nothing to add. Your visit to Australia, however, does move me to make a few small points.

It's not really true that Australian bird life is uniformly colourful. Magpies, mudlarks, and currawongs all come in basic black and white and are probably the three most common native birds. ((I thought I saw magpies in Sydney but could not find anyone to confirm my suspicions. They looked a little different from the ones in this country but close enough.)) I don't suppose you would see many of them in city centres, however, where introduced birds like the ones you mentioned rule. And out in the countryside, the more colourful birds probably draw your eye away from them.

I was surprised to find US plumbing not quite up to the standard I expected of it when I visited. I assumed that at least some of it would be far superior to what I was used to; but on the whole, Australian toilets and other pluming are superior, from what I encountered. Of course, this doesn't mean every example here is better, but you know what I mean.

Damned if I know why you were told most Australian schools are single sex, since it's quite untrue. The bulk of schools in this country are government-operated and unisex, as far as I'm aware. Many private schools are single sex, in particular those aiming to service the rich end of society, but by no means all. However, even if the bulk of private schools are single sex, they are still outnumbered heavily by public schools. Either somebody was indulging in a little wishful think, or there was some sort of communications breakdown. ((Could it differ by state? The person who told us this was in Sydney. Another possibility is that the person was behind the times; he was no youngster.))

#

Cathy Cupitt, P. O. Box 915, Nedlands, 6909, W. Australia **19 July 2000**

Thanks for the copies of *Convention Log* and *Feline Mewsings*. They have made me feel that I almost know you, as they are so chatty and newsy. I'm sending you a copy of my own zine – *The Rhizome Factor* in return. It's not as personal; I'm afraid, so you won't learn much about me from it; but I hope you enjoy it anyway.

I'm really looking forward to meeting you at Chicon ((this year's World Science Fiction Convention)) and afterwards in LA.

((I'm sure I shall enjoy your zine. I enjoy reading a variety of fanzines from the personal to ones that contain fiction and others in between.))

#

Franz H. Miklis, A-5151 Nussdorf 179, Austria **19 July 2000**

I read in your *Feline Mewsings #1* that you are searching after some illos for your zines. Voilà – I decided to put together a nice collection for your convenience. (Some work is really old and rare and goes back to 1980.) ((Your contribution is much appreciated, and I hope I can do them justice in including them in my zines.

Nice cat haiku, a good contrast to the dolphin haiku I'm just reading in the great Brin book (don't know the English title) where the dolphins were uplifted by man. Imagine, we've got three little cats, two weeks old now; and it's a wonder to watch them exploring the universe in their kitty ways. ((We have two cats. Fluffy is about a year and a half. Mercury is a little over three months. Since we got Mercury, Fluffy has decided he is no longer a kitten and acts more like a parent to Mercury. Mercury chews on everything. Photos are available at my web site.))

Greetings to Mike. Hey, I've bought this wonderful ETX, too; and I also like the compact little thing. Watching the moon is like flying in an Eagle over it. My kids tremble in excitement, and even my wife had one sigh of astonishment (She doesn't share my extravagant hobbies). I think Mike could be interested that before I purchased the ETX, I worked on a self-made 8-inch reflector. The interesting thing is that I even produced the mirror for myself. I began cutting and polishing the glass (Pyrex) in 1986 and 1989 – a gigantic piece of work on such a damn little glass, but the quality is superb. (But the whole telescope weights nearly a hundred kilograms, including the mounts and counterbalances so does not compare with the ETX in flexibility.) An interesting thing is also the optical tests of the mirrors' sphere by a test called "Faucould'sche Messerschneide," which is so exact that you see the warm air of your hand held before the mirror in dark clouds steaming up when watched through this apparatus.

Next time, I have to check out the www page of you and Mike. ((Mike's web site can be reached from mine. If you have any problems, let me know.))

#

Leslie David, ldavid_@hotmail.com **26 July 2000**

As usual, it's always good to hear from you. I think you're the only person in fandom that I'm still in touch with.

Thanks for telling me about the *Convention Log* and *Feline Mewsings*. I did read *Feline Mewsings* #1 and *Convention Log* #68. I'm sorry that you have not been well enough to work. It sounds like you've seen a boatload of doctors--I hope they are helping you. The one comment I saw that stuck in my mind in *Feline Mewsings* #1 was your comment about saturated fats being animal fats. For the most part this is true, however, two of the worst saturated fats are coconut oil and palm kernel oil, which are used in a lot of prepared foods. These days I try to stay away from most pre-packaged and prepared foods.

I also enjoyed reading Convention Log #68. I must be the last person in the world to know that you and Mike got married! I can't believe you never said a word to me. Belated felicitations to you both. I enjoyed your trip report to Australia, since it is a place I've always wanted to go to. The Aussiecon trip report, well, I realize that the smartest thing I did was to walk away from fandom. I'm just too mundane these days for words. It also came as a surprise to find my name in print. Guess that much of a fan I still am....

I would be happy to host you and Mike if you make it to DC for a visit after going to Philly. I'm not sure if I've seen you since '83, when I went to Korea.

Been having a few health problems of my own. I've had a sleep disorder since the 80's where I couldn't maintain sleep for more than 2-4 hours a night. In '90 I was diagnosed as having clinical depression and put on a combination of antidepressants--10 mg of Prozac during the day and 150 mg of Trazadone at night. I guess after 10 years, I've become accustomed to the dosage. My doctor tried increasing my dosage of Trazadone to 200 mg, but that hasn't helped my sleep cycle substantially, so now I have to go back and let the doctor play with my medications all over again.

I've also been having night sweats, so we did a chest X-ray and TB test to rule out TB. Instead of injecting

me with the TB subcutaneously, the nurse accidentally injected me with tetanus vaccine, which swelled up, itched and took 3 weeks to completely reabsorb. I guess I'm lucky they didn't make a mistake with anything that could have been fatal. I also had urinalysis and blood work to rule out HIV and early menopause. All of my tests were normal, so we still don't know why I wake up sweating.

Well, I've got to get back to work, so please keep in touch.

#

Mary Kato, mary_kato@urscorp.com **28 July 2000**

Got a chance to look at some of it yesterday--very fun! I enjoy your entertainment reviews. Will look at it more later.

((Mary only has Internet access through work right now, so she can't read much of my zines at one sitting. Her computer at home died.))

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Closing Remarks

Due to the length of my Hawaii trip report, I'm not going to try to fit in any theatre reviews this issue.