

# Feline ~~M~~ewsings

#11

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Feline Mewsings is a personalzine / newsletter published more or less quarterly by R-Laurraine Tutihasi, 29217 Stonecrest Road, Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90275-4936, 310-265-0766, ltutihasi@aol.com, <http://members.aol.com/ltutihasi>. It is distributed through FAPA 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: \$1.50 per issue or \$5 per year). [ ] if this box is checked, I need to hear from you if you wish to stay on my mailing list. A slightly modified version 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 #340. ©2003 R-Laurraine Tutihasi. Permission is granted to reprint or forward any part or all of this newsletter provided that it carries the following statement: "Copyright 2003 by R-Laurraine Tutihasi. Originally published in Feline Mewsings #11, <http://members.aol.com/ltutihasi>."

## \* Editorial / Introduction

On New Year's day, we figured out that we could hook up our rooftop TV antenna to the digital input on our new TV to get the digital UHF signals. We tried it, and it works! We get eight local stations. Some are apparently not broadcasting, or we can't get their signals for some reason. Perhaps we should contact them to find out, since one of the stations we don't get is UPN.

I've waited until too late to have Mike read it over before I print this off, so there may be more typos than usual. My apologies.

\* \* \*

## \* Mike

The big news is his new telescope. It is a Meade LXD 8-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain. He has just used it a few times so far, and you can see ever so much better than the 5-inch one he has on loan from Meade. Pictures he has taken with it are at [www.weasner.com/lxd](http://www.weasner.com/lxd).

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## \* Local Activities

### Live Theatre

**Beautiful in the Extreme:** This play was about Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark fame. Apparently he suffered from depression. The play was based on his diary. Most of it takes place during the famous expedition. This Colony performance was the play's world premiere. I thought it was an excellent study of Lewis and hope it gets performed in many more places.

The Colony also held a party for its supporters. They served food and also entertained us with excerpts from the various musicals they have performed since the group's inception in 1975.

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**Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk:** Originally Prokofiev's *War and Peace* had been scheduled. However, due to circumstances about which we were not informed, we got this opera by Dmitri Shostakovich. Even this had its problems. The sets and costumes were waylaid by the dockworkers strike on the West Coast. The ship carrying them was diverted to Japan. The costumes were eventually flown over, but this could not be done with the sets. Instead, the plans were obtained. They had then to be translated, because they were in Russian. Carpenters worked overtime to get the sets built in time for the performance. I wasn't terribly impressed by the sets. They were fairly simple. One set basically served for the whole opera. Pieces were moved around to represent different locations. The story is about a woman named Katerina who is unhappy with her married life. Her husband is a wimp. Her father-in-law bosses Katerina and her husband around. She falls in love with an itinerant worker while her husband is away on a business trip. They eventually murder the father-in-law and hide his body in the wine cellar. Unfortunately, a passing tramp breaks into the cellar, thinking to steal something and discovers the body. Katerina eventually finds out what an opportunist her lover is. While the performance was fine, this opera isn't exactly to my taste.

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**A Concert of Passion and Poetry:** The programme originally scheduled had been Monteverdi's *Di Coronazione di Pompeia*. However, due to the illness of the person who was doing the new arrangement, the programme was changed. This new show comprised excerpts from three operas. The three operas were Monteverdi's *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, Massenet's *Werther*, and Verdi's *Otello*. We were treated to the last scene or the last few scenes from each opera and therefore the death scenes from each. The *Battle between Tancredi and Clorinda* was presented in orchestral fashion. A small chamber orchestra was in the centre front of the stage. The three singers appeared around them. Most of the singing was done by the narrator, Testo, sung by Kresimir Spicer. Because Clorinda was supposed to be dressed as a man in the scene, Isabel Bayrakdarian wore a tuxedo. Alfredo Daza sang the part of Tancredi. The story takes place during the crusades and is about a knight who is in love with a Saracen maiden.

The other two operas were minimally staged. There were no backdrops, but furniture was used. The singers were in costume.

Massenet's *Werther* excerpt started in the scene where Charlotte, sung by Frederica von Stade, is perusing the letters she has received from Werther and is wondering what will happen at Christmas, which is fast approaching. Placido Domingo was originally supposed to have sung the part of Werther, but illness prevented him from doing so. The part was sung instead by Roberto Alagna. I heard someone in the audience say, during the intermission, that Alagna had had two weeks to learn this part, which he was performing for his first time. His performance was fine except for one note, which he seemed to have difficulty hitting. The part of Sophie was sung by the Japanese soprano Maki Mori, who didn't look particularly Japanese to me. Albert's part was sung by Vladimir Chernov.

The Monteverdi and Massenet pieces were conducted by Kent Nagano.

*Otello* essentially began with Desdemona, sung by Carmen Giannattasio, preparing to go to bed for the last time. The part of Otello was sung by Roberto Alagna, taking the place of Placido Domingo. The excerpt was conducted by Placido Domingo.

I wasn't expecting to enjoy the evening much, so I was pleasantly surprised. Maybe they should do this kind of thing more often.

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### Films

**Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets:** I had the chance to see this with friends. Mike won't go to any of the Harry Potter films. I liked it better than the first one, one friend thought because they didn't have to spend a lot of time setting things up. I wonder if anyone who saw it hadn't seen the first movie? This one had a fairly complex plot that involved giant spiders, dead people, and dragons. This all happens in Harry's second year at Hogwart's. Kenneth Branagh played a role in this, just a fun, fluffy part. I expect to see this on the Hugo ballot, not because it was that great but because there are so many Harry Potter fans. I still have not managed to finish any of the books. The movie was quite enjoyable and fun.

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**Die Another Day:** Mike is a James Bond fan. He reads all the books and sees all the movies. This one, I thought, was better than the last few have been. It involves Korea and Iceland. Maybe they are going a bit too far with the gadgets. But it was fun. Considering all the violence, there was very little blood.

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**Star Trek: Nemesis:** I thought this was one of the better stories, about in the same league with *Wrath of Khan*. It opens at the wedding of William Riker and Deanna Troi. If you have a sharp eye, you can catch Wil Wheaton in this scene. We missed it. The nemesis of the title is Jean-Luc Picard's clone. I thought this story demonstrated very well the fact that a clone isn't necessarily a carbon copy of the original. The action was mostly fast-paced, though the beginning was a bit slow. There is a sad scene toward the end, so I shed some tears. If you're a Star Trek follower, I think you will be pleased.

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**The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers:** Before we went to see this, we viewed the expanded version of the first instalment, which I can't recommend highly enough. It was much better than the theatrical version. The action flowed more smoothly. *The Two Towers* suffered from the same problems as *The Fellowship of the Ring* in that it was probably cut short for theatrical release. I expect a much better product when the expanded version comes out on DVD. Overall, though, the movie was quite satisfactory. There was a lot of action as the war with the dark forces has begun in earnest. The acting, music, and scenery were great. I remember not liking this second book as well as the other two, but I don't think the movie suffers as much from being the middle segment. I can't wait for the conclusion.

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## Other

**Halloween Party:** This year's theme was "Clueless". Here's a picture of me.

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**Forry Ackerman:** The weekend before Thanksgiving, Forry Ackerman celebrated his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday with a luncheon at a Chinese buffet. There were a hundred guests. The food was mediocre, but it was great to see him up and about again. He hasn't lost his love for dessert. Among the "name" guests were John Landis, Brad Linaweaver, and Ann Robinson. He had a bunch of postal covers prepared for this occasion. He also gave away copies of the magazine he is apparently working for now.

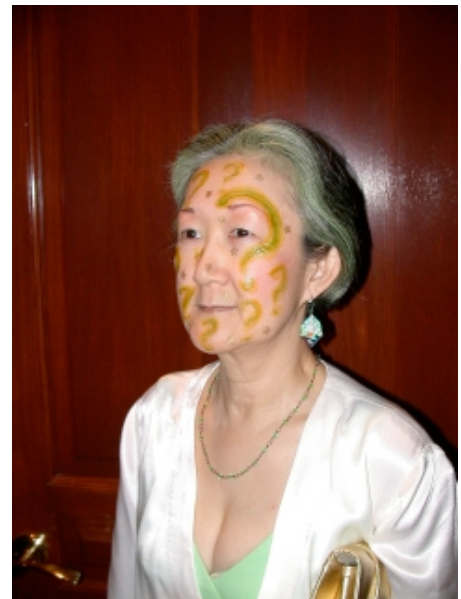
We made a day of this and followed the lunch with a trip to a bookstore for a signing by F. Paul Wilson. Then we saw *Die Another Day*, the new James Bond film. We ended the day at another party.

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**Loscon 29 - Planet Loscon:** Unfortunately, I came down with the flu the night before; so I was pretty miserable for most of the con and didn't do a whole lot. The reason I went even though I was sick is because I was responsible for the Fanzine Lounge. For most of the con, I didn't have much of a voice. I did a few shifts in the Fanzine Lounge myself, but others volunteered for the rest. I also had found two others to host evening parties on Friday and Saturday. I think it turned out pretty well. Other than the panel I was on, which was about fanzines, I attended part of a panel about the bricks and mortar demise of a local sf bookstore; they will be selling on the Internet.

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**Balboa Island:** Last year we viewed Christmas lights in Long Beach. This year, we went down to Newport Beach. Balboa Island is connected to the mainland by one narrow bridge. There is one parking lot on the island, and we met the Neighborhood Place Project walking group there. We started the walk during daylight hours and walked the perimeter of most of the island, admiring the Christmas decorations and some of the architecture. Like the neighbourhood in Long Beach that we toured last year, this place has small lots with large houses, for the most part. Many well-heeled celebrities have lived here. Shirley Temple and John Wayne were among those that were mentioned. John Wayne's widow still lives there. Some people live there only in summer. Many places are available for rent. We had dinner at a restaurant across the street from the parking lot. Then we took a short ferry ride across the channel to the mainland on the other side, Balboa Peninsula where the Balboa Pier is. We were able to view some of the Christmas lights on the island from there. Overall, I wasn't as impressed as I was last year by the Christmas decorations.





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**Fillmore and environs:** Another Neighborhood Place Project outing we went on was to the West Valley and into Ventura County.

We met in Burbank and all piled into a van for this one.

Our first stop was at Oakwood Cemetery in Chatsworth where Fred Astaire is buried. Then we went to Strathearn Historical Park and Museum in Simi Valley. This is akin to Greenfield Park in Michigan and similar places but much smaller. The park is situated on part of the former Strathearn estate. Their original home is the centrepiece. Other buildings have been moved here from elsewhere. Other buildings include a library and a typical prebuilt home of the type that Sears used to sell. We also drove by the Santa Susanna Railroad Depot and Museum.

After a lunch stop at a Marie Callender's, we drove past a few places we did not have time to stop at, such as "Wrong Way" Corrigan's former estate and an animal training place. Then we drove on to Fillmore, which retains its original nineteenth century charm. The big attraction there is the Fillmore and Western Railway Museum. There we had an extra treat, as work was being done to prepare for a movie shoot the next day. The film's working title is *Sea Biscuit*. It's about the famous racehorse. The trains had been painted with different signs and extra platforms and lamps had been erected. There were station signs for Chicago, Albuquerque, and other places. We learned later that Jeff Bridges was in the movie. Another stop was at the Rancho Camulos Museum. It is largely still being restored.

For dinner we stopped at the Heritage Valley Inn in Piru, where a lovely Queen Anne's mansion is for sale. We saw the exterior of the house. The interior as shown on its web site is impressive (<http://www.pirumansion.com/>)

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**Stars on Ice:** We saw this at Arrowhead Pond in Anaheim. It was an enjoyable show with most of the numbers having a theme of love. There were four pairs couples: World silver medallists Meno and Sand, Olympics gold medallists Salé and Pelletier, Olympic bronze medallists Ina and Zimmerman, and Olympic gold medallists Berezhnaya and Sikharulidze. In addition, there was one dance pair - US national champions Roca and Sur - and four single skaters: six-time US champion Todd Eldredge, World skating champion Kurt Browning, Olympic gold medallist Alexei Yagudin, and two-time Olympic gold medallist Katarina Witt. There was a good mix of humour in the selections and a balance between popular and classical music.

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**\* Mailing Comments on FAPA #261:** 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.

**Fantasy Amateur:** Good to see a few new members, though I'm sorry that we've also lost a couple.  
I don't see any reason to keep term limits for FAPA. Is there a procedure for unseating an officer if the membership feels it's necessary?

**Arnie Katz (Spotch #1):** I read with interest your reaction to the auction at the LASFS meeting held at Westercon. I guess I've been around the LASFS so long that I've stopped noticing when things were inappropriate.

**Ben Indick (Ben's Beat 69-70):** I read *Vingt ans Après (Twenty Years After)* in French, so the English edition may be different. I have the French edition because I could not find it in English at the time I was searching for it. The edition I have is a thick book that comes in two volumes. Your description of the book you have makes me think we both have the same version, just in different languages. If so, then there are no other books than the ones you already have. Bruce Pelz mentioned two other books, but they are incorporated into my edition. As I recall, one of the books was about Mademoiselle Louise de la Valliere. Apparently the book is sometimes published in three parts. At least that is my take on it.

Your description of Frank Langella's performance in *Fortune's Fool* makes me wonder whether he always plays his parts in a tired way. When I saw him in *Dangerous Liaisons (Les liaisons Dangereuses)*, I thought he looked as though he was so bored he couldn't wait for the play to end. Perhaps I misinterpreted his intent, but I still didn't like his performance. I have seen him play parts where I thought he did well, though not live. One was a taped play, but I don't know whether it was taped live.

**Ray Nelson (Big Cat Vol. 1, No. 1):** Welcome to FAPA.

Thank you for running the Ray Bradbury interview. It was very interesting.

Thank you for the information about *Scenes de la Vie de Boheme*. I will soon be as behind in my electronic reading as I am with my books. There is so much good stuff to read and so little time to read it!

**Bob Silverberg (Mailing 255, Where Are You):** I keep all the FAPA mailings intact in the envelope I receive them in. I hope you find a copy of 255.

**Roger Wells (Voice of the Habu):** I'm glad you found something productive to do with your time. I thought maybe it was something I might look into, but you said only minors are allowed to do part-time work, so I guess I'll have to look elsewhere.

**Peggy Rae Sapienza (Adventures on Earth No. 6):** I looked "pronunciation" up in the OED. It doesn't specifically say how the spelling changed from "pronunciation", which it apparently was from the evidence in some of the historical quotes, to "pronunciation". However, I have a theory. The British have a tendency to shorten sounds. Witness such things as "St. James" being pronounced "sinjin". I think this is what happened with "pronunciation". People pronounced it "pronunciation", and the spelling eventually changed.

**Janice Morningstar (Did You Know the Way to San Jose):** Welcome back. Stick around.

I don't know how many WorldCons we'll be getting to in future. We'll be deciding on a case by case basis. They have become so big that we're barely able to cope with them.

**Tim Marion (Terminal Eyes 8):** You are much more patient with the cable company than I would be. My second action after my dissatisfaction of not being able to correct the situation locally would have been to write to the president and CEO of the company, possibly copying in the Better Business Bureau, the Attorney General, the FCC, and any local government entity involved in choosing your cable provider.

Season one of *Babylon 5* came out in November. Season two is due out in March or April. I haven't had a chance to watch the DVDs yet. I understand there are a few minor complaints about the transfer. We had a few DVDs before we bought a DVD player. We watched them on Mike's computer until that time.

When Mike ordered the Toyota Prius, he started looking around for a buyer for his Oldsmobile Aurora. The agreement was that his co-worker would get the Aurora when Mike got his Prius. Unfortunately, the buyer's car was totalled, and she asked Mike if she could have the Aurora sooner. He sold the Aurora in November, but he had to wait until January for his Prius. The dealer had said that we would get the Prius in October or November.

Watching figure skating live is a completely different experience from watching on TV. Even when I go to a show in person, I still like to watch the show on TV as well. In person, you get to see the whole rink at once. On TV, the cameras focus in on the skaters and rarely show the whole rink. If you've never had the experience, it may be difficult to understand.

What effect does caffeine have on your skin? Do you break out? That sounds like an allergy. Caffeine makes me drowsy if I have too much.

A friend of mine used comic books to teach her students how to read. It was not an official part of the curriculum. She taught fourth and fifth graders, and they often arrived at her class not knowing how to read. When they left, though, they all knew how to read. She used comic books, Star Trek books, and anything else she knew the students would be interested in reading. She bought the material with her own money.

Weren't there two shows called *The Bob Newhart Show*? One was about a psychiatrist; I believe that was the one in which Suzanne (not Susan) Pleshette co-starred. The other one took place in an inn. I didn't watch either, but I have one of the Christmas episodes on a tape. I think, at the end, one of the series turns out to have been a dream.

My mailing comments are in Trebuchet MS. The headers to the mailing comments are in Georgia. I notice that occasionally Word will play tricks on me and change the format. That's the part about Word I don't like. You can't see the formatting as you can in WordPerfect or WordStar. I try to check for formatting when I proofread, but sometimes I don't catch everything.

The LoC from Darrell Schweitzer explains a lot about Islamic history. The problem with the way history is taught, at least in this country, is that every incident seems to be studied in isolation and not in the context of everything else that was happening in the world at the time. One history course I liked in high school was where the instructor would throw in remarks like "At the time of the American Revolution, Beethoven was writing his music". I like timelines that show parallel developments in science, music, etc. Nothing happens in isolation.

I really like the illo by Mac McGill about the Twin Towers. It's the sort of thing I wish I'd thought of.

**Gordon Eklund (Sweet Jane 35):** I guess I'm not much of a moviegoer. I think I've only seen about a third of your top fifty-five list. I see some movies on the list that I have watched more than once or that I would consider seeing again - *2001*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Metropolis*, *La Strada*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *My Darling Clementine*, and *Nosferatu*. On the other hand there are also a couple of movies I will never see or wish I hadn't - *Godfather II* and *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*.

**Moi (Feline Mewsings #10):** We recently bought a new scanner that connects to the computer via USB. We bought it because we had an old slide scanner for which we hadn't been able to get software for OS X. Our old flatbed scanner was SCSI.

At a recent opera lecture, we learned that Verdi's *Otello*, one of his last operas, shows a Wagnerian influence.

**Fred Lerner (Lofgeornost #69):** The computer game of *Myst* has nothing whatsoever, that I can tell, to do with Verne's *The Mysterious Island*. The game involves, I think, interdimensional travel. I haven't read the Verne novel in years. I think the translation I read was published by Scholastic. I don't see how it could be translated badly. Verne's writing is pretty straightforward prose. It's not the sort of writing that I feel I need to read in the original language.

**Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #93: Wondrous Stories):** I bought the audio book version of *Fantasy: the Best of 2001*. I haven't listened to it yet, but it doesn't seem to include the Ted Chiang story. It's supposed to be an unabridged recording. Maybe Chiang did not give permission for his story to be included.

**Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #93: The Passing Scene):** I see you have *The Three Musketeers* on your reading list; are you also planning to read the sequels? I was reading *Captain Blood* free at the Common Reader site, but it was pulled before I finished it. I don't consider it worth buying a copy to finish it, though; it's just a pirate story after all.

You said Jean was at a tricky tray at MOHS; what's a tricky tray?

**Michael W. Waite (Trial and Air No. 12):** I scored a paltry thirty on the Stephen King Horror



Quiz. I'm not surprised; I'm not particularly fond of horror, finding most of it pretty silly. The movie I found most frightening is classified as a medical thriller - *Coma*, based on Robin Cook's book. I have liked some of Stephen King's works, notably on film. *Carrie* is among my favourite movies, but that may be more because of director Brian de Palma than because it was written by King. I also liked *The Green Mile*; but then it starred Tom Hanks. Of his books, I liked *The Stand*. I have a couple of his short story collections that I have yet to read. I found *Salem's Lot* pretty boring and was angered by the ending of *The Shining*. I liked the movie and TV versions of *The Shining* better, though I consider neither to be great works. I was afraid to read *Carrie* for fear that it would ruin the movie for me. I watched a bunch of mediocre TV-movies of his works before I gave up on them. I did watch *The Stand*, and it was not too bad.

I have twice purchased *Playboy* - once was for skater Katarina Witt, the other time for actress Claudia Christian. I'm still getting the free subscription - free to me; but someone must be paying for it.

**Milt Stevens (Alphabet Soup #36):** Perhaps the Horton and Converse drug store in the Valley closed, but there were other branches of the store that were open at least until the early or mid 1990s.

**Jack Speer (Synapse):** My understanding is that "groats" is the actual original spelling of grits and was pronounced grits. English may be easier if the accented syllable were marked except that people don't always pronounce them with the same syllables accented. As an example, I pronounce address, the location, with the accent on the first syllable; but others pronounce it with the accent on the second syllable.

What is Palmer script?

**Jack Speer (Synapse):** As I recall, Harlan blamed the 11 September attack on fundamentalists, not just Islamic fundamentalists, but all fundamentalists. This is a simplification. He talked for quite a while, probably over an hour. I have the videotape of his speech but have not had a chance to view it.

The dictation software understands nothing. When you first install it, you read some passages that come with the software. In this way, it learns a basic vocabulary of pronunciation. As you use it, it learns your pronunciation of other words. I don't use it to write this zine, as I do it in short stints that don't require a lot of typing all at once. I mostly use the dictation software when I write letters, since then I spend an hour or more typing. The dictation software requires quite a bit of proofreading. In addition, I use the spelling and grammar checker in Word. I always do a final proofreading just before I print things. Still, errors happen. Mike usually reads the zine over as well.



Illo by Franz Miklis



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