

Feline Mewsings #19



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, Laurraine@mac.com, <http://www.weasner.com/>. 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 #348. ©2004 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 2004 by R-Laurraine Tutihasi. Originally published in *Feline Mewsings* #19, <http://members.aol.com/felinemewsings/index.html>."

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Feline ~~M~~ewsings

#19

February 2005

* Editorial / Introduction

November and December were about as expected. We were busy enough with holiday activities that we were happy we hadn't planned any extra activities. Aside from sending out cards and gifts, there were the usual parties to keep us busy.

The weather in December was varied. It started out quite cold; I used my long-sleeved blouses for the first time in a couple of years. Then it heated up to summerlike temperatures. The month ended with a prolonged rainy period that extended well into January.

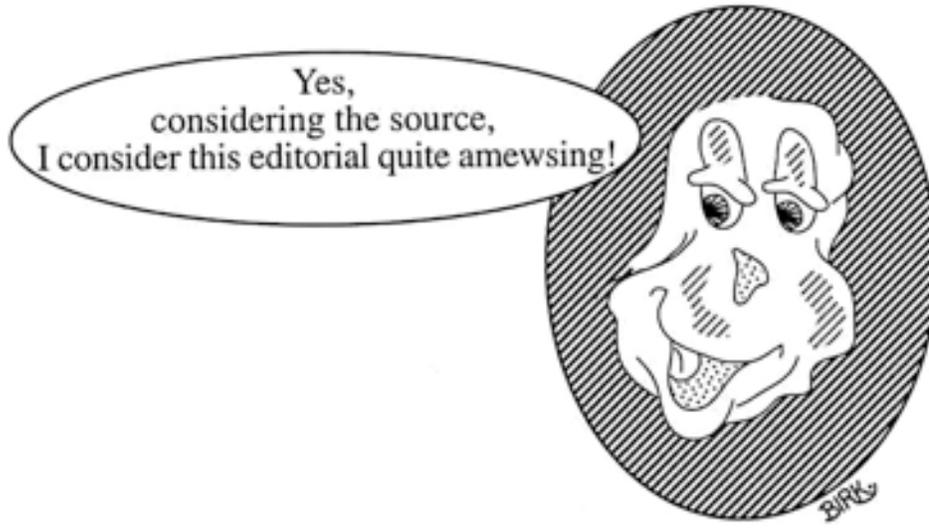
Although the first day of January went about as expected, things started to go wrong after that. We learned that Frank Kelly Freas had died early on the morning of the second. As the funeral was the next day, various LASFS members were busy making phone calls to alert the membership. Mike took Monday off for the funeral, which was at a mortuary in Canoga Park. The service was well attended. Friends were invited to speak. Among those who did were Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, David Gerrold, Brad Linaweaver, and John Hertz. Family members also spoke. Kelly's son had flown in from the East Coast. Jackie and her family have lived in the area for the last year or so. Afterward we were invited to widow Laura's house. A memorial service also took place the following Sunday.

We received news of another LASFS death a day or two later. This time it was Michael Mason, a fan in the prime of his life, whom we had just seen at Kelly's funeral. I understand he died in his sleep. This is not a good way to start out year. I learned later than Michael had died from the effects of an undiagnosed case of diabetes. He was under the care of a doctor, so I have to believe incompetence on the doctor's part.

I drove in the rain Sunday, 9 January, to attend the memorial service for Frank Kelly Freas at the Church of Scientology Celebrity Center & Manor Hotel in Hollywood. Traffic was fairly light, and the rain was sparse. I got there in plenty of time. I spoke to a few people, including Genny Dazzo before the service. Then it was announced that we should take our seats. I sat down next to Allison Hershey, whom it turned out had been helped in her art career by Kelly. It took a while, though, for the service to start. I spoke mostly to a man sitting next to me; I think his name was Harry something. We talked about flowers, and he told me about a web site where photos were exhibited. The service started with an introduction. Then Tim Powers spoke. After that a message from fellow artist Vincent di Fate was read. Then, I think, Brad Linaweaver spoke. Another message was read. After that I don't remember the exact order of speakers. One was a man from Michigan, whose I believe his name is George Hunt, who reminded me a bit of Robin Williams in both appearance and demeanor. He spoke about a Star Trek convention in Chicago where Kelly helped get Leonard Nimoy out of a crowd of fans. It turns out we were probably at many of the same conventions on the East Coast and Midwest in the seventies. George and I shared many friends and acquaintances in common. After the service we caught up with many memories that we hadn't known we'd shared.

Other speakers included a man named Dragon, who now works in the television and film industries. Kelly encouraged him in his 3-D art. LASFSian Glen Olson talked about introducing Kelly to his father and related a WWII story that Kelly had shared with them. There were other speakers, including members of Kelly's family and close family friends. After the formalities, we mingled and shared light refreshments. I discovered that Steve Barnes is back in town living on the eastern edge of LA County. I

spoke to Alice Massoglia, Karen Anderson, Art Cover, and many others but no longer remember exactly whom.



The rain became very heavy after the service. When it lightened up, I decided I'd better make my getaway while I had the chance. The drive home was rather horrendous, as it rained quite heavily for most of it. Most roads were covered with sheets of water, and sometimes the water was quite a bit deeper. Traffic was heavier than it had been on the drive up.

During about fifteen days from the end of December until well into January, we received more rain than we usually get for an entire year. The amount of rain varied widely from place to place. I think generally it rained more in inland areas than along the coast. The danger for coastal low-lying areas was runoff from inland areas. Several places had to be evacuated because of the possibility of rivers overflowing. Mudslides in some areas completely destroyed several homes. The after effects of the rain continued for quite a afterwards. We experienced a blackout that lasted for over twenty-eight hours a few days after the rains had stopped. Although we don't know for sure that the power outage was caused by the rain, we suspect the two were related. The electric company only said there had been an equipment malfunction.

* * *

* Mike

Mike's computer had a meltdown just before Loscon. It was almost, but not quite, as bad as the hard disk failure I experienced last year. Apparently his motherboard gave out. But for a while he could operate the computer long enough to create a disk image with some new software he had downloaded. The motherboard didn't fail until the computer was heated up. For some reason Apple replaced his hard disk as well, so he was really happy to have made a disk image.

In late January we hosted a get-together for my college alumni group for the purpose of stargazing. We were worried that fog would interfere, but the skies cleared up for us. Mike spent most of the party showing people sights through three telescopes. Everyone seemed to enjoy it.

* * *

* Local Activities

Theatre

The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge: This was a dramatic reading given at the Colony Theatre for regular subscribers and was written by Mark Brown. It starred many talented actors we have seen in other plays there. The play takes place a year after the well-known Dickens story when Scrooge is suing Jacob Marley and the other ghosts for breaking and entering, kidnapping, slander, pain and suffering,

attempted murder, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The whole thing takes place in a courtroom. While not as great as most of their plays, it was quite entertaining and fun. The play used many lines lifted straight out of Dickens.

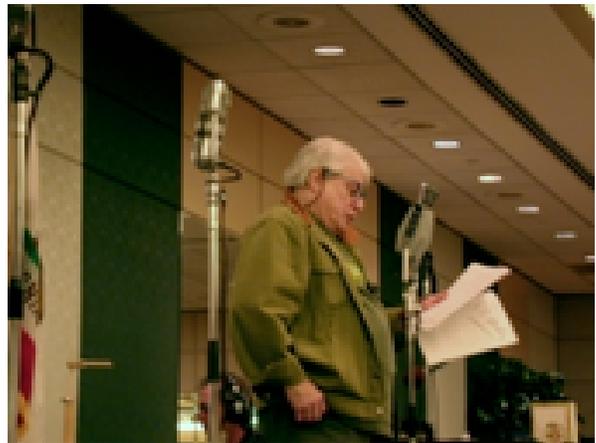
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Other

SPERDVAC: The acronym stands for Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety, and Comedy. Basically, the group caters to people interested in old-time radio shows. They had a convention in mid-November, and we attended a portion of it. We might have considered attending more of it, but we already had things planned for the rest of the weekend.

We attended the Friday night banquet and recreations. Dinner started about 18h30. The meal was relatively light but fairly good – fish with potatoes and string beans followed by a flan dessert. The company at our table were very interesting to talk to. We were treated to recreations of two radio shows afterward. The first was an episode of *The Mysterious Traveler* titled “Five Miles Down”. Apparently there are no existing recordings of the original broadcast. Harlan Ellison, who acted and helped direct the show, said he remembers hearing this episode when he was growing up. Other members of the cast were Frankie Thomas, Jan Merlin, Tommy Cook, Walter Koenig, and Stefan Rudnicki. I have a number of audio books read at least in part by the last, so it was interesting to see what he looks like; he is quite tall. Harlan’s co-director was Anthony Tollin. Sounds effects were done by Tony Palermo. The story is basically about a scientist who wants to dig a really deep hole into the Earth. At the file-mile point, he sees something that causes him to tell everyone to plug up the hole. We never find out exactly what it was, because he dies.

The second radio show was an episode of *Duffy’s Tavern* that guest-starred Robert Benchley. Because the man who did his part was different from the printed schedule, I don’t have his name. The other members of the cast were Ben Cooper, Hazel Shermet and Bob Graham (who were in the original), Hal Stone, and Charles Washburn. Bob Lynes played the part of the announcer. The episode was directed by Hal Stone and Barbara Watkins. Sound effects were by Tony Palermo.



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Southern California Autumn Ball: This is a one-day event put on annually in the fall. This year’s took place at a hall in South Pasadena. There is teaching in the morning and afternoon. However, we got there just as the afternoon teaching was ending. We had stopped to pick up Mike’s new Regency outfit on the way. To the left is a picture of the two of us.

We got there just in time to hear a talk by Henry Kupjack, who makes miniature rooms. The most famous miniature rooms are the Thorne Rooms at the Chicago Art Institute. The original Thorne Rooms were commissioned by Mrs. James Ward Thorne. They were built by our speaker’s father. The rooms are at a 1:12 scale. They were set in various periods and various locales. The talk at the ball covered the period around the Regency in England, Europe, and America. They included selections from the Thorne Rooms and ones built subsequent to Thorne’s commission.

The ball was in the evening. I only danced three dances (Margaret’s Waltz, An Easy Competence, and Horatio’s

Fancy), my energy levels being on the lower end of the spectrum. Also the ball ran really late, and we left before it was over. Still we had an enjoyable time. It was also an opportunity to catch up with some friends we don't see very often.

#

Forry Ackerman's eighty-eighth birthday: This year's party was held at a Thai restaurant that held more people than the Chinese restaurant he has used for the past couple of years. It also had one big room equipped with a stage and an audio-visual system. With a couple of exceptions, we didn't think the food was as good; but it was nice to be able to see and hear what was going on. Ann Robinson, who was in the 1953 movie of *War of the Worlds*, has been given a role in the new version directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Tom Cruise. She was at the party and sounded very excited about the movie. Because we had to drive down to Oceanside (near San Diego) after the party, we didn't linger to talk to people.

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Stars on Ice: This year's show at Arrowhead Pond was very good. We noticed Scott Hamilton in the audience. We were in the third row of the regular seating area. This year's show featured World champion Todd Eldredge, World champion Yuka Sato, World pairs bronze medallists Kyoko Ina and John Zimmerman, British champion Steven Cousins, Olympic pairs gold medallists Jamie Salé and David Pelletier, Olympic gold medallist Alexei Yagudin, Olympic gold medallist Sarah Hughes, and Olympic pairs gold medallists Elena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze. World champion Kurt Browning was the special guest. The theme was imagination. It's always amazing how they manage to come up with new ideas every year.

* * *

* Loscon

Loscon 31 began on Friday 26 November. We drove to the LAX Marriott in late morning and had a few problems getting a suitable room. The room we had been preassigned was not ready. The first room we were given turned out to be reeking of smoke. The second room was acceptable.

Fortunately, registering for the con turned out to be less of a problem. Mike had no problems, and I got my badge in the Green Room. In the Green Room, I fell into a conversation with Kat Tanaka, a Japanese-American fan I had not previously met; she is quite a bit younger than I, but we got on very well. In early afternoon, I met Mike for the David Gerrold interview by LASFSian Tadao Tomomatsu, though David hardly needed an interviewer. One question kept him going for many minutes. David asked for a copy of my videotape, since he had forgot his tape recorder.

Mike went off to the panel "Is Star Trek Dead?" while I did a shift in the fanzine lounge; while there I built a Lego toy for the very first time. The Star Trek panel included Greg Benford, Margaret Bonanno, Mel Gilden, and Armin Shimerman. Their conclusion was that the answer is "yes, for a while". Then I went to hear David Gerrold do a reading. He read a recently sold short story. It was a very touching story about a child.

There was a short break after that before I met Mike to listen to a dramatization of L. Ron Hubbard's "To the Stars". It was sponsored by Writers of the Future, and the reading was done mostly by professional actors -- Karen Black, Bob Casco, R. F. Daley, Todd McCaffrey, Tadao Tomomatsu, and Jim Meskimen.

It was then just about time for the Ice Cream Social. There was a line, however, and it was late starting. I almost gave up waiting except that I got involved in conversation with the Moffats, who were also waiting. Len Moffat kindly gave up his seat to me so that I wouldn't have to stand in line. The room eventually opened up, so I ended up having two servings of ice cream -- green tea and macadamia nut -- while sitting with the Moffats and Karen Anderson. I later learned that the hotel had not delivered as much ice cream as ordered. Since so many fans had given up on waiting, that turned out not to be a problem. Also, I think the servings were kept small to eke out what ice cream they did have.

In the same room, setup was underway for *Lux Presents "A Spaceman's Home Companion"*. I proceeded to that end of the room to secure a good seat. While waiting I enjoyed a conversation with John Mann-Stevens, who was passing through. Eventually a family from Torrance sat next to me, and I talked with them while we all continued to wait. The show started about a half hour late around 2100. The show was basically a variety show of take-offs on the NPR shows *Car Talk* and *The Prairie Home*

Companion. It was well done and quite entertaining.

By that time it was past 22h00. I went back up to our hotel room to drop off my camera and pick up stuff that I had brought for Sue Haseltine. I went to the Regency dance room to drop off a video tape and book for the Autumn ball raffle and exchange an empty jewel case for one with a CD in it; the one I had bought at the Autumn Ball had turned out to be empty. I was too tired to do any actual dancing. Then I went up to the party floor for a while. I got to Elst Weinstein's wine and cheese party too late for Keith Kato's chili, but I did meet Keith. Elst had a bit of wine left. I also went to the OASIS party for a while. I stopped by one other party to grab a bottle of water, then called it a night. It was after midnight.

Saturday morning Mike and I both went down for breakfast. We hooked up with Lee and Barry Gold for that.



After breakfast we had time to go through the art show. I figured there was no reason to go through the dealer's room, since I was over my spending limit for this quarter, mostly because of emergency vet expenditures.

At 11h30 I had a panel titled "Blog! The APA of the 21st Century". The panellists were Chaz Baden, Marty Cantor, Karl Lembke, Steve Smyth, and I. We came from varied backgrounds. But in the end, I believe we all agreed that blogs as they exist today were not the APA of the future and that the electronic scene was still evolving. Mike sat in the audience and videotaped. See photo at bottom of previous page.

Then I went to the taping of *Hour 25*. Convention guests and con chair were

interviewed – Tim Powers, Wendy Pini, James Daugherty, David Gerrold, and Ed Green. This started late and went a little longer than I expected. In the meantime, Mike went to "The X-Prize: a New Hope and What It means for Space Travel" with panellists Steve Bartlett, Jim Busby, Michael Cassutt, Larry Evans, Robert Gounley, and Jerry Pournelle.

I was a bit late getting to Lynn Maudlin's concert as the *Hour 25* taping had started and ended late. She has a pleasant singing voice and nice songs with a bit of variety.

At 16h00 I went to hear Deborah Ross read. She is working on a fantasy. I asked her if she was ever going to write sf again. She said Dave Hartwell is sitting on an sf manuscript she did; he says there's not a market for sf.

After that I went up to our room to get Mike for dinner, which we had in the hotel. After dinner, we went back up to our room. I had a chance to write a few diary entries.

About 19h30 we went down to line up for the masquerade. We got into the handicapped line. I didn't need my cane chair, since there were some chairs set up. While we were waiting, I got into a conversation with a Canadian fan from Montreal. She also has fibromyalgia and has recently been told she has MS as well. The masquerade started late – no surprise. It was quite a nice masquerade with some very excellent costumes. The half time entertainment was a bit overlong. There was a virtual masquerade



video that was very poor quality and ran too long in one segment.

After the masquerade I did some serious partying. I walked to one end of the party corridor and slowly made my way down the hallway. I think I started at the LACon party to get a bottle of water. Then I stopped at the OASIS party, where I fell into conversation again with Kat Tanaka and her friend Doug Jones. After they left for dancing, about half past midnight, I intended to make my way back to our hotel room. I stopped by one party to get another bottle of water. There I fell into conversation with Michael Siladi, who says we met back in 1976 at Equicon. I don't recall this, but everything he said made sense. By the time I left there, it was well after 02h00.

Despite going to bed so late, I woke up Sunday at 07h00 and couldn't get back to sleep. I went down to breakfast by myself. Then I went to hear Mel Gilden's reading. Unfortunately, he'd forgot to bring his reading material. There was only he and I and a friend of his, so we ended up just talking about his career.

Then I went back up to our room to pack and check out. We used the quickie telephone checkout. We took our luggage down to the Green Room. There I had conversations with Jace Foss and others until it was time for my panel. This was the panel on "LASFS's 70th Anniversary". The panellists were Genny Dazzo, Len Moffat, Fred Patten, Milt Stevens, and I. Len Moffat ended up doing most of the talking; it's unfortunate that he has such a quiet voice. Genny said little, and I said even less.

That was the end of the con for us. My energy levels held up during the con (mostly just adrenaline), but I crashed majorly the next day.

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*** Leftover Mailing Comments on FAPA #268:** 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.

Eric Lindsay (Gegenschein 101): Jupiter was in the eastern sky in spring in the evening and would have been visible from Florida.

I have fruit spoons with serrated edges. I don't recall if my mother might have had a knife like that.

I don't think feeling cold and having low blood pressure are related. My father and I both have low blood pressure. He thinks 50° F (-15° C) is perfect, while I prefer a much higher temperature - something like 74° F (-23° C). My father may feel comfortable in a British household, if they still keep the thermostat at 15° C. I love summers in the desert.

Howard DeVore (Grandfather Stories, August 2004): Thank you for writing this up. It is interesting reading.

Sandra Bond (big fish, little fish, cardboard box 4): Interesting to read a Corflu report from a very different perspective. Incidentally, there is no period in my name; thanks.

Marty Cantor (Fish Wrap World Gazette): When I applied to college, I filled in "human" under race. I was accepted on early decision.

Steven and Vicki Ogden (Ouroboros #12): It sounds like you dealt with the movers from hell. But I'm glad you got moved more or less in one piece and are settling in to a new home.

I'm not familiar with realtors that deal with rentals, so you may be right about them. However, we have two really great realtors that deal with sales. The realtor we have in California is one Mike has been dealing with since the mid-80s. If she's still in business when we sell the house we're living in now, we will be glad to give her our business. The realtors we have in Arizona are really great, too. They are a husband and wife team. If anyone here or anyone you know is interested in buying in the Tucson area, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend them. We bought land, as opposed to a house, so we didn't spent as much as we would have on a house. But they spent as much time as we needed with us. They were also very helpful after the purchase and found someone to put up a fence around our new property.

Tom Feller (The Road Warrior): I just want to say you write excellent book reviews. I find them inspiring. Once I catch up with my periodical reading, now only ten months behind (down from three years), I'm hoping to be able to read more books and do more reviewing.

* * *

* Mailing Comments on FAPA #269:

Ben Indick (Ben's Beat 78): So sorry to hear about your accident and subsequent pacemaker installation. But your sense of humour seems to remain intact, and I think that is most important. Please take it easy and stay well.

Arthur D. Hlavaty (Nice Distinctions 7): Your review of *Set This House in Order* makes it sound like a book I should check out. I've always been interested in multiple personalities.

Bo Stenfors (Sexy Venus Once Again 1/2004): I have the Aickman collection *Painted Devils*. One of the stories in this collection was made into an episode of an anthology series shown on ShowTime, a cable station, a few years ago. I no longer remember the name of the series. I would consider his stories to be fantasies and don't really understand why you wouldn't. The author may not have considered his stories to be fantasy because he didn't want to be known as a genre writer.

Milt Stevens (Alphabet Soup #44): When we went on the Alaska cruise, the cruise line wanted my name exactly as it appeared on my passport. This was different from the way it appeared on my driver's licence and most other documentation. This was the straw that made me decide to go ahead with the official name change. Having tickets compared against my driver's licence would be a problem. When I order airline tickets, I have never been asked to give my name exactly as it appears on my driver's licence. I usually just use Laurraine Tutihasi. Besides, my name is really misrepresented on my driver's licence, since it lacks the hyphen; I guess the DMV's system couldn't handle the hyphen. I hope this doesn't give me any problem next time I fly, which is planned for February.

Dale Speirs (Opuntia 55.3): Our computers are set to calibrate to some sort of time signal from time to time. Our watches calibrate to the time signal in Ft. Collins, CO, every night, ideally. The computer time and watch time seem to correspond pretty closely.

Who is that handsome young man in the photograph? I guess you bear somewhat of a resemblance to Rip Torn. I can't say anything about Terry Carr. So far as I can recall, I never saw him. I think you also bear a resemblance to an LA area fan named Gavin Claypool, except that Gavin doesn't usually have a beard.

Roger Wells (Voice of the Habu): Mike says he is technically qualified to use the VA system. After reading about your experiences, though, I hope we never have to rely on them. It's bad enough having to wait months for mammograms and bone density exams. I'd hate to have to wait months for diagnostic tests. Also not being able to get records transferred quickly from one doctor to another would be frustrating.

Dick Eney (Target: FAPA): Speaking of chirping traffic lights, I ran across an interesting setup in Beverly Hills. This was a number of years ago, so I don't know whether it is still like this. I was doing jury duty in Beverly Hills. Otherwise, I don't go there much. The traffic lights were set up so that when pedestrians crossed, all the lights for cars were red. I recall some intersections like this in Massachusetts as well; I don't recall which town. In those situations, it was perfectly safe for pedestrians to cross diagonally to the opposite corner.

I don't recall being critical of Tim Marion's pubbing the photos of scantily clad females in his zines. The only objection I might have had that I can think of would be copyright ones. They were photos taken not by him but by professional photographers, and I don't believe he had permission to use them.

I try always to have memberships in WorldCons whether I go or not. In fact I believe we have attending memberships in Glasgow, but I don't think we will attend. We will not bother converting our memberships in the Japanese WorldCon unless we win the lottery or something similar occurs.

Eric Leif Davin (A Different Drummer, No. 2): I enjoyed very much reading about your trip to Binghamton and environs. A long time ago when I was still living in Rochester, NY, and came out here on a trip, I took photos of the carousel horses at Disneyland for a friend who was a carousel enthusiast. Unfortunately she is no longer among the living, and I don't know what happened to the photos I gave her. I still have the originals.

Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #101): Mark may also enjoy reading Jeffery Deaver.

Aren't guitar chord symbols just pictorial representations of the frets and placement of the fingers? That's the notation in my sister's guitar books and my ukulele books. There's nothing to memorize. Are different symbols being used currently?

Not all of Canada is cold. The Great Lakes moderate temperatures in places near them, although the snowfall may be higher than you're used to. For an even milder climate, try Vancouver. That will be a lot milder than New Jersey.

Moi (Feline Mewsings #18): From what I've heard recently, it seems as though the changeover to all-digital TV broadcasting is not yet set in stone. There still seems to be some argument over the date, so it may still happen in 2006.

Arnie Katz (Plasma, Nov. 2004): At least psychology and sociology are sciences, albeit not hard sciences. Actually there is a part of psychology that is harder than the rest - the part that deals with experimentation in the lab. History is not a science at all. There is nothing technological or scientific about imagining what might have happened if history had taken a different turn. Now if the story depended on a device to explore another dimension in which history had taken a different path, that would be science fiction.

Janice Morningstar (I'm not a politician, so I don't have to panda to anyone): I think once the political parties get you on their list, you don't get off. Even though I change party registration every few years, I still get mail from whatever party I'm not registered as any more. I don't open mail from the parties, and I don't pick up phone calls from them assuming our power is on and the caller ID devices work.

My socio-political views are much like yours.

I received e-mail from, I believe, Dianne Feinstein recently talking about doing away with the Electoral College.

Shelby Vick (After the Crash!): I'm glad you are doing okay.

Jack Speer (Synapse): Equity waiver means that the theatre has fewer than a hundred seats and does not need to pay the actors equity wages. It has nothing to do with copyright.

The cat songs I was talking about are compilations created by humans from clips of cat sounds to make them sound like they are meowing Christmas songs. They are not cat songs in the way that whale songs are songs sung by whales.

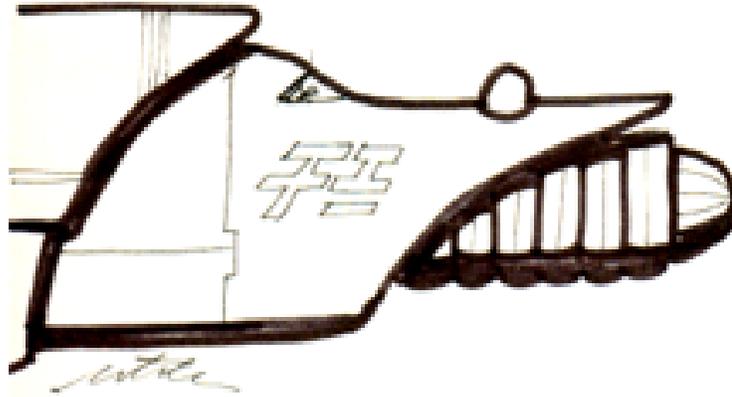
The *Dictionary of American English* is pretty close in the pronunciation of Van Gogh. As I understand it, the V in Van Gogh is a sound about half way between an f and a v in English. The g and gh are pronounced the same and is a guttural g sound.

I know the difference between mulch and compost. However, I happen to use the same thing for both when it comes to azaleas, camellias, and gardenias. I use azalea mix as both a soil amendment and a mulch. So I get sloppy about my terminology.

You failed to mention that the reason we don't use airmail stickers any more, at least for domestic mail, is that all First Class Mail is handled as airmail if the distance warrants.

You say that the two-party system is best but don't say why you think so.

* * *



*** 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 the like.

Leslie David, Reston, VA

27 Nov 2004

Hi Laurraine, I was able to get *Feline Mewsings* to download just fine this time -- I just have to remember on this puny dial-up system that it takes a long time for Adobe to open stuff....

...

With 22 pages, I hope I can remember enough of what I read to comment, although I got some of the stuff from our e-mails. I loved the Gaudi house; I have yet to see La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. I also liked the con reports and the desert pictures. I hope you will be able to build the house of your dreams for when you and Mike retire. I was out in LA right before the 4th and Westercon; but I was working at LAX and staying in El Segundo, which is why I didn't call; I figured that you'd be out of town. While I was there, we went to see *Fahrenheit 911*, and I'm sure the people in the theatre thought I was crazy when they started talking about the terrorist threat in Tappahannock, VA. Tappahannock is a sleepy little town near the Rappahannock River, and they interviewed these Bubba-looking guys at a garage; these guys are looking really sincere as they said, uh huh, yeah, we have to be ready for the terrorists. Now what any terrorist would want in Tappahannock is beyond me.

Locations: I used to laugh when watching *The X Files*, which was filmed in Canada and trying to pretend they were in the DC area; in one episode they showed a bridge in Bethesda; there are no bridges in Bethesda.

Theatre: This summer my friend Elizabeth and I went to see Sally Field in *The Glass Menagerie*, which was at the Kennedy Center. It was a real Tennessee Williams summer with *Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* also being performed. It was a good production, although the actors seemed to swallow their lines during the first half of the play. I had to put in my hearing aids during intermission to hear them; and next time I go to the Kennedy Center, I think I'll check out what they have for the hearing impaired. The hearing aids are fine until someone coughs continually in your ear, which happened at a lecture at the Smithsonian, or I have to go into a bar or restaurant; and then there's so much background noise that it's difficult to hear conversations. Earlier this year I went to see *Henry IV*, Parts 1 and 2, at the Shakespeare Theater. They were excellent productions. I also went to see *A Comedy of Errors* at the Folger Theater. That is a lovely and cosy facility and was also an excellent production with some very

innovative sets, with one of the scenes literally being performed as a stand-up routine and some good ad-libs, "Thou hast the right to remain silent." Labor Day weekend I saw *The Glass Mendacity*, which was a spoof of the three Williams plays performed at the Kennedy Center. This was performed by a group called the Landless Theatre at DCAC in Adams-Morgan. It had been billed as gender bending, since the entire cast was cross-dressed, and was hysterical. It featured the DuBois family -- Big Daddy Dubois, Big Amanda, Maggie, Brick (who was played by a dummy -- literally), Blanche (of course), Laura DuBois (who had a collection of animals made out of ice cubes rather than glass and was wearing bunny slippers), Stanley Kowalski, and Mitch O'Connor.

Last week I went to a lecture by Samuel R. Delany and Octavia Butler at the Smithsonian, where they talked about science fiction and speculative fiction. Octavia Butler talked about getting into writing and described a cross-country trip from LA to Baltimore by bus she took when researching a book about time travel that was set on the eastern shore of Maryland in the 1850s. Her character goes back in time and has to deal with slavery. She mentioned trying to find out how people did laundry back then; and when she finally found out, she called her mother to tell her, only to be told that her mother remembered her mother doing wash the same way she described. Moral: Ask your relatives first and make sure you document what they have to say while they're still living. Samuel Delany read from one of his books that also dealt with time travel and slavery. He mentioned his grandfather, who was born in 1857, had been a slave. Apparently his family originally was from Raleigh. He also said that he's been writing historical fiction and hasn't written sf in twenty years. Afterwards there was a question and answer session with a lot of very earnest students from Howard University. The lecture was taped and will be run on local cable as well as being part of a presentation at the Black History Museum, which is part of the Smithsonian and will be in Anacostia.

#

Dan Deckert, Sioux Falls, SD

27 Nov 2004

Thanks for putting me on the distribution for this link. Reading FM #18 gave me something to do while I was waiting for my pain medication to kick in at 3:00 this morning. I don't know how far the word has spread (though I've had feedback from Lee Gold, Joanne Dow, and Marji Holt), but I had surgery to replace two of my heart valves nearly two weeks ago. I'm looking forward to another 8-10 weeks of at-home recovery time before I can go back to work, so all distractions are most welcome. :-)

As you've probably guessed by now, the operation appears to have been successful. (If I died and haven't noticed it, I have to say that my e-mail forwarding has been far better than I ever expected. <g>) The valve replacement fixes the congenital problem (a bifurcated aortic valve) that has caused me to have a heart murmur since birth. Most open-heart surgical procedures are pretty routine these days, but recovery from the surgery never will be. Too much bone to heal. Still, getting through the operation tends to promote a positive attitude about recovery.

I'm not going to run on with a full-up LoC tonight, but one segment I read this morning prompted a reaction. That was Rita Winston's exploration of "prairie gophers." After eight years of prairie living, I've learned a few things about the local fauna, and I can assure you that there are no "prairie gophers" out here. We *do* have a wide range of prairie *farmers* out here, however; and they are the root cause of this confusion.

There are eight species of ground-dwelling rodents here that are bigger than field mice and smaller than prairie dogs. The local farmers call all of these rodents "gophers" with a fine disregard for the rather major differences between them. Some of them actually are the pocket gophers that are common throughout the US. Most of them are ground squirrels of one sort or another. Moles are also painted with the "gopher" brush. The largest of these animals is about half the size of a prairie dog, which is why the confusion rarely spreads that far. I've never heard anybody here refer to a muskrat or a groundhog/woodchuck as a gopher, either. :-)

The University of Minnesota mascot is the "Golden Gopher," and the U has actually adopted the likeness of a pocket gopher for that mascot. Makes sense when you consider that Minnesota is the "Gopher State," no? Well, no, it doesn't really make sense, historically speaking. Minnesota's early economy was based

primarily on mining, and the miners who made this happen were referred to as "gophers." All in all, after several years in Minnesota, I'm happy to be living in South Dakota. :-)

Enough already! Hope to hear from you again soon.

((So good to hear from you. Elyse has kept me abreast of the state of your health. I should have e-mailed you, I suppose. Sorry. But I'm glad you were distracted by my zine.

((Surgery is an act of violence, regardless of what a doctor might say. Obviously your body needs a lot of time to recover from such an attack. The only reason people undergo surgery is that the alternative is even worse.

((I'm sure Rita will appreciate your thoughts on prairie dogs and such animals.

((I am currently recovering from Loscon. I was charged with adrenaline through the convention and for several days before. Because of this, I'm trying now to make up for sleep deficit. I enjoyed the con immensely, though.

((You sound serious about liking South Dakota better than Minnesota. Perhaps you could go into the reason(s) when you have time and are feeling up to it. I went to college in Minnesota. But I don't think I've ever been in South Dakota unless the train from Seattle to Chicago goes through it. It's the state that has the stone carvings of the presidential faces, isn't it?

((I wish you a quick and complete recovery from your surgery. Say hello to Danise for me. I'd add your kids, too; but I doubt they remember me. I was surprised at the con to be accosted by Becky Foss in the ladies room. She has grown a lot. But she seemed to remember having met me.))

#

Hope Leibowitz, Toronto, Canada

7 Dec 2004

Thanks for another issue of your fanzine. I was impressed with all the colour. I guess you didn't crank it out on your Gestetner!

But I am very, very upset about something; and I was already upset about it in your previous zine. I carried it around with me for weeks, intending to send a postcard, and just didn't get around to it. (I have two round tuits at home but have misplaced both of them!)

I was so sickened by the Hugo results this year that I will never make an effort to vote again, which means I will never vote again. I feel there is something morally defunct about voting in a fiction category without having read all the nominees. I read all of them, and I thought Bob Wilson's book *Blind Lake* was by far the best. I enjoyed Sawyer's sequels, but don't believe a sequel should get a Hugo.

Finding out that you read Bob's book after the voting was over and thought it was better than the one that won just reinforced my abhorrence of that practice. I go to the Merrill Collection and read all the short fiction while sitting at a table (the books and magazines there aren't loaned out), and I take novels out of other lending libraries.

Bujold's book was enjoyable light reading. Love story with demons. Big deal. I didn't think that it should have even been nominated; and as long as someone like her is on the ballot -- someone with so many "friends", someone with a following that doesn't care what else is nominated -- really good writers like Robert Charles Wilson (a personal friend and a wonderful person) will never get a Hugo. That is what sickens me, and you are one of the people responsible.

Not voting any more is almost a relief. It takes a lot of time and effort to read everything. Now I don't have to do that any more. Less effort for me. Not good for deserving writers.

((Thank you for your LoC even though you are angry with me and other Hugo voters. I don't think I'm as

guilty, if there are degrees of guilt, as some who probably vote only after reading one or two of the nominees in a category. At least I bought all the books. Though I hadn't finished *Blind Lake* when I voted, I thought I had read enough of it to make a decision. I usually read at least the first and last chapters if I don't have time to read the whole thing. Also previous experience with the author's works led me not to expect to like it much.

((I hope you will forgive me my small sin.

((But I'm sorry that this situation leads you to decide not to vote for the Hugos again. I think that will make the situation even worse.

((I think I have a spare round tuit someplace. If I find it, I will send it to you.))

#

Neil Kaden, Fairview, TX

8 Dec 2004

Thanks for posting FM18; the cover was awesome. Someone once told me (can't remember who) that every fanzine deserved a cover; so when I did the 1-page Ditto-Dallas PRs, each had a Brad Foster cover. Speaking of Foster covers, did you know that if you take all the LoneStarCon PRs and lay them out in a square, they all form one larger piece of art?

#

Carolyn Thompson, Vista, CA

rec'd 8 Dec 2004

Received your *Feline Mewsings* #18 and enjoyed it.

Your move to Tucson sounds exciting and I hope it happens. It would be fun to design a house just the way you would like it.

I rather long for the desert, because I am not an ocean person. I like high and dry. Cactus not roses. But for a few years, I will stay in California. I am still too useful helping with the boys and driving them after school.

#

Rita Prince Winston, Venice, CA

12 Dec 2004

Surely this is progress: My LoC on *Feline Mewsings* #18 is less than a month late!

I like the pretty picture of the Gaudi-style house in LA. I'm afraid "style" is the right word. I love the wall, but the house looks as if someone just put a fabric-matching skin (and an ungraceful dome that looks like a hump – I think it's solid and adds to the weight borne by the walls/pillars) on an existing rectilinear building, which looks like it was designed as an apartment house with the outside stairs and three originally-identical window sections.

I suppose Oracle, AZ, isn't really named after Larry Ellison's software empire. Good that you'll be able to retire to what you consider the best climate.

I'm so sorry to hear of Shadow's adenocarcinoma! I hope you can keep him comfortable for the rest of his life, however long it is.

....

Did the play of *Around the World in Eighty Days* have lots of set changes? The story goes so many places that I imagine that only minimalist sets would be practical. ((You imagine correctly.))

Westercon – was "Enterprise: Love It or Leave It" about a space shuttle, an aircraft carrier, one of many space ships in the *Strek* franchise, the free enterprise system, a town in Kentucky.... ((It was about the

latest Trek series on TV. I guess I should have italicized the title.))

#

Lloyd Penney, Etobicoke, ON

27 Dec 2004

Thank you for sending me issue 18 of *Feline Mewsings*. The pages of your FAPazine are the only places I see the good works of Franz Miklis any more. Just another reason why I'm glad you send them to me.

Beautiful pictures...I could take some [of his area] and send them to you; but in most cases, all you would see is white. The temperature outside as I type is -14°C , or about 7°F , and the ground is mostly white. Too cold to go outside unless there's a very good reason, and I can't think of any right now. You probably remember how cold it could get in Rochester. ((I do, and I don't need it. I could put a frame around a white space and caption it as a photo of you outside in Toronto.))

I agree with you about the Retro Hugos; now that you bring it up, could the Retro Hugo results over the years be not a measure of what was really the best but a measure of what was most readily available back then and today? As for the regular Hugos at Noreascon, I finished sixth, the first name off the ballot, for Best Fan Writer for the third time. As I've said elsewhere, always a bridesmaid, and never a bride. There's still time....

I've never seen *The Drawer Boy*, but I have heard of it. It may have been performed during a Shaw Festival last year or the year before or might have been at a small theatre in Toronto.

Yvonne's family has made fun of us for being "space cadets" for years, but what happened at Christmas dinner a couple of days ago was unexpected. Most of the family had seen *I, Robot*; and we hadn't. Same goes for the latest episodes of *Enterprise*. The "space cadets" are passing on the latest sf offerings, and the relatives are enjoying them. I guess having little money also has something to do with not seeing the movie, and not having much interest in yet another Trek series has a lot to do with *Enterprise*.

Your mention of Arthur C. Clarke reminds me that no one that I know of has yet heard from him, given the catastrophic earthquake [on Christmas Day] and resulting tsunami that have hit the countries surrounding the Indian Ocean, including Sri Lanka, which was probably hardest hit. There's been nothing that I've read online, either; but I will keep looking. ((In case there are people reading this who haven't heard, Arthur C. Clarke is fine. He has placed a message on the web.))

Hugh Gregory has been getting around a lot! He lives in Montreal; and I know his brother Charles, who lives down the highway from me. Charles gafiated some years ago. Hugh gets invites everywhere, but I do know that he won't be going back to Montreal any time soon. Hugh can be a little overbearing.

Yvonne is in the dining room, doing some studying for her pilot's license. Ever since the Torcon fiasco [Worldcon], she has taken most of her time she used to spend on SF and fandom and devoted it to space advocacy and studying further for her wings.

Comment to Ben Indick..."Her Pilgrim Soul" was one of my own favourite episodes of the 1985 *Twilight Zone*. In the holographic chamber, the scientists come to the realization that they have captured a wandering human soul, or ghost, if you will, of a woman who died some years earlier. The soul grows into a foetus, a baby, a child, and an adult. One scientist even converses with the captured soul, and they become confidantes. The soul, as she ages, helps the scientist mend his fractured marriage, and the scientist helps the soul get over the loss of her own child and the trauma of her death. Once both are helped and healed, the soul finally is able to leave for wherever souls go. It was based on a story by Alan Brennert; I have the anthology here.

The letter column...I guess eventually upgrades are necessary; but if you're content with what you're using, you shouldn't necessarily have to upgrade. I'm doing fine on Windows 98 and Office 2000. Further versions of both seem to make the assumption that you're going to want to create your own website.

rich brown brings up something I like about some movies...checking out the background shots, especially if the movie was shot where you live. Many movies are shot in Toronto, which winds up masquerading as New York or Chicago or LA or any large generic big city. As the action goes on, we recognize the backgrounds... "Hey, he was driving on Adelaide St., and he turned onto Richmond? He can't do that, they're parallel!" or "He was on Spadina, and now he's on Parliament? They never meet!" Come to Toronto and see the building that was the Police Academy; it's at the bottom of Kipling Ave.

My loc...Burt Rutan did win the X Prize, and we were looking forward to going to St. Louis to see the awarding of the prize, but we never did go. Yvonne asked her boss to let her go and sponsor her, but he refused. Instead, he went himself at the last minute. The dinner prices were quite expensive. The Canadian groups have been fairly quiet. I think Brian Feeney and the DaVinci Project still plan to launch in Saskatchewan, and the Canadian Arrow project will be launching soon and setting up a public space facility in their home base of London. Yvonne got to all her conferences and had a great time. If things work out for her, she will be the chairman of the 2007 International Space Development Conference, to be held in Toronto.

Also, I do have a new job in the new year...it's with Canada NewsWire, and I will be a proofreader/editor for the various corporate/financial press releases the company distributes to clients via its website. The training will take two to three months, and then I go on the night shift. Yecch...I might be able to find something else during that time. I've read on several websites that in these tough job-finding times, it is wise to keep looking, even if you are employed, to keep monitoring trends in your chosen industry and create your own rungs on the ladder you're trying to climb.

I Googled the term "picket pin"...the original meaning was a metal bar used to tether a horse, and it's also the name of a popular fishing fly. I've never heard of it to refer to a gopher or woodchuck, or part of a fence, unless it has something to do with the horse's tether...

Hi, Sheryl...as soon as I can find your e-mail address, I should send you a message. I'm surprised you couldn't find my most recent telephone number on something like 411.com.

Hey, I got through it, and it gave me enough comment ideas to get me to a third page. Again, many thanks, and let's hope for a happier 2005. The last few years haven't been the greatest for me, and I need a break. See you next issue!

* * *

* Closing Remarks

Life continues to be interesting.

A few days ago, I was taking Shadow in for his periodic ultrasound to make sure his cancer is gone for good. After I pulled into the parking lot, I got hit by a car pulling out of a parking spot. Fortunately, the man who hit me was very nice. The cover over the parking light on my car was smashed. His car suffered no damage. He agreed to just pay for the repairs and keep it out of our insurance files. I received his cheque a few days later. I will be taking my car in shortly to have it fixed. Incidentally, Shadow is still free of cancer.

A few days after that on a night after we got home from a fannish gathering that we left early because Mike was tired, Mercury had a seizure. We were all (Mike and I and the cats) upset by this. We'd been watching a video. Mike stopped the DVD player, and I called the vet. We took Mercury into the emergency hospital. The tests they ran were inconclusive, and I brought him home about three o'clock the next afternoon. He seems to be okay now, and I took him to my regular vet the next day with the x-ray that the emergency place took. If he has another seizure, we will run more tests.

The fannish gathering we had been at was unusual but fun. We met at Descanso Gardens in La Cañada Flintridge. Mike and I got there early and walked around the camellia forests. After the rest of the group got there, most of us went on a tram tour that took about an hour. Besides the garden, there is a house that used to belong to the man who used to own the land. It is now an art gallery. Then we had a catered picnic. In the afternoon there was a camellia show that many of us checked out. Later we went bowling. I hadn't bowled in over forty years. It was fun. But then Mike declared he was too tired, and we had to go home.