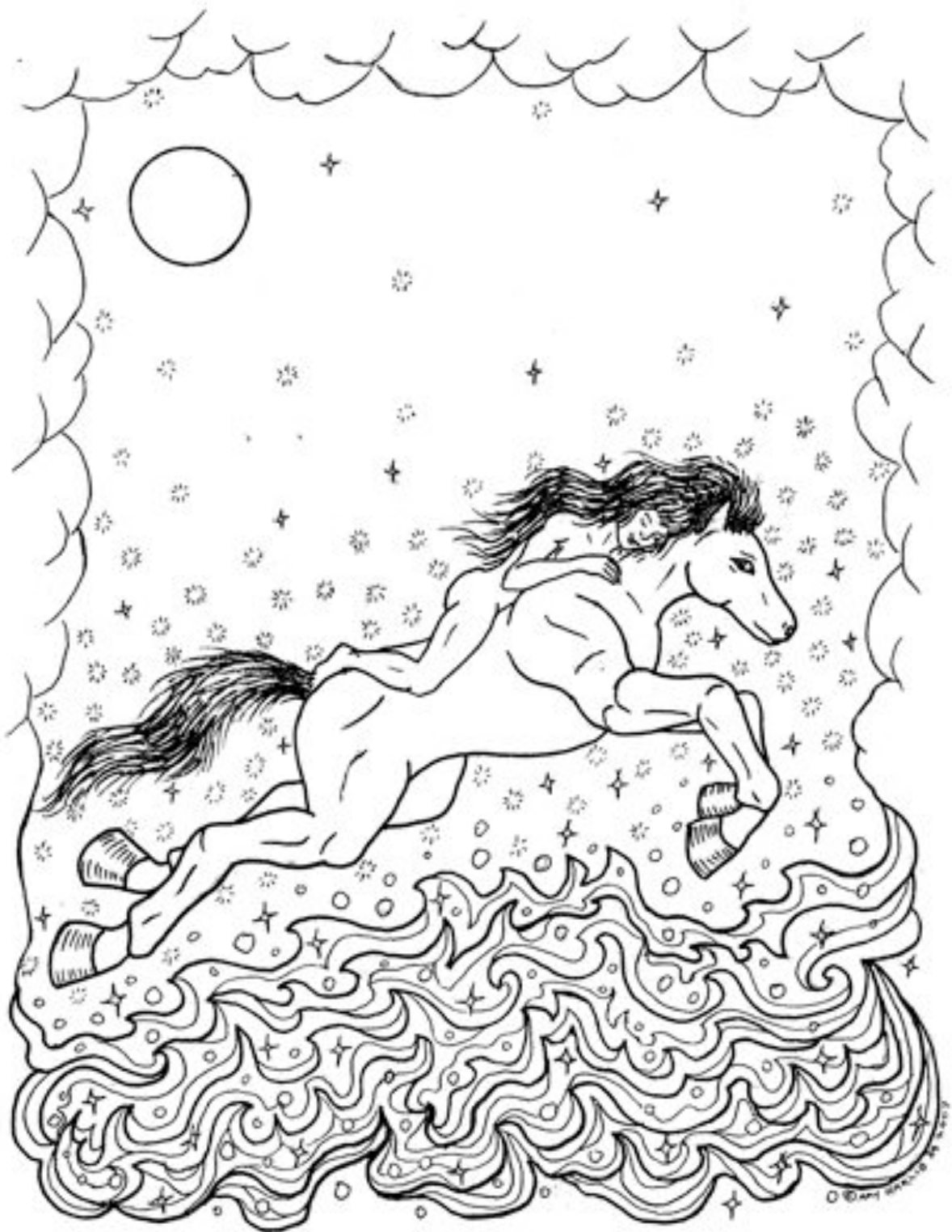


Feline Mewsings #31



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Cover art by Amy Harlib.

Feline ~~M~~ewsings

#31

February 2008

* Editorial / Introduction

If you read the small print on the previous page, you will see that we are now living in Arizona. I have written up all the details and present them in the section titled “A Moving Adventure”.

* * *

* Local Activities

Theatre

“Master Harold” ... and the Boys: This is the last play in the Colony series that we attended before we moved. By noted South African playwright Athol Fugard, it is about black-white relations there before the end of Apartheid. Based on Fugard’s experiences growing up, it’s about a young schoolboy and the two black men who work in his mother’s tearoom in Port Elizabeth. Master Harold, who is familiarly called Hallie by friends, has an invalid father. One of the black men, Sam, has tried to act as a surrogate father figure. Hallie has a lot of stress in his life. There’s his schoolwork for one. Having an invalid father doesn’t help. On the afternoon when the play takes place, he blows up and takes it out on the blacks. The play was performed with South African accents; the dialect coach did an excellent job. The acting was superb, and I reacted as I always do to this play—with a lot of tears. This was the first time I’d seen the play. My prior experiences with the play have been as a radio drama, which is available for purchase at <http://www.latw.org/audio/audio.aspx>.

###

Cinema

I Am Legend: This is the second remake of Richard Matheson’s story, which was published in 1954. The first movie version was titled *The Last Man on Earth* and starred Vincent Price; I don’t know whether I’ve seen this version or not. The first remake was *The Omega Man* and starred Charlton Heston; I remember seeing this one and didn’t care much for it. So I was a bit sceptical going to this latest version starring Will Smith. However I found it to be a good movie. How faithful it is to the book, I’m not sure, as I don’t recall reading the book. According to my records, I have read it; I guess I will have to reread it as soon as it’s unpacked a couple of years from now. To get back to this latest remake, Will Smith plays it straight and does a very good job of it. The movie has a good mix of excitement, humour, and human interest.

For those of you unfamiliar with the story, it’s about the last man alive in Los Angeles who is trying to solve the problem of vampirism caused by a bacterial plague. The movie takes place in New York City, and the plot has been updated so that the plague is caused by an engineered virus. Other details have been changed, but the overall effect of the story is the same. The ending has been changed the most, so purists may object.

This movie is also similar to the 2002 movie *28 Days Later*.

* * *

* A Moving Adventure

Shortly after I finished the previous issue, we decided to move even though our house hadn't yet sold. We drove to Tucson in early November to find a rental house there. We looked at four of them and decided our first and second choices. Unfortunately someone else got our first choice, but we were able to get the second one. It's a bit more expensive than our first choice, and the house is a bit larger than our house in California.

Back in LA we scheduled movers, a handyman, and made many phone calls. At a certain point, I stopped most of my regular daily activities and had to devote myself to move-related ones. On the last day of November after taking our cats to the vet for boarding, we drove to Arizona again to pay our first month's rent and deposit, pick up the keys to the house, and to check it over. The checking over took a lot longer than we had anticipated, because we found so many problems with the house. Among other things, the washing machine was missing the temperature regulator knob, many of the blinds were missing control rods, there was a leaky bathtub faucet, and many light bulbs were missing or burnt out. We made a list of all the problems. We also took some measurements so that we could make plans about what furniture and other things to put in which rooms.

We had one day in LA to further prepare for the move before the movers arrived. They arrived early on the morning of 3 December to pack. It took them until well after dark to finish. The next day they arrived to pack everything into a truck just shy of a semi. It took them until about 21h00 to finish. Everyone was tired and hungry. Our things just barely fit into the truck. We spent the night in a motel in Redondo Beach after a very late dinner.

The next day we drove to Arizona after packing a few things into the car and picking the cats up from the vet. There were still things we left in the garage to be picked up later. They were in the garage, because the house was being worked on by our handyman; he would remove the popcorn ceiling, wall paper, and carpet and paint most of the rooms and the kitchen cabinets and do whatever other touch-ups needed doing.

After we reached Arizona, we took the cats to the rental house and fed them. We set up their litter box and left them on their own and checked into a motel. We had another late dinner but not as late as the night before. Over the next few days, we had the gas service to the house turned on, talked to the rental agency about the problems we'd found, had a locksmith service some sticky locks, and had the phone service turned on. The delivery of our belongs was scheduled for 10 December. The weather had been rainy since our arrival, so we were worried about having our things rained on; however the weather cooperated and let up on the rain that day. Everything seemed to be in order when the movers unloaded.

We stayed another night at the motel, since we didn't know exactly what box the bedding was in. The next day and the following several days were spent unpacking. On that Friday we received a new washing machine; while the old one had not been irreparable, it would have taken too long to repair. We also had cable TV and modem installed, but we had a lot of problems with that. The installers had to return twice before everything worked the way it should. Mike made his first trip back to LA to pick up things we had left behind. He brought back all the liquids the movers wouldn't move and quite a bit of his astronomical equipment.

Unfortunately he didn't make it back again to LA until after Xmas. When he did, he discovered that several items had been stolen from the garage, including his largest telescope. Other things that were taken make me believe the thief meant to use the equipment. For details about what was taken, please go to our web site. He reported the theft to the police and to our insurance company. We should get something from the latter, but we're still waiting to hear. The police didn't find enough clues to act on. Property crimes are the only serious problems in that neighbourhood.

The main reason Mike didn't get back to LA before then was the weather. Our handyman had originally expected to be finished with his work by Xmas. However, it seems to have rained there almost daily since we moved. Paint takes a long time to dry in such conditions, so the work basically wasn't finished until well into January.

Mike ended up making two more trips back even though there was no more of our things to bring back. One trip was to talk further with the police. The other trip was to pay the handyman and let the carpet people in to install new carpeting. The house went back on the market then, and we are still waiting to sell it.

In the meantime we have settled in well in Arizona. The heavy unpacking was finished by early January. The rest is not urgent; and some things, such as books, will remain packed until we move again. Getting our car registered here and getting our driver's licences were really easy. There is a cursory check of the car but nothing like in California. Since we had driver's licences from California, it was a simple

matter of filling out the application form, paying a fee, and getting our photos taken. We registered to vote at the same time. We have found a vet, a doctor, and a dentist and will probably find other medical professionals as needed. After shopping around for groceries, we've decided on two stores that we go to regularly. The organic grocery store we chose was bought by Whole Foods last year and is in the process of being made over.

The house we are renting has two stories. The cats seem to like that. Going up and down the stairs several times a day is probably helping to keep Mike and me fit, but I seem to have chronic bursitis in the left ankle and right hip. With all the moving activity, we both lost weight.

The house has problems, so I'm glad we're just renting it. The biggest problem is the extremely poor design of the AC system. The thermostats are very badly placed. Supposedly there are two zones, the upstairs and the downstairs. The downstairs thermostat is placed halfway up the stairs across from a semicircular window over the south-facing front door that doesn't have any curtains or other cover. The thermometer part of the thermostat seems to be way off. I've placed a thermometer at eye level by the stairs to check the actual temperature. The vents are in or near the ceiling, which means that the air near the floor never gets heated. Some vents are facing in the wrong direction. For instance there is one vent in the kitchen that does a good job of heating one of the cabinets and a counter. It also faces the refrigerator, which I'm sure makes the refrigerator work harder. All the heat rises, so I've turned the heat off completely upstairs. I've set the downstairs thermometer at 72, but the thermometer attached to it reads higher. The actual temperature is only about 70 except when the sun shines in and raises it higher. The upstairs temperature is always much higher, even approaching 80 on warm days; there was one day when I had the AC on upstairs while the downstairs was still on heat. I don't know what will happen during summer.

It turned out that the dryer also needed replacing. After we used it a couple of times, it became clear that neither the timing control knob nor temperature control worked. Eventually the dryer was also replaced. It was repairable, but I guess the owner chose to replace it.

As in most houses I've seen, the kitchen is inadequate. There are not enough cabinets; it's a good thing we chose not to unpack all the kitchen things. What's there isn't very adequate either. The double door cabinets aren't really, because there is a post between the two doors. This means that nothing large can fit. My crock-pot is in the pantry because of this. The cabinets that have shelves don't all have full shelves, which limits the number things that can be stored therein. The pantry is also inadequate. It's fairly large but only has shelves on two sides. We put one of our metal bookcases in there for more shelf space.

There are a couple of good things about the house. There are adequate numbers of electric outlets and adequate light fixtures. Unfortunately there are phone outlets only in three rooms, one downstairs and two upstairs. That limited our choice as far as where the computer room would be. There are four cable outlets, two downstairs and two upstairs. Fortunately the upstairs room with the phone outlet also has a cable outlet, since we need the computer modem in the computer room. However the room we are using as the computer room is probably the smallest of the bedrooms; it's also right across the hall from the upstairs thermostat, which may have an impact on how that works; three computers that are on all the time generate quite a bit of heat. We couldn't fit in all the furniture we used to have in our old computer room. At least we have an adequate numbers of bedrooms, one master and three others. One of the others is being used as my workroom, and one is being used as Mike's room. Mike's reading chair is in his room as well as everything from the computer room that didn't fit there.

The kitchen works pretty well, except that there is counter space only on one side of the sink, which I find problematical. The refrigerator works well enough for us, but some will find the fact that the ice dispenser doesn't work to be a problem. The dishwasher is the biggest problem for me. I don't have a lot of experience with dishwashers, so I cannot write a fully informed criticism of it. However it's the worst designed dishwasher I remember having. I admit that I don't know much about the dishwashers my mother used while I was growing up. I just recall her complaining that they didn't clean very well. On that score I cannot criticize the dishwasher we have. It seems to clean quite well except for things that really need scrubbing. But the design of the unit leaves a great deal to be desired. In our LA house, we replaced the unit shortly before we moved. The new one was a low end one, but it was still better than the one in this house. I don't know how old it is. It looks older than one would think by the way it washes. The new unit in LA had features such as a sanitize setting, a delayed timer, and a set of closed receptacles for silverware and small things plus a special rack for stemware. The unit here is really basic and doesn't have any of those features. In addition the top drawer is so shallow that anything of any height must be put in at a slant. The unit seems to require much more detergent than I'm used to using. The water comes into it with such force that one must be really careful about loading it. If we had bought this house,

I would already have replaced the unit.

As is frequently the case, the bathrooms don't have enough towel racks and they're often placed badly. We have one of those over-the-door towel racks, so that helps alleviate the problem.

Now that you've read all my complaints, here is a photo of the house.



The two upstairs windows you can see have shades that don't work. On the other hand, we don't really want those south-facing windows to be open to the sun.

Whatever problems the house may have is at least partially compensated by the beauty of the area. Here's a photo of the view as you look east from in front of the house. In addition we appreciate the fact that there are no streetlights in the neighbourhood, so we get a really nice view of the night sky.



In the coming days, weeks, and months we hope to see more of this natural beauty.

* * *



Amy's Motley Media Musings

Reviews by Amy Harlib



Amy didn't send anything in this time, but I hope to see her back next issue.

* * *

* Mailing Comments on FAPA #281:

Dan Steffan (Steffan-dango, #1): Welcome to FAPA.

Eric Leif Davin (A Different Drummer, #11): I'm one woman who thinks too much romance sf is being published. I prefer hard sf authors, such as Greg Bear, or literary sf authors, such as Gene Wolfe. I don't mind if there is romance in an sf book, but I don't want it to be the main focus.

Ben Indick (Ben's Beat 90): I'm sorry to hear about your injuries. I hope you are doing much better now, and please be careful.

Robert Michael Sabella (Visions of Paradise #120: the Passing Scene): What is a pizza like that is not Americanized?

Robert Lichtman (King Biscuit Time 51): I recently read somewhere that there are now fluorescent lights that work on dimmer switches.

Gordon Eklund (Sweet Jane #53): Although a couple of movies I saw as a child gave me nightmares after seeing them, I don't recall being frightened at the time of viewing. It wasn't until I saw *Coma* that I had an experience that could be described as "cinematic fear". I would have been around thirty then.

Jim Caughran (A Propos de Rien): Making schools accountable is a good idea, but the way they're currently going about it is all wrong.

Yes the Capitol Steps can be much better appreciated in person, since they act out a lot of things.

The thing about Meteor Crater is that it's privately owned, so like it or not you have to pay to see it.

Mike McInerney (Number One #11): Thank you for the opportunity to read the unpublished Simak story. You seem to have had some printing problems, but I suppose this is related to your running out of time.

* * *

* Letters to the Editor

The text of letters received will be in brown. My replies to the letters will be enclosed in double parentheses. I will also routinely make editorial corrections in punctuation, spelling, and the like.

Last time I managed to leave out a couple of letters, so I present them first.

Sheryl Birkhead, Gaithersburg, MD

26 Oct 2007

Dear Mewers,

I have FM #29 sitting here on the top of the pile. It has risen like cream!

First off, nice colour pictures on the cover makes me faunch anew for a colour printer, yeah RSN. It also reminds me that I need to figure out how one uses a digital camera with a Mac; I am sure it is probably the same as with a PC, but one never knows. I had an offer of a freebie camera from Staples but inadvertently asked for a certificate for 10% off on a sale, and you only could get one choice so started thinking about it.

I hope you include an updated version of the new house plans nextish as you shift from a crawl to a run toward retirement! ((Actually the retirement is done. It's just the house building that's on hold until we sell the house in California.))

I went to see *Ratatouille* with Nicki and was very pleasantly surprised. This was a movie that had hopped onto my list of things to be seen (i.e. gone directly to the Netflix list), but I went ahead and saw it in the theatre. I really enjoyed it and will probably go ahead and keep it on the list.

I was just notified by my fraud alert capacity on one of my credit cards that there was a transaction to a company in London; had I made it? Um no. So for the second time in two years, I have cancelled the credit card (effective as soon as the conversation ends) and will have a new one within five days. Now I have to contact any company that I have regular payments to or which I have recently sent credit card authorization to but which had not cleared the account when it was closed out. After all is said and done, I simply have no idea how this company got my credit card number in the first place so no idea what holes exist. It all prompted me to change IDs and passwords again. Such fun. ((Chances are that the number did not come from online sources. I've had this happen so many times that I've lost count.))

Your trip sounds as if it went smoothly for the most part and was enjoyable. Only recently have I taken a look at gluten in my diet. Yeouch. I thought most grocery stores would carry at least one source of gluten free bread, but that is, obviously wishful thinking. The one that surprised me the most is that I had forgotten that soy sauce is a stubborn gluten culprit, and all the processed soy burgers (at least all the ones I checked) have soy sauce. So at this point I am mostly observing just how much gluten I actually am eating.

Just FYI: a recent study shows that, in cats, prednisolone is absorbed three times more effectively than prednisone and, hence, is the steroid of choice. It also needs to be added, frequently, that, again, in cats, steroids are to be given at night if on a once a day schedule. There is a "new" (or at least novel) cat piller; I saw one at the veterinary meeting and need to get some; they include a small water chaser; so when the pill is given, it is assured to move down the oesophagus. If you still want to give the Pepcid, you can try the transdermal gel. ((I talked to our current vet about trying the once-a-day prednisone dose in the evening, and she seemed to agree it was worth the try. I've been able to effect this since we moved. I've also cut back on the metronidazole.))

The "small" rambler/rancher house I bought is about 3000 square feet when you add in all the living space in the basement. The layout is nothing like I would set up, and the thing that is missing most is storage that is out of sight (had there been an actual attic, I would have used that; but there is just whatever you call the attic equivalent of a crawl space (or maybe it is the same term?)). Here the rule of thumb is \$125-\$175 per square foot for construction costs. Ooof-just did a quick mental calculation for the 6000 square feet!!! ((We're looking at construction costs of \$100-\$150 per square foot. The one builder we've talked to so far is at the higher end. We've pared the square footage down to 3500, but we may pare it down a bit more.))

Your edited floor plan still looks very ambitious but liveable.

Agh, this has been far too long in the making—will try to get it in the mail today. I have to be home when the Home Depot delivery arrives in the morning and then in the afternoon when the plumber comes to service the water softener. Until I replaced the original unit (at about thirty years old), I had to manually back flush it every month and then once a year refill it with chemicals—not really difficult (except the pails of chemicals are heavy!) but just a pain in the butt to remember. I thought I could get it repaired easily,

but the plumber said there was no way to solder the base metal, and all the new ones are self-contained to be automatic except for that once a year when you have to refill the chemicals. Ah, they quoted me a minimal of \$155 for the refill. I will watch them closely and see if there is any way I can do it next year. I already checked the information that came with the unit, and it does not explain how to add the chemicals yourself. We shall see.

My sister mentioned (several months ago) that her husband would be retiring from being in charge of quality control at Stouffer's in a few weeks. They own a used car lot where they buy cars and repair them for sale, and she thought he was just looking forward to being able to spend more time with the cars. So retirement opens many doors, or at least it can.

Thanks for this!

#

Edmund R. Meskys, Moultonboro, NH

15 November 2007

Thanks, again. Enjoyed the extended review of the re-constructed *Metropolis*. I had seen it several times while still sighted, when I first got into fandom, as well as *Woman in the Moon*. I joined a local SF club in late '55; and members there told of a showing at the Brooklyn Academy of Arts and Sciences, where they used a recording of Ballet Mechanique for a sound track. Since then I have seen it at several cons, old movie clubs, or sf club meetings. A decade or so ago, I acquired a videotape of it with a rock sound track. I ran it while my son tried to describe it for me and read the titles. At that time that was the best available re-construction of lost scenes, but I gather this one has even more lost scenes. I remember Forry Ackerman saying this was his favourite sf movie; he had seen it some thirty times (if I remember correctly), and every so often he would catch a scene he had never seen before.

The last time I saw *Woman in the Moon* was at a meeting of the Eastern SF Association in Newark, NJ—a mini-con celebrating an anniversary of *Amazing Stories*. Both Hugo Gernsback and Frank R. Paul were there, and I got them to autograph the front cover of my copy of the first issue. Anyhow, they showed *Woman* while Willy Ley gave commentary on how various scenes were filmed, why some scenes were done that way, etc. The movie is credited with the invention of the "countdown"; and Willy said it was done to heighten the drama, not for any engineering or scientific reason. Also, when the rocket lifted off, it was gone in a flash. The filmmakers were thinking of how fireworks rockets seem to disappear from the launch stick or slide. They did not imagine that because of its great size and mass, the blast-off would be so stately. I remember thinking of this while watching on TV the launch of one of the Apollo moon-ships. They had one TV camera mounted on the gantry near the top of the ship, and it seemed to take several seconds for it to slide past. I have somewhere an open reel audiotape of Willy Ley and had always intended to transcribe it to put in *Niekas*, but I wonder if that tape is any good after some forty years.

Your comments on the movie *Stardust* make it sound interesting. I remember reading a very favourable review of the book when it was first published, but I am getting further and further behind in reading all the books. My friend Anne Braude jokes about her collection of books to be read being large enough to fill the Grand Canyon.

Right now I am reading Brin's *Uplift War*, and this is only the third book in the series. Amy makes me want to read the Vinge books. Sigh.

We lost our cat, Shadow, at 14.5 years. He had undiagnosed maladies and was down from his original eleven pounds to less than five. He had been cured of thyroid cancer with radioiodine but had imminent kidney failure, and the vet did not know what caused this precipitous decline in weight and energy. We had planned to get a new kitten from the pound after returning from a two-week vacation in early December but inherited a used cat a few weeks ago. She was rescued as a kitten by a friend, who had kept her and two other cats for three years. Then she had to move to Baltimore and could only take two cats, so she left Amber with the tenant in her two-family house who knew and liked Amber. Now the friend has to move in with her son and cannot take the cat and talked us into taking it. The cat is very shy, terrified actually. She hid behind the washing machine for three days until we had to do a wash. She only started coming to us and climbing into Sandy's lap a week ago. Today she was traumatized when we tried to put her in a carrier for her first vet visit in two years. She escaped and is in hiding again. The vet suggested

we leave the carrier out where her food used to be kept and keep the food inside the open carrier. After a while she will get used to the presence of the carrier and go in to eat. Once she is used to the carrier, we can take her in. Sandy says it is a multicoloured cat with large areas of intermixed red and black hair and other patches. She does not have white patches, which is unusual. Much is a pale red-brown.

#

Stella Nemeth, Macungie, PA

15 November 2007

I enjoyed seeing *Feline Mewsings* as always. I enjoyed the reviews. I might have a look at those two Vinge books since I haven't read either of them.

Thank you for the update on the fires on the last page. I was aware that the Orange County fire was believed to have been set. Was one of the LA County fires set as well? So basically the fires that were set are now closed cases because they know who set them and the people responsible have been either arrested or have been killed trying to escape. ((I only heard about one person being identified as having set one or more of the fires. It turned out to be a young boy playing with matches. Probably because of his age, he is not being charged. Perhaps his parents should be fined for not having taught him not to play with matches.))

The fires were national news when they were really bad; but once they began to get under control, there was very little follow-up that I was aware of.

Here the weather has begun to turn early winter cold. We have warmer temps today and a lot of rain. Tomorrow it goes down into the 40s for the highs for at least a week. The trees have only just turned colourful, but yesterday the sun never came out; and although we were driving through areas where the colour should have been awesome, it wasn't anywhere as nice as it would have been on a sunny day. It was just too warm and dry in October for the trees to do their thing the way they were supposed to do; so basically when some of the trees finally turned bright orange or red, most of the others around them had already lost their leaves. It was a disappointment.

#

John Purcell, College Station, TX

18 November 2007

That cover art by Frank Wu is simply wonderful, Laurraine! It is really beautiful, in fact. The most recent issue of *Askance* (#5, now posted to efanazines) has front and back covers by Frank, and already a few LoCs have commented on how good they are. This cover on your zine is even better, though. I have often wondered what cats dream about. Now I know.

Well, I remember how stressful it was for us to sell our house in Marshalltown, Iowa, in order to move to College Station, Texas. In late August of 2001, after I had just accepted a position at Texas A&M University and moved myself down there in July to start teaching at the English Language Institute at TAMU, we put our house in Marshalltown on the market. My wife reported that there were numerous interested buyers - lots of nibbles, etcetera, but no one really bit on it. Then after 9-11, nobody was looking to buy a house up there. So through that entire winter, my wife and children were up in Iowa (where it was snowy and cold), having to keep the house clean; and all while I was in much warmer (and snowless) south-eastern Texas working at two jobs (I had taken a part-time job at WalMart here to help cover expenses for both locations). That winter was very stressful. I flew back up for a week and half at Christmas; then the house finally sold in the early summer of 2002. The whole family was then moved down to College Station in July that year. Needless to say, none of us ever want to go through that kind of a mess again!

I haven't read much of Vernor Vinge's work over the years, and Amy Harlib certainly makes these two books of his sound really good. So I will keep these in mind if I ever get around to having oodles of free time on my hands. (Free time? What in the world is that?!)

Also in Amy's reviews, I have seen *Metropolis* a few times before, always enjoying and admiring the movie. I think I will put the 2002 DVD on my Christmas list; this would make a wonderful gift.

Your response to Janice Morningstar about the various pronunciations of "ough" was clever. I remember reading that sentence you quoted somewhere, but I simply can't recall where. This requires some digging. Stay tuned...

Tim Marion's letter reminded me of a couple of my favourite Ballantine AF titles; besides *Excalibur*, which I liked a lot, there was also *Lilith* by George MacDonald and *The Wood Beyond the World* by William Morris. William Hope Hodgson was another good fantasy writer, too. *Vathek* was a lot of fun, too, I remember. The cover art throughout that entire series was always exemplary, and I collected the series on two levels: to have a complete set (of course) and because of the cover artwork.

And that should take of things for now. Take care of yourself, and I hope your house sells so that you and Mike can get moved and settle down in Tucson without too much stress. Even more importantly, I am very happy that you two are fine; those California wildfires really had me worried about all of my fan friends out there. You certainly didn't need the added stress of that on top of retirement and moving, did you?

#

Brad Foster, Irving, TX

20 November 2007

Sorry to hear that things are going so slowly with the house selling. It took us over a year to sell Cindy's dad's house after he passed away. While not the most fabulous house in the world, it was on the shore of a lovely lake in the area; and empty lots around it were going for more than we were asking. Just seemed to be a bad market time though. Our biggest headache was that several people were interested; but for whatever reasons, none could get the final financing they needed. We ended up selling it to one of his neighbours for a bit less than we had hoped but enough to make a dent in many of the bills we had built up while taking care of him at the end.

Nifty cover from Frank this issue. I wasn't sure if it was depicting the cat dreaming of attacking or defending; and then I realized I wasn't supposed to know for sure because, of course, how could I as a mere humid bean understand the deep inner thoughts of one of my furry masters? Very subtle, Wu!

#

Tim Marion, New York, NY

27 November 2007

Thanks for *Feline Mewsings* 30. Quite an impressive cover! It had been so long since I heard from you that I was afraid I had either said something to offend and had subsequently been lopped from the mailing list, or else you had joined the bandwagon and had stopped printing out (and mailing) hard copies and decided to become totally virtual (except for the copies for FAPA, of course). I'm still planning on doing another (hard copy issuance of) *So It Goes*.

I'm sorry that you have been suffering from smoke at your present location due to the fires in southern California. When I first heard of these fires, I became confused between Rancho Cordova, the location of the origin of the fires, and Rancho Bernardo, where resides an individual for whom I have a particular amount of acrimony. My very first assumption was that this person had antagonized so many people that someone had probably set fire to this fellow's vast acreage on purpose. Since then, however, I have discovered that Rancho Bernardo is actually some miles from Rancho Cordova. Well, I'm sorry that anyone has had to suffer.

I agree with Rita Prince Winston that it is almost certainly impossible that we will be on Mars, much less a terra-formed Mars, by 2025. That shouldn't mean that someone can't write a book with such a premise, however. Any book's subjective reality should be considered an "alternate reality." I was astounded, though, to read Rita asking who Berni Wrightson is! (No 'e' at the end of "Berni.") I admit that the main body of his work has been in comics, but I thought he had certainly done enough art in the science fiction world for over forty years to be renowned there as well! I sure hope Rita has heard of Jeff Jones, who is/was Berni's primary influence and who has also done much art in the science fiction field.

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Rita Prince Winston, Venice, CA

28 November 2007

I don't know if I'm going to get further than the front cover of your zine tonight. It lured me into accepting an upgrade of Acrobat, which keeps crashing 126.3% of the way through downloading; but I do love that cover, that beautiful Siamese cat dreaming of being Darth Vader on the Death Star or whatever Nazi propaganda movie the Deathstar was copied from.

At last!

Two plays of the Colony, both about WWII. Does the rest of their season continue the theme? ((No.))

Metropolis—I saw it once and it was dreadful, but Amy's article explains that the reason it's important is because it was the first movie to do various things, and being first is always important.

Laurraine's comment to Dale Speirs, "... self-driving cars ... still awaiting". Several years ago there was a test of self-driving cars on a closed-off mile of freeway, if I recall correctly, in Orange County. The first step toward self-driving was cruise control. Lately I've been hearing about "collision avoidance", in which a car senses that it is getting too close to the car ahead and slows down without any human touching the cruise control.

Laurraine's comment to Tom Feller: "regular TV stretched out to fill the wide screen". The TVs should have had an option to reverse-letterbox the regular-width TV picture.

...

Laurraine's comment to Mary Manchester about the house plans: "a house where there were cat runs from room to room". I don't understand this. I think of cat runs as areas that are fenced on all sides (and on top—cats climb) except where there is the entrance in a closed room that the cats are allowed to roam in. Is the enclosed room is for the cats to get some fresh air but they can't run away and the coyotes can't get at them? Cat runs inside the house suggests cats who are allowed in more than one room but not in any room except the ones connected by the runs. I would expect a cat to feel very insulted by the strong implication that he/she is not the boss of the entire house, ruling over human servants. Seriously, what's the good of having a cat if it can't honour me by choosing to share my bed at night? ((The cat runs are shortcuts from one room to another. The cats are allowed the run of the house.))

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Amy Harlib, NY, NY

30 November 2007

Adore the cat dreaming of "Catopolis" artwork!

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Jay Kay Klein, Bridgeport, NY

24 December 2007

Really do like getting your very well done and interesting, well written, gosh-awful informative letterzine. Your photos are well taken and well reproduced. Kudos to you!

Noted Mike's retirement! I recall your noting you haven't been able to sell your house, so you can get to Arizona as planned.

Years back, I bought this place—100 feet lake frontage on Oneida Lake, which is large enough to fit in two Manhattans! (or conversely occupy half of Singapore Island.) Had to hold on to my old house for one year before it sold. Two sets of taxes, mortgage payments, etc.

I can't go to cons any more—too hard to travel. Spinal arthritis makes walking/standing painful. But I do dream frequently I'm at an sf con!

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Thank you for *Feline Mewsings* 30. I might have left this late, but life is in a bit of an uproar these days trying to stay employed and head above water.

It's a couple of months past the release date of this zine, so I gather you've had the move to the Tucson area. How is that working out? Any move is a stress. We're thinking that we'll have to move some time in the next five years, given that our apartment is having the usual structural problems any apartment suffers from over time.

Perhaps I should get those Vernor Vinge books. Our local sf convention doesn't seem too interested in getting bigger literary names; but the little convention in Niagara Falls, NY, Eeriecon, has promised Vinge as a guest for next year.

Just a few days ago, *Supercomet: After the Impact* was shown on Discovery Channel Canada. An interesting watch, but I think it might have been sugar-coated to some degree. If the earth is singed and is warmed at some point to about 700°, how can anyone survive those temperatures? I would think that a cometary impact would be the end of not only civilization, as this programme says, but the end of humanity period. ((I tend to agree with you that the programme took a decidedly optimistic point of view. But if they hadn't, it wouldn't have been much of a show. Actually I believe various governments have underground hideouts for "important" people, so they may survive even a singed Earth.))

I have worked at some jobs where you are expected to look busy when there is no work to do, and that's where fanzines come in very handy. As you say, when you're typing away, you look quite busy. A fair number of the LoCs I write are done through a gap in the workflow and sufficient time management.

I hope there will be some movement towards exploration of Mars, not to mention development and eventual settlement; but when billions of dollars go towards military conflicts around the world instead of ecological or exploratory concerns, I despair for our future.

Greetings to Mary Manchester and Tim Marion, both of whom I haven't corresponded with in some time.

My loc... Audio books are loaned out at most libraries here; but seeing that libraries are chronically underfunded, there aren't many if any new books available for loan. I would also need the time to sit and listen and enjoy, and that time is nowhere in sight. ((I usually listen to audio books while doing things where my total attention is not required, such as driving, sewing, etc.))

I hope you get to enjoy the new home and location, and the next issue should I have lots more about the move. See you then.

* * *

* Closing Remarks

I hope to have more about the Tucson area in the next issue.

Laurraïne