

Purrsonal Mewsings #72



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

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#72

April 2020

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Contributions of art, reviews, articles, fiction, letters, even poetry welcome.
Publication not guaranteed, but all submissions will be given due consideration.

[] if this box is checked, I need to hear from you if you wish to stay on my mailing list.

If you are reading this electronically and would prefer to receive a printed version, please let me know. Or vice versa.

* Editorial / Introduction

Life seems to be quieter and calmer recently, which is a great relief. On the other hand the developments of the coronavirus pandemic are disquieting. Arizona has clamped down on the rules about sequestering et al, and some people seem to have gone into panic mode. Some grocery store sections have been stripped; it varies from store to store and time of day and day of week. The state is ramping up testing facilities, so for a while the numbers of infected will rise dramatically. Here's hoping they taper off soon.

We filed our Federal income tax and have received a nice refund, padded by a hefty tax credit for the solar battery we installed. Arizona has extended their filing deadline, so we'll file that later since we have to write them a cheque.

We've recently received a good amount of winter rainfall, for which we are grateful. In mid-February we had a light dusting of snow.

* * *

* Kritter Korner

One thing I've noted recently is that a greater roadrunner has been hanging around a lot. Since they are omnivores that will eat small birds as well as rodents, snakes, and lizards, many small birds seem to be discouraged from using our bird feeders as much as previously. See photo to right.

We saw a horrific fight recently between two antelope squirrels. Spring is the time for the males of many species to have it out with one another. The poor loser was badly injured, but he hobbled away.

* * *



* Astronomy

Mike has been working on a committee to build an observatory at our local state park. They decided to meet weekly, but the COVID-19 scare has at least temporarily halted those meetings.

Below are three photos I selected from his observations since my last issue.



Very new Moon exposed to reveal dark part.



Horsehead Nebula



Cigar Galaxy (M82)

* * *

* David H. Levy Arizona Dark Sky Star Party, October 2019

We drove to this event at Kartchner Caverns State Park southeast of Tucson on Tuesday, 22 October 2019, in early afternoon. It took us about two and a half hours to reach our motel in Benson with two stops on the way, one to drop Cato off at a kennel, the other to pick up a few snacks. We stayed at a Comfort Inn just outside Benson, a small town with a few other motels and some restaurants.

The next day we left the motel a few minutes before 09:00 to drive to the park about fifteen minutes away. The registration area was at the back of the outdoor amphitheater, and we picked up badges and other material. Mike went back to the car to take stuff back, and I went to the visitor centre and looked through the gift shop and some exhibits. About 10:00 there was an orientation talk by Scott Roberts, who was working at Meade Instruments when Mike met him in the late 1990s.

Around 11:30 I bought lunch at the Bat Cave Cafe, which has outdoor seating.

About 13:30 there was another orientation talk featuring David Levy, who is famous for the many comets he's discovered. Mike's talk, "Protecting Dark Skies", began at 15:00. This was followed by a talk on "Fantasy Flights to the Moon". The third and final talk, "Breaking the Boundaries of Astrophotography", was by an expert astrophotographer and was quite interesting.

We went to dinner in Benson at the Horseshoe Cafe, which turned out to be a good choice; we saw another couple from the conference there.

Afterward I picked up a salad for the next day's lunch at Denny's.

On Thursday we carpoled with Kent who volunteered to drive some of us to Kitt Peak. There were two other passengers; one was Ray, and I didn't catch the other man's name. We left early and got to our destination early, allowing us plenty of time to use the restrooms and look at the museum and gift shop. Then we were all taken on a tour of the Mayall 4-meter telescope, which has some new instrumentation attached to it.

Then we had a brief lunch break. I had the lunch I had picked up at Denny's. Mike had a small piece of beef from it.

After that we got a tour of the Steward telescope that started its life in Tucson. It was the first telescope built by the University of Arizona. This was followed by a tour of the 1.3 meter reflector. Next we toured the Mcmath-Pierce solar telescope.

For dinner we went to the Denny's in Benson. Mike found the service slow, but the food was good.

On Friday we drove to Kartchner Caverns to meet Jeff Stuckey and Rick van Kooten from Indiana University for lunch. Lunch was not too bad, considering it was outside and it was considerably cooler that day than it had been. Mike was given an award, an IU (Indiana University) Bicentennial Medal, from them in recognition of his educational outreach.

There was some free time until the first presentation, so we sat in the visitor centre and caught up with e-mail and other stuff. That first presentation by Fred Espenak was

about solar eclipses. The final presentation, “A Nightwatchman’s Journey”, was basically about David Levy’s life and was quite fascinating. Mike had pre-ordered his latest book, an autobiography, and we picked that up after his talk.

Then we hurried back to the motel, where Mike wanted to pick up a special lens. I reheated leftovers from Wednesday’s dinner and ate that.

When we got back to the park, Mike discovered he’d forgot his lens, the main purpose for going back to the motel! Since his project was time bound, as his objective would set early, there was nothing to do but plan to return the next night. I saw a couple of meteors, but Mike saw a bolide. After his photo session, we went to the amphitheater to listen to a lecture on astrophotography. That night was the coldest night that week; there were even freeze warnings.

We went back to the park about 10:30 Saturday morning.

About 11:00 we got our lunch. I had a pork tamale. We joined Scott and his two daughters; I think one was Jessica.

Then we went on the Rotunda-Throne Room tour of the caverns. The caverns tours are highly regulated to minimize the effect of our exhalations on the formations; we couldn’t take anything other than our wallets and keys. After a break during which we talked off and on with Scott and his daughters and Penny, whom Mike had met when she worked at the Oceanside [California] Photo and Telescope (OPT) store, there was a presentation by Robert Vice about astrophotography and image processing. About 17:00 there were group pictures taken and door prize drawings. We won a set of very expensive filters that Mike has been testing out recently. After that we returned briefly to our motel to regroup. We drove back to the park where Mike took a series of photos of the Milky Way in the vicinity of Sagittarius.

Dinner was about 20:00 at Denny’s. Most of the other restaurants were closed by then.

Sunday morning we checked out and headed over to the park for the farewell session and group photo. We started on our drive home about 10:45. It took us a couple of hours.

An addendum. A second event in this series, where Mike had been featured again as a guest speaker, was scheduled for May of this year, but this has been postponed because of COVID-19.

* * *

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

Cyrano de Bergerac, performed and filmed at the National Theatre in London and starring EbenFigueiredo, James McAvoy, and Anita-sou Uwajeh

This was one of the filmed theatrical events that are shown in select cinemas. The movie theatre fairly close to us shows these. I went with a friend who used to live in Oracle but who moved to a senior housing development located south of us in Tuscon.

When the film opened and I saw that the stage was mostly bare, I started having doubts about this version of the Rostand play. Fortunately little time went by before the performance started appealing to me. It is done in poetry, as is the original French publication. It is a new translation with words updated to modern English, though the story supposedly takes place in the original time period. It is performed in modern style as though today were the seventeenth century.

I felt it worked very well. The actors were excellent. I found it wonderful to see James McAvoy doing serious acting as opposed to his roles in the X-men movies. I enjoyed it immensely. As usual when I see this play performed, I cried at the end.

In case you are unfamiliar with the story, it is about Cyrano de Bergerac, who has been blessed with a huge proboscis and consequently considers himself too ugly to court the fairer sex. He is in love with his cousin Roxanne. He meets a tongue-tied young soldier with is infatuated with Roxann. Since the young soldier is unable to woo Roxanne in the manner in which she desires, Cyrano writes the speeches for the soldier.

Many of these movies are repeated. If you like this type of work, keep an eye out for it. Or check Fathom Events online.

* * *

*** StippleAPA**

StippleAPA is an amateur press association. An APA is like a group pen pal. Each distribution includes a fanzine from each member, who usually writes about his or her interests and life and makes comments on the previous issues of the other members. If you're interested in joining, please let me know and I can get you in touch with the person who runs it.

MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #332

Ruth Odren (The Once and Future Zine): I must have typoed; it's Wobenzyme **N**. And it's designed for joint health, not necessarily just for arthritis.

There are shower seats available of various designs, both built-in and portable.

Erik Biever (It's a Zine): My condolences on the passing of your mother.

Joyce Maetta Odum (Change Horse

Double Step): Before you hire someone to trim your trees, be sure to find out if he/she knows the proper techniques. The best way is to educate yourself—lots of information online under “pruning”.

Lucy Schmeidler (Don't Ask #22): Octavia Butler also died from an unexpected fall.

You ask if our feeders and birdbaths bring interesting visitors. It depends on what one considers interesting. Mostly we get house finches, various

kinds of sparrows, curve billed thrashers, cactus wrens, cardinals, quails, doves, gila woodpeckers, ladder back woodpeckers, various hummingbirds, and squirrels and chipmunks. During the warmer months, we get three different kinds of orioles, pyrrhuloxia, the occasional kingbird, a larger variety of hummingbirds, towhees, black-headed grosbeaks, and perhaps a few I'm unable to think of at this time. A couple of predatory birds sometimes hang out to prey on the smaller birds and squirrels—cooper's hawks and roadrunners. We recently spotted a Scott's oriole, a Bullock's oriole, and a Western scrub jay.

We invited a lot more than fifteen people to our party. Fifteen people indicated that they planned to attend. The weather was cold and wet; our unimproved road was muddy and slippery.

Garth Spencer (Missions Creep #8): Why do you blame Belgians for

See you all in the May disty.

*** Letters to the Editor**

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

Timothy Lane, timothylane51 at gmail dot com

6 March 2020

Ah, another enjoyable *Purrsonal Mewsings*. It was hard following those astronomical photos on their sides. I guess old age is catching up with me.

various things?

Cy Chauvin (Amazons & Swallows Forever! #74):

I once went to the George Eastman museum in Rochester, NY, to see an announced showing of *Aelita: Queen of Mars*. When a friend and I got there, it was announced that the showing would be postponed until the film had been cleaned up (technically speaking) and showed a different film completely. During the time I lived in the area, no showing of *Aelita* was ever announced; consequently I've never seen it.

I've seen video productions of *A Town like Alice* on TV but never read the book. It sounds like it's worth reading.

Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits): I'm sorry to hear you're still struggling with ear problems.

Our holiday party is more or less an open house, so we invite as many people as we can reach. The attendance varies from year to year.

((He reads the zine in PDF, presumably on a desktop computer. On an iPad, it's easy to lock the screen and turn it to see the photo right-side-up.))

You sure seem to be accumulating a lot of household bills. Stephen King said in *Danse Macabre* that *The Amityville Horror* was an adult horror film because one of the major problems they faced was all the bills. I don't think you're as bad off.

((You're definitely correct that life could be worse. Our finances look better after working out our taxes and receiving a large refund.))

"Mimsy Were the Borogoves" is an interesting story. I came across it in the *Science Fiction Hall of Fame*. We had "The Jabberwocky" in 6th grade and I've loved it ever since, so it was natural for me to read it.

Usually when Elizabeth and I combined a convention with sightseeing, we didn't stay in the hotel after it was over but went elsewhere. One exception was when we stayed over in Nashville. The last day of the convention, we went to the Hermitage, the Parthenon (which includes a small art museum, though the convention art show was probably better), and another plantation. The next day we toured the Stone's River battlefield.

I remember sharing a program event with Bjo Trimble lo these many years ago (it may have been the Atlanta NASFIC in 1995) on tolerance at conventions. She noted that a lot of fans don't like gamers even though the gamers actually are very convenient for the conventions; they go to the gaming area and pretty much spend their time there, while paying as much to attend as other fans.

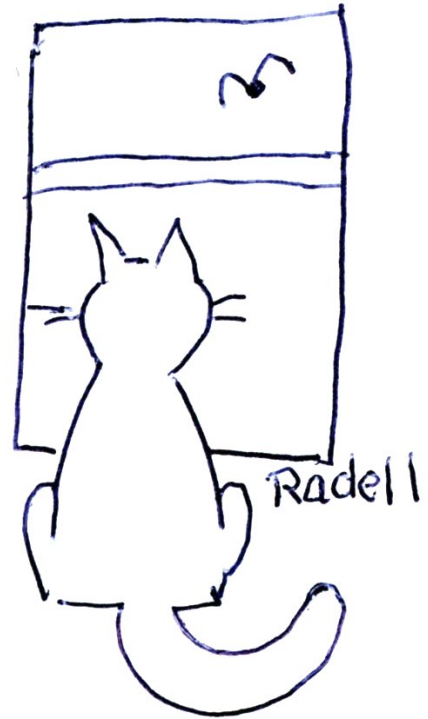
I hope things work out for you with all these problems.

#

Joy V. Smith, Pagadan at aol dot com

8 March 2020

So many beautiful and fantastic photos! I especially love the sunset, the ice spike, the moon and the space station, the Orion nebula, and the montage! Oh, and I'm glad your tush is better.



What a busy and fun time you had at Westercon; I would have enjoyed “Alien Invasion Debriefing Session”, “Cats in Speculative Fiction”, among others--and thanks for the masquerade photo. You had a lot of fun at the museums and Arches too--and a good selection of meals--always fun exploring new places on a trip.

And thanks for the reviews. I appreciated learning about "20th century female astronomer Henrietta Leavitt. Back then astronomer Edward Charles Pickering took a large number of sky photographs and needed people to analyze them. He hired women, among them, astronomer Leavitt, a graduate of Radcliffe College, to catalogue the stars in his photographs..." I'd love to share that info. I've read *Hidden Figures*, *Hidden Women*, etc.; but here's another fantastic female few people know about.

Interesting letters too. Amy, I love your kitten! Thanks to everyone for their contributions everywhere!

#

**Robert Kennedy, The Terraces of Boise, 5301 East Warm Springs Ave., Apt. B306, Boise, Id 83716-6205, 208-343-1773, robertk at cipcug dot org
13 March 2020**

Thank you for #71.

Great owl photo by Mike on the cover. Also his usual wonderful astronomical photos. Very much enjoyed was the International Space Station crossing the Moon.

Glad to hear that your tail bone area has improved.

Excellent report on Westercon along with the photo which includes Mike. The other photos were appreciated too including one of yourself.

Dale Cozort indicates that he DVRs everything. That sounds like me. I don't watch the news and haven't for years. I record the shows that interest me and watch them at my convenience. I have a massive collection of movies on DVD and watch a number of them again when I feel like it. I also have some DVDs from The Great Courses. Furthermore I receive a number of magazines of various political and economic persuasions.

You indicate that you prefer digital readouts as opposed to analogue. I like analogue watches and clocks. I like to see the current time and how it relates to past time and future time. I have an Apple Watch and selected a Mickey Mouse analogue face. His feet tap out the seconds. Periodically his eyes blink. If I tap him he says the time. I love it.

The comment by Lloyd Penney about *Eats, Roots, Shoots and Leaves* as a take-off of *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* by Lynne Truss was funny. As mentioned in a previous issue, I too have the book by Lynne Truss. Maybe it's time for me to read it again.

I noticed that in this issue as in many prior issues, you have a number of cat pictures. I read somewhere about the difference between dog people and cat people. Dog people wish that their dogs were people. Cat people wish that they were cats. Personally I'm a cat person.

That's about it. Nothing much going on here. Just about 300 old people hoping none of us gets the COVID-19.

((I also DVR everything, partly to avoid watching commercials, also to watch at my convenience. I like dogs too, but we aren't willing to take them for walks. I hope we all stay healthy.))

#

Mary Manchester, 1297 Monroe Ave #2, Rochester, NY 14620-1655
19 March 2020

Thank you for P. M. #71. Owls always look so determined—scary.

Have I seen ice spikes? Tiny ones in cube trays. As usual, Mike, great photos. Loved the one of Cato on the ladder. He's all cat, said fondly.

((The photo of Cato was taken by yours truly.))

#

I Also Heard From: Jerry Kaufman; Trinlay Khadro

* * *

*** Closing Remarks**

Most local physical events have been cancelled or postponed. We are mostly staying home except to get allergy shots, shop for grocery and pet supplies, and pick up mail (we have no US Mail delivery to the house). The paucity of reviews this time around is at least in part because of the COVID-19 lockdown. Because of the cancellations and postponement of events, the near future of trip reports is uncertain.

I hope all of you out there are doing the prudent thing and limiting contact with others. Stay safe.

Deadline for next issue is expected to be on or about 30 April.

Laurraïne

2020