

# Purrsonal Mewsings #63



*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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#63

March 2018

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## **Art and Photo Credits**

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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**

I don't have any travel planned until April, so I include in this issue a history article by Alexis Gilliland.

January here was rather dry with less than two inches of rain, and there were a lot of fairly warm days. So far February has been much wetter with about three inches of rain, and temperatures have mostly been cooler.

I had a cold during much of January. Since then I've mostly been trying to catch up with stuff and prepare for my trip in April.

\* \* \*

### **\* Kritter Korner**

We've had a couple of visits by a Cooper's hawk. Here's a pretty good picture we got of it. It has a fairly long tail with stripes.



Mike caught our two cats napping in their window seat.



\* \* \*

**\* So What Happened To Sparta?** by Alexis Gilliland

In the course of reading over ancient history, I noticed that Sparta had been a major power on the Grecian mainland, while the Spartan phalanx was a state of the art, unbeatable war machine until all of a sudden Sparta and the Spartans weren't there any more. So I did some research to find out what happened, which turned out to be a little involved. The following article simplifies matters considerably, up to the point where Sparta exits the world stage. After that there is a short description of Spartan society intended to clarify matters a little further. We start at the beginning of the end.

The Peloponnesian War was fought between 433 and 404 BC to curb the imperial ambition of Athens and ended with a decisive victory for Sparta and her allies in the Peloponnesian league, when Athens surrendered and pulled down the long walls to the music of flutes.

Despite the collaborative nature of the war effort, Sparta alone received the plunder and tribute from the defeated Athenian Empire and in 402 BC attacked Elis, an ally and fellow league member, as payback for what Sparta considered their unsatisfactory conduct in the war. Sparta's allies, Corinth and Thebes, chose not to support this attack; and in 398 BC they also refused to send troops with the Spartan expedition supporting the Greek colony of Ionia on Asia Minor against the Persian Empire. This expedition spilled over the border into the Persian satrapy of Lydia, a formerly Greek state, leading Persia to send envoys to foment an anti-Spartan distraction on mainland Greece. This resulted in an alliance of four states: Athens, Corinth, Thebes, and Argos, initially supported by the Persian Empire, which fought the Corinthian War, from 395 to 387 BC. This war was fought on two fronts, on land near Corinth and Thebes and in the Aegean Sea. On land the Spartans won several battles but were unable to secure a

victory, while at sea they were decisively defeated. During this time Athens took the opportunity to rebuild the long walls connecting Athens to its port of Piraeus and to reestablish their fleet and empire. The Persians, concerned about the Athenian resurgence, changed sides to support Sparta. This resulted in the Peace of Antacidas, in 387 BC, which ceded Ionia to the Persians and recognized Sparta as being the first state among equals on the Greek mainland.

The Spartans took being the dominant Greek state seriously and actively intervened in the affairs of the other Greek city-states. In 382 BC when Sparta and Thebes were at peace, Sparta conspired with a faction in Thebes to seize Cadmea, the citadel of Thebes, installing a pro-Spartan oligarchy supported by a Spartan garrison. That must have seemed like a good idea at the time, but this state of affairs only lasted until 378 BC when an uprising killed the three oligarchs and expelled the Spartan garrison. What followed was a series of inconclusive campaigns by Sparta against Thebes, in which a Spartan general acting on his own initiative tried to seize Piraeus, the port of Athens, thus widening the war unnecessarily.

Holding the title of strategos, Epaminondas was the leader of the Theban cause. What he did was to devise tactics against the hitherto invincible Spartan phalanx. Changes were made improving the use and gear of the peltasts, the light infantry, and emphasizing cavalry training. He also rethought the way the phalanx was used to counter traditional Spartan tactics that were by now well understood. The Greek phalanx was made up of heavily armed hoplites, each hoplite getting logistical support from seven or eight camp followers; and in battle formation the hoplites stood in close order, eight to twelve ranks deep, with the best trained forces stationed on the right flank. This formation was cumbersome to maneuver, so that most battles between rival armies were fought at a mutually agreed upon time and place and in the traditional manner. In 371 BC, after Sparta rejected a peace treaty with Thebes and its allies, Epaminondas won the battle of Leuctra against a numerically superior Spartan force. First Theban cavalry routed the Spartan cavalry; and then Epaminondas, having made the Theban left flank strong, fifty men deep as opposed to the Spartan twelve, also kept his depleted right flank and center back in an echelon formation so that they were not immediately engaged, closed with the left flank only. The heavily reinforced Theban left smashed through the elite Spartan right, killing about one thousand of which four hundred were Spartan citizen-soldiers, including King Cleombrotus I. Seeing the right flank broken, the Spartan center and left flank, Peloponnesian allies with less of a stake in victory, withdrew from the field. That victory destroyed the myth of Spartan invincibility, enabling Epaminondas to take the war to Sparta, first by liberating the Messenian helots in 370 BC and then by rebuilding and fortifying the ancient city of Messene. Messenia, which had been ruled by Sparta for 230 years, had served as the Spartan breadbasket. It now became an implacably anti-Spartan city-state allied with Thebes. In a subsequent war, Thebes defeated the allied forces of Athens and Sparta at the battle of Mantinea in 362 BC, again using the tactic of a strong left flank. However Epaminondas, who had been leading the left flank, was killed by a Spartan spear. Lacking his leadership, Thebes declared victory and ended the war without seeking any decisive advantage. In 336 BC, on hearing a rumor of Alexander the Great's death, the city rose against Macedonian rule and was destroyed. Although greatly diminished,

Sparta remained a player and in 192 BC supported the Roman conquest of Greece when, because Sparta had nothing the Romans wanted, the Spartans were granted limited autonomy.

In its day Sparta was a profoundly conservative society that had evolved to maximize military success. It was ruled by two hereditary kings of equal authority, the Gerosia, a council of twenty-eight elders elected for life, plus the two kings and the ephors, or overseers. In time, power shifted to the Gerosia and the ephors, except that a Spartan king always commanded the army in the field. Spartan women, the wives and daughters of the ruling class, could own property, divorce their husbands, and go out in public unattended, but not vote nor hold office. Girl children were better fed, better exercised, and not married until their late teens or twenty, as opposed to standard conditions elsewhere in Greece. As a result they bore more and healthier children. All infants were presented to the Gerosia to eliminate those that were "puny and deformed", but babies that made the cut were raised; and at the age of seven, males started military training in the Agoge. This training was rough in that the students were subjected to serious bullying by the older students and fed short rations. Part of their training was that students were expected to go out and steal extra food. The assertion that older but still unmarried Spartans mentored younger ones in a homosexual relationship is unproven. Xenophon, who had first hand knowledge, explicitly denies the charge, as does Plutarch. In his critique of the Spartan constitution, Aristotle writes that the lack of homosexuality in Spartan men was why the Spartan women were so deplorably powerful. Besides agreeing with Xenophon and Plutarch, Aristotle's ancient idea is also in accord with modern psychology, which suggests that pederasty inclines its practitioners towards misogyny. Unlike the normally misogynistic Greek city-states of the era, Spartan girls were also educated, though not in the arts of war. In part this may be that since the men were often away fighting, the women had to be able to keep things running at home, thus informing Aristotle's opinion that their power was deplorable.

The three classes of Sparta were Spartiates, the highly trained hoplites with full political privileges; Perioiki, non-voting freemen who were in effect a small middle class doing necessary work forbidden to the Spartiates (who weren't allowed to make money, although since they had been trained to steal, they may have found a way); and Helots, either state owned serfs (in Messenia) or slaves. The Spartans were professional soldiers who looked on war as a pleasant interlude from the rigors of training for war, but the Spartiate class suffered a lot of attrition due to death and downward mobility as death in battle was common and one could also be demoted for any number of reasons. Around 750 BC a land reform had provided nine thousand helot-worked holdings to support nine thousand Spartiates; but by Aristotle's time (384-322 BC), that number had fallen to less than a thousand, providing the context for losing four hundred Spartiates at Leuctra in 371 BC.

Finally, much of what we know about Sparta is untrue, being either Spartan propaganda, or slanders from its enemies. Thus Athens tells of the Spartan mother's farewell to her son in which she bids him to return "With your shield or on it". This is either bogus or of great antiquity, since the Spartans buried their dead at the field of battle, which was usually far from home. The famous story of the Spartan boy who stole

a fox and hid it under his tunic so that on being apprehended he kept stoically silent (Fox? What fox?) while the fox chewed out his entrails, is Spartan in origin. It expresses an ideal behaviour rather than a real one; and since Spartan boys in the Agoge were expected to steal food, the story might have been inspired by a stolen chicken concealed under a boy's tunic. However foxes are not domestic animals to be easily taken; and one also has to wonder about the boy's interrogators, who could have hardly missed seeing the fox struggling to free itself under the tunic; so it also appears to be bogus.

\* \* \*

### \* **Astronomy**

Mike decided to take a photo of his telescope family.



At the end of January, he got photos of the lunar eclipse.





Here's a great photo of the Orion nebula he took using his new Nikon D850 DSLR through his 12" telescope.



\* \* \*

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

### ***The Genius Plague*, by David Walton**

This novel, which I read for the Oro Valley Science Fiction Book Club starts with the fact that mushrooms are just the tip of very large fungi. A study of one in Oregon revealed that the fungus covered almost four square miles. Most of the organism is underground. In the book the fungus in question lives in the Amazon. One kind of fungus there infects ants. The ants then spread spores. Eventually the ants die from the infection. Fungi can infect people as well. A well known fungal disease is Desert Fever, which can occur in the southwestern states of the US. Fungal infections can be difficult to get rid of, requiring sometimes up to a year or two or even longer in especially susceptible people.

In the book a fungus infects people in the Amazon. The fungus fuses with the nervous system of their victims. There are benefits for the victims, such as better health. But it also promotes behaviour beneficial to the fungus and not necessarily to people. The early spread of the infection grows mostly in South America and therefore doesn't

attract the attention of the world.

Once events occur to attract worldwide attention, things snowball. It becomes an emergency. The novel follows one of the people affected by these changes.

I found it to be a very interesting read. The plot was novel. There is a nominal happy ending, but the situation is left somewhat open-ended for some of the characters.

#

### ***The Water Knife*, by Paulo Bacigalupi**

This book was the chosen selection for the Oro Valley SF Book Cub for February.

I found the book well-written and interesting, but parts of it were a little too violent or steamy for me. Otherwise the story is not too far-fetched. It takes place in a near future when water has become very scarce in the Southwest. California has effectively closed its borders, which are protected by armed guards. Las Vegas is similarly fortified. Texas is apparently so dry that people are leaving in droves. Most of the action takes place in Phoenix, which is now inhabited by the poor Phoenicians, Texans, and the rich, who live in fortified apartment complexes. Many of these complexes in Phoenix and elsewhere are built by the Chinese.

The main characters are a reporter, originally from Vancouver, Canada, who sees it as her mission to stay in Phoenix, a “water knife” working for Las Vegas, and a Texan refugee who has lost the rest of her family. Their paths cross in interesting ways.

#

### ***Join*, by Steve Toutonghi**

I found this book somewhat unsatisfying. The title refers to a capability that has been developed that allows people to join together as though different drives on a computer. Much computer terminology is used to describe this. Problems with joining more than a certain maximum number has limited the number of people in a join. A few individuals have worked on crafting workarounds for the limitation with varying degrees of success.

The story mainly revolves around two joins named Chance and Leap. Another join has been attacking some of their members. There are rumours of an un-joined person who might be able to help them with a problem they have developed.

The main problem I found with the book is that no one character is developed in any depth, so there is no one with whom I could sympathize or identify. The whole concept of the join is also very confusing.

\* \* \*

### **\* 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 #315

**Ruth Odren (The Once and Future Zine):** Falling behind has certainly become a chronic problem for me. I find myself about eighteen months behind with my periodical reading among other things.

**Bill Thomasson (Musings from the Gathering Dusk #13):** I know all about the time and money thing when it comes to travel. Before I retired, I frequently found myself with the time but no money. It was also difficult to take off large blocks of time when I was working. Nowadays what I have to ration is my energy. I don't have the energy to travel constantly and have to try to space my trips wisely. I overdid it last year. It's difficult when so much beckons. I also have to space out my expenditures; I don't have an infinite supply of money.

**Jacky Boykin (Hollywood 101: the "Talk" of the Town):** I agree that quail are cute. My first quail sighting outside of a zoo was at the Huntington Gardens. I was with a friend and probably squealed like a kid when a family of quail walked by.

I'll try to remember about not ordering quail at a restaurant if you're there. To date I don't think I've ever had quail, though I think I've had quail eggs.

**Cy Chauvin (Amazons & Swallows Forever!):** I also went to the high school I graduated from for only two

years. Yet I made some fairly strong connections. I was also invited to another school I went to for their high school reunion but didn't choose to attend that one. I went to a third high school, but I haven't heard anything about any reunions there.

**Erik Biever (Fat Tire):** It's been a while since I read *Cryptonomicon*, but I remember really loving it.

**Dale Cozort (Space Bats & Butterflies):** I also like *The Orville*. I find it fun the way I used to find the original *Star Trek*.

**Lucy Schmeidler (Don't Ask #6):** Congratulations on having your poetry published.

I hope your hand is doing much better.

Trying to understand lyrics that are sung is always difficult. Super- or subtitles at operas is wonderful. I remember overhearing two women at an opera in LA. The opera was in German and the women were German; they were grateful for the supertitles.

If my zine was bound upside down, it has nothing to do with me. Since I don't live in Minnesota, I wasn't at the collation.

Eating gluten free is fairly easy now. A lot of products are available in gluten free form in most supermarkets. Even travelling is not too bad. There was very little trouble in Argentina. I did have a problem on the ship to Antarctica, but the dinner

was a buffet, and the head waiter hadn't found me yet. After that experience I'll be much more careful. I'll find out how difficult the situation is in Africa when I go in April.

I'm not absolutely sure what the spotted cat in the photo from the Houston Zoo is, but I would guess it's a leopard.

The animal on the right side of p. 12 is a red panda. I'm not sure of the other one. The third animal on p. 13 is some kind of pig.

I'm not big on poetry, but I liked "A Kiss?"

**Joyce Maetta Odum (Epoxy Moments):** My sympathies on your health situation.

A lot of people caught the flu this year despite getting vaccinated. My husband also succumbed.

**S. H. Rayne (Wight as Rayne):** Why is your reading list "to be read in 2020"? What happens then?

**The Sparrow and the 'Wolf (Not Unlike a Sparrow's Perspective):**

Mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and syntax abound everywhere. There was a sign at my doctor's office asking people to wait behind a sign. During the time I was waiting, I found four mistakes and alerted the person behind the counter; this is a high number, considering the shortness of

\*\*\*\*\*

See you all in the next disty.

the sign. She later came out to take a picture to give to the person who designed the sign.

**Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits):** I've seen the green flash twice now—once in Hawaii and once at the top of Kitt Peak.

Mike wants to see the 2024 total solar eclipse from Seymour, IN, where he's from.

I always dress in layers at conventions. I usually put on nylons under my slacks; I take warm underwear as well just in case. I wear long-sleeved blouses and put on a blazer, sometimes both a sweater and a blazer.

I haven't shopped for FEW gin yet, but FEW makes three kinds of gin. Two of them have a lot of different spices in them. It was one of those two that I was served.

I don't have names for all the people in the photo Mike took at the reunion. It would take a lot of time to identify everyone, not to mention that identifying spouses would be even more difficult.

I haven't found a way to add captions to photos in Pages.

There are always movies I'd to see but don't have the time while they're at the cinema.

Mercury is taking Methimazole for his hyperthyroidism. It seems to be working.

\*\*\*

## \* 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. Deadline for next issue is 29 March 2018.

**Tom Feller**

**5 January 2018**

Thank you for sending the zine. I am enclosing my most recent FAPazine in trade. I enjoyed having dinner with you and Mike back in August.

My company was once a Denny's franchisee many years ago. Before we opened our store, our then Vice-President for Food and Beverage spent a lot of time with their people. He was astounded at how much they demanded of the store managers and asked how they kept them. Their response was that they planned for their store managers to burn out after eighteen months. I don't know if that is still their attitude, but at the time it explained why their quality of service varied greatly from store to store.

E. E. Barnard, for whom Barnard's Star is named, was a Nashville native who received the first astronomy degree awarded by Vanderbilt.

Both my wife Anita and I have heard David Weintraub, a professor of astronomy at Vanderbilt, speak. We even have two of his books in our collection: *Is Pluto a Planet?* and *How Old is the Universe?* Too bad you were sleeping, because we have always found him to be quite interesting.

((I have a tendency to get sleepy after lunch. I found his presentation style to be rather dry, especially by comparison to the other speaker.))

I've never been to the Stones River battlefield, although Anita has.

I'm glad you were able to see the eclipse. If you had skipped the trip to Hopkinsville and tried to watch it from your hotel, you might not have been able to see it. Clouds over downtown Nashville covered it up at the last minute, and many people were disappointed. I'm sorry Mike got sick. It is very easy to get dehydrated in Kentucky in August.

I see that you and Mike have a preference for Marriott products, especially Fairfield Inns. I always enjoyed staying at them during business trips. Each room had a king-size bed, a comfortable chair for either reading or watching TV, and a desk for work. They also had good breakfasts.

((I'm a member of Marriott's preferred members club. I joined many years ago, mostly because many of conventions are held on their properties. I also prefer Marriott because of their no smoking policy.))

#

**Mary Manchester, 1297 Monroe Av, #2, Rochester, NY 14620-15655**  
**19 January 2018**

Are the kitties responding to treatment? That's such a worry.

((After one change of dosage, Mercury's hyperthyroidism seems to be under control. Gateway isn't on any new meds but seems to be okay.))

What's a Martha's Vineyard salad?

((There are probably variations, but I recall a lettuce salad with strawberries, blue cheese, and most likely some kind of nuts.))

My compliments, as always, to Mike. He certainly *gave his all* for that perfect photo of the eclipse.

((She enclosed some news clippings. One was about a plan to remove a lot of trees lining the Erie Canal. This reminds me of another fan who talked about tree removal in a small town in France. Is this some kind of plot?)

((Another article listed the top ten attractions in New York State. I've been to seven of them, though I don't really remember one (probably too young).))

((She also enclosed an article about Ursula K. LeGuin, which seemed a bit weird considering her recent passing.))

((Finally she sent an article about places to see in Arizona. I haven't been to most of them.))

#

**Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd. Etobicoke, ON CANADA M9C 2B2, penneys**  
**at bell dot net** **24 January 2018**

Hello! It's been a very long time; and I have been so busy with finding work, finally being successful, and then having all my spare time being eaten by the new job. I have a little downtime, so I have been writing as many locs as I can in a short time, and I have two issues of *Purrsonal Mewsings*, 60 and 61. So, here goes.

((I'm very happy that you are employed again.))

60... Connie Willis is a lovely lady, and I've only met her once. Same goes for the Trimbles, and we've had some adventures with them. A recent wonderful movie that covered the time period of Dunkirk was *Darkest Hour*, with Gary Oldman being an amazing Winston Churchill overcoming an undistinguished political career at the beginning to be a major part of WWII in his own finest hours.

The panel you describe about Star Trek fandom would be quite interesting with current discussions I see online about *Star Trek: Discovery* and *The Orville*. Both shows have their fans and detractors, and I am sure a panel about these two shows at any con would probably generate more heat than light, but might be entertaining to see.

((I quite enjoy *The Orville* myself; I find it fun to watch. I'll reserve judgement on *Star Trek: Discovery* until I'm able to see more than the first episode.))

From the mailing comments on retirement...Yvonne is officially retired, is very much enjoying it, the cheques start arriving shortly, and she is quite busy with doing a general clean-up of the apartment. The detritus of two fannish packrats has definitely piled up over the years, and it is time for some hard decisions about what to keep and what to recycle.

((I find retirement almost too busy to handle. There is no time for daily chores. I had a timed irrigation system put in, and we recently hired a handyman to do weeding. I've fallen way behind (about eighteen months) with my periodical reading.))

Ah, I see some mentions of what I've written...indeed, Rodney Leighton did pass away from heart problems. Stephen Hunt is a popular steampunk author who writes in a very dense style, dense with the ideas and concepts he fills his books with. I also believe that while he currently lives in Great Britain, he was born in Mississauga, just a short drive away from where I am right now.

My own letter's update...we did go to The Asylum, and it was a marvelous time, but I am not sure we'd return. We do want to return to England and plan to do so in 2019. We will return to Michigan for Motor City Steam Con (now in Novi, MI), and Yvonne will reprise Queen Victoria and is scheduled to review the troops. In case anyone asks, Kraken Rum is pure poisonous throatslit, and I am sure it goes well with Coke.

61... Some great astronomical shots. I've seen mention of antelope squirrels and rock squirrels in issue 60. On page 12 on the leg, which squirrel is this one? I've never seen a three-coloured squirrel before. All the squirrels around here are black or grey. We do have red squirrels here, but they are an endangered species, thanks to the bigger blacks.

((The animal photos are from the Houston Zoo, and I don't know what kind of squirrel is in the photos. Our local antelope squirrels and rock squirrels are both ground squirrels. The antelope squirrels look like Disney's Chip and Dale. The rock squirrels are larger than most tree squirrels that I've seen in cities, and their tails don't stand up.))



On the next page, there are elephants. The Toronto Zoo no longer has elephants, and Bob Barker made sure of that. We wanted to see *Victoria and Abdul* and *Blade Runner 2049* but just never got around to them. It looks like SW Episode VIII may see the same fate.

((I missed seeing a couple of movies during the holidays, because I was just too busy.))

I must agree with Bill Wright. SF fandom is usually full of people who have never been in charge of anything before competing against those who have been in charge of too much, and their egos depend on it. We try our best, and we don't often get along, but at least we do try. Some years ago, Yvonne and I finished up 30-year careers in running cons, because we knew that the good times take some hard work to set up. Near the end, we saw that expectations and laws were changing, and we asked ourselves, can we still do this? As soon as we had some doubts, we knew it was time to leave.

One thing Bill might not like, and I know Marty Cantor would rather excommunicate me for it... as soon as I complete this loc and send it to you, I will archive it on a LiveJournal account. Marty complained that I was publishing my loc before the faneds could, and he would never send me any LASFS publications. He has been good to his word, although I suspect he's actually forgotten all of this.



I am on a day off and with Yvonne retired, she is a lady of (just a little) leisure; so we will soon be going out for coffee. It is cold outside right now, but the coffee shop is not far away. Take care, stay cool (but not indoor AC cold), and I hope this loc isn't too late for inclusion in the next issue.

((We set our AC to 80° F; we don't like AC that freezes our tushies.))

#

**John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St, No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057**  
**26 January 2018**

Thanks for *Mewsings* 61 as ever.

What a fine solar eclipse photo by Mike on your front cover.

His other photos are also good and contribute well to your zine. I an ignorant city boy don't know the butterflies, bird, or armadillo on p. 3; since you seem to know great-tailed grackles when you see them, would you kindly consider identifying the subjects of such photos? In the zoo photos I recognize a raccoon, elephants, and giraffes; who or what are the rest?

((I'm not very good at butterfly identification, but I believe the butterfly is the Queen (*Danaus gilippus*). The bird is a Green Jay. As for the zoo pictures, other than identifying the animals next to the giraffes are being in the pig family, I don't remember.))

I suppose one may ask whether they're subjects or objects.

The beauty and indeed drama of a total solar eclipse are striking. I notice you felt a frisson (fine word that; it often reminds me of Wallace Stevens's "Anecdote of the Prince of Peacocks" (1923), the title of which sometimes reminds me he had an Emperor of Ice Cream in the same year) and nearly cried, gosh.

On p. 10 the photo of a hand with "1967" on the nails, one digit for each digit, reminds me of a poster I've seen promoting interest in mathematics among teenagers: a clenched fist with the letters M A T H drawn one to a knuckle.

About *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) my view is a little different from yours. You can see a note by me via <File770.com>; look on the sidebar below "Meta". I'd be interested in any comments.

My Westercon LXX report is at <File770.com/?p=37057> 16 Aug 17. To me an s-f con is a sandbox, you bring your own pail and shovel. All too often I find things that seemingly could have been managed better; as Dean Gahlon says, not so much re-inventing the wheel as re-inventing the square wheel; but also, to introduce yet a third metaphor, I'm a cup-is-half-full man.

I was particularly glad to see letters of comment from Bill Wright and Linda Deneroff.

#

**Timothy Lane, timothylane51 at gmail dot com**

**10 February 2018**

Some nice material there, including the usual photographs (including the eclipse and one that looked like a galaxy). Melinda Snodgrass did a lot of good books that I can remember (some of them co-written by Victor Milán), but it's been years since I've seen anything by her. Is she still getting published?

((I believe so. For one thing she still works on the “Wild Card” series.))

Like Jeanne Mealy, I pronounce both h's in ophthalmologist. And I wonder if Michael Kingsley means that the Hannibal area has (more or less) the actual cave that Tom Sawyer and Becky Thatcher got temporarily trapped in during Tom Sawyer (and in which Injun Joe was actually trapped and eventually suffocated).

((As do I, regarding ophthalmologist. I should ask my ophthalmologist how he says it.

((Yes the caverns is in Hannibal. I travelled through there one year just to visit the caverns.))

Like Robert Kennedy, I enjoy chocolate chip ice cream, though mint chocolate chip is probably my favourite. I also rather enjoy butter pecan and probably most with a lot of chocolate.

I find it interesting that sparrows were related to hawks. That explains something from World War II. Italy started to convert a pair of liners to aircraft carriers (neither was every completed). The first was the Aquila (eagle) and the second the Sparviero (sparrow). Now I understand that second name.

((Sparrows are related to hawks in that they're both birds.))

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**Amy Harlib, amyharlib at gmail dot com**

**11 February 2018**

As always, enjoyed the most recent *Purrsonal Mewsings* # 62. “Rodent Alert”, probably the most elaborately written, silly, very fannish in-joke ever! LOL! Really love Mike's astronomy photos and collage, and the pictures of the hawks and the fox. Recent cinematic excursions:

*Maze Runner: The Death Cure* – 3rd in a near future, dystopian, science-fiction trilogy – conclusion to a story involving elaborate experiments (zombie virus theme), elites trying to control an underclass and the inevitable uprising. Nothing very original, but entertaining and high production values.

*The Shape of Water*, a genre masterpiece. Guillermo del Toro triumphs in this marvelous take on *Beauty and the Beast* meets *Creature From the Black Lagoon* meets *Splash* commenting on the Cold War 1962 era while telling a thrilling yarn about underdogs prevailing against the insanity of the “military/industrial complex” when a cleaning lady rescues a captive “merman” from the clutches of her employers at a secret government lab after she and the aquatic being have come to love each other. A must see that deserves all the Oscar nominations it’s getting.

*Padmavaat*, Bollywood historical epic of 12th century India where the Sultan of the Delhi region covets the Queen of the Rajah of neighbouring Mewar with ultimately tragic results. Based on actual events, the story is thin on plot and character but so spectacular and elaborate visually that it is easy to be dazzled and utterly entertained for its nearly three -hour running time; a few musical numbers are well-integrated into the narrative and the score is lovely.

*Hostiles*, western drama set in 1890s Montana where all sides of the conflicts between colonial settlers and Native Americans are portrayed fairly when a seasoned cavalry officer must escort a Cheyenne chief and his family back to their ancestral home. Excellent performances and gorgeous location scenery.

*Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, fun fantasy romp where four teenagers get sucked into the titular video game and inside, as adult avatars, they must get along to survive every jungle adventure cliché imaginable and return home with the lost player they find there who has been trapped in the game for twenty years. You don’t have to see the 1995 *Jumanji* film to enjoy this one which is a hoot—seeing four well known stars act like high schoolers!

*Paddington 2* – adorable sequel to the 2015 fantasy film about a sentient, child-sized brown bear from Peru who gets stranded in the UK and adopted by a London family, and who brings gentle mischief and joy everywhere he goes. Based on books I loved in grade school, these films do justice to the charming stories.

*Mary and the Witch’s Flower*, a Japanese anime feature made by the brand new Ponoc Studios founded by Studio Ghibli/Miyazaki alumni and it shows. Based on Mary Stewart’s children’s classic, *The Little Broomstick*, this fantasy about a young girl in rural twentieth century England who finds a magical flower that gives her witches’ powers, dazzles and delights with gorgeous visuals and interesting characters and a plot that reminds one of *Kiki’s Delivery Service* and *Harry Potter* but with a freshness of its own.

That’s it until next time!

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**WAHF: Ken Bausert (who thinks publishing the StippleAPA comments is just fine as long as the comments are clear as to subject matter) and Cathy Palmer-Lister**

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**\* Closing Remarks**

Deadline for next issue will be 29 March 2018.

*Laurraïne*  
*19 February 2018*