

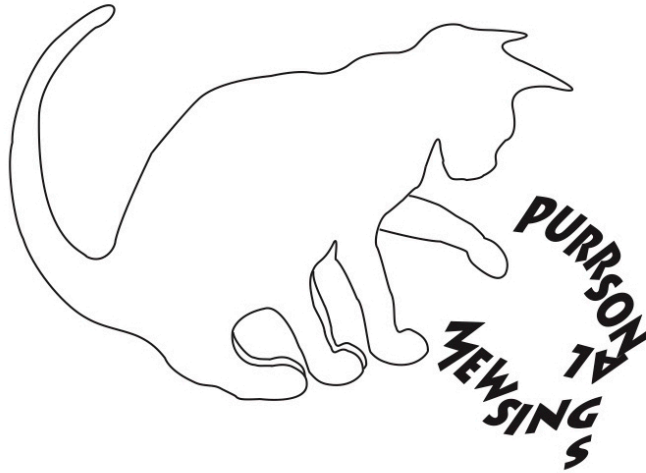
# Purrsonal Mewsings #77



*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, Lorraine@mac.com, <http://www.weasner.com/>. I hope to publish every six weeks.

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#77

January 2021

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

## \* Editorial / Introduction

In November into early December I had a cage built for my fruit trees to protect them from critters. From this point on, I have a good chance of actually getting some fruit to eat off my trees. I'm starting with some new trees, however. I discovered that the two loquat trees I'd bought were the wrong kind, so I removed them. A Japanese loquat tree has recently been planted, and I expect to have two Fuyu persimmon trees in a month or two. The Asian pear tree is in a questionable state; every time new leaves came out, some animal came and ate them. With the cage (see below), I should finally be able to learn whether the tree is still viable. The apple tree and peach tree are okay as far as I know; I should be able to get some edible fruit off them next summer. The cage covers seven trees planted in a row, though two of the spaces are currently empty.



The weather was still quite warm at the start of November but cooled down quite a bit as the month wore on. Much of December was quite frigid, as though to make up for our too warm summer. There were a number of nights cold enough to at least partially freeze the water in the birdbaths. These occurred frequently enough that I kept my orange tree covered. We currently have thermometers attached to our house. We need to have one further away; one by the bird feeders would be handy. However we will probably need new equipment. Right now the thermometers we have don't send a signal far enough to be able to get readings in the house.

Mike bought an electric-assist bike (see photo to right) about mid-November. Because of arthritis pain in one hip, he'd been having too much difficulty riding a regular bike. His doctor recommended he get more exercise. We had learned about electric assist bikes a few years ago from a friend. Mike got one with a very low step-through, which is much



easier on his hip. Since then he's been riding quite a bit. To increase the amount of exercise, he only uses the electric assist when necessary, such as going up a steep hill.

Mike bought a new Apple Watch, because his old one couldn't be updated to the new operating system due to lack of adequate memory. I have also run into the same problem now, but I will wait a while before getting a new one. I also need a new iPad; it's been months since its last operating system upgrade. I use my iPad for Zoom sessions, because it allows me to sit in a comfortable chair. However there have been problems. I'm hoping a newer model will improve the connection.

We lost our NBC station for about three weeks at the beginning of December because of a contract dispute between DirecTV and the company that owns our station. It didn't affect me too much, since I'm not following any series on NBC. However Mike missed some football games before the service was restored shortly before Christmas.

Recently I returned a Pima County library book and discovered that many of the library branches will be closed until further notice because of Covid-19. The situation in Pima County, where we do just about all our in-person shopping and where the library I was using is located, has been pretty bad. Hospitals are filled just about to capacity. I don't know what the situation is in our own county of Pinal; there is not very much news coverage here. Our local library only has pickup hours in the morning, and that is not convenient for me.

\* \* \*

### \* **Kritter Korner**

Here is a photo of the ubiquitous cactus wren, which is also the Arizona state bird.



And here is a photo of two bobcats recently taken by our wildlife camera.



\* \* \*

## \* Astronomy

We had some clear skies during November and December. The highlight of this period was the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. Unfortunately, although the two looked practically on top of each other to the naked eye at their closest, the telescope tells a different story. It's not at all an easy thing to photograph so that it will look good. However, Mike created the composite photo below that looks very good; Jupiter and



Saturn were not that close to the Moon; the Moon was added for a size comparison.  
 Here are a few other photos he was able to take:



\* \* \*

## \* CapClave

CapClave occurred in the middle of October. I missed the introductory session on Friday due to the time difference. I just hadn't expected anything to happen so early.

After breakfast on Saturday, 17 October, I attended "Carrie Vaughan discussion with Connie Willis" at CapClave. They're both in northern Colorado in the smoke plume of a fire that went on for weeks. Like us they haven't had any rain for a long time. Connie is recovering from seven surgeries, including knee and back. It's conducted on Zoom, so the audience could submit questions.



After a break I attended the "Connie Willis and Nancy Kress Discussion". These are both authors I know, so it was a good way to catch up with them.

In the afternoon I watched the CapClave session "Catherynne Valente and Seanan

McGuire Discussion” which was changed to a Q and A session. McGuire also writes as Mira Grant. I have read a few of her books under both names, and I generally enjoy them quite a bit. They both have cats.

After breakfast the next day I watched a reading by Steven Silver of his first book, *After Hastings*, which I believe is part of the “1632” series. He’s not a very good reader, but he gave us a helpful synopsis of the history of England in the decades preceding the Battle of Hastings, most of which was absolutely new to me.

\* \* \*

## \* **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. Note to non-members: these are my comments to members.

### CONTINUED MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #337

**Marge Sehnert (Mamma’s Mutterings):** So sorry to read about your recent accidents. I hope you are doing better now.

If only you *could* send us some rain.

Mike thinks there is life elsewhere in other galaxies and within our own galaxy; not only that, but he thinks there is intelligent life. Personally I’m skeptical about there being intelligent life anywhere, including here on Earth.

**Garth Spencer (Mission Creep #13):** In my experience there are different levels of privacy among APAs. At one time I belonged to one with an extreme code of privacy. Others don’t seem to have more than a modest code of privacy.

I don’t think it’s stupidity as much as ignorance that you complain about. People aren’t generally taught to think things out for themselves. Today’s

faster communication makes people’s ignorance more visible.

I enjoyed seeing your photos of Yvette.

The author’s name is spelled Stephenie Meyer with all e’s and no a’s at all.

There is no fee in the US for forwarding first class mail. There is a time limit, but you can get around it by sending in new change-of-address notices to the PO periodically.

John Hertz does not have e-mail.

The removal of public Confederate statues has been sped up by the Black Lives Matter movement. I think it’s long overdue.

**Lucy Schmeidler (Don’t Ask #27):** What a lovely photo of Mystique.

Free Covid-19 testing is available here as well.

When the SET alert was given for the fire, we packed small suitcases



with some clothing and paper bags with cat supplies. We made a mental note of other last minute items we would grab. We even had an offer of shelter from a friend. Fortunately we didn't have to evacuate.

As you say, one must remember to



go for walks. I haven't remembered very frequently. On the other hand, I've had quite a bit to do in the yard with the new plantings.

I, too, loved the skin on puddings.

The lefties question is also complicated with people like me who tend toward ambidexterity.

**Cy Chauvin (Amazons & Swallows Forever! #78):** Yes, I think Frank Wu reading his own story greatly influenced the impact of it. Also he presented illustrations. Some authors are no good at reading, but a good reader will enhance any story.

The three electronic APAe I've been in have all collated the contributions into one PDF. The distribution method varies. If the disties are not overly large, they can simply be sent as e-mail. Otherwise they can be compressed or use Dropbox for distribution.

You don't need a camera to participate in a Zoom event, but other

participants won't be able to see you. Much modern computer equipment comes with built-in cameras.

I, too, consider colour to be the last consideration when buying a car. My most recent car is dark grey. There was not much of a colour choice. I told the dealer I'd take anything other than plain white.

I have one close friend who names her car.

**Joyce Maetta Odum (Gauntlets, Greaves, and Gorgets):** I'm not sure exactly what you consider to be "icky crawlers", but I don't want scorpions and centipedes running free around the house. If I see them, I capture them and see them out. The rest I leave alone, but I'm beginning to feel sorry for the spiders, because Cato plays with them until they die.

As I believe I mentioned before, I saw a fire hydrant recently about a mile from our house; whether it works, I don't know. Our fire station is only a couple of miles away.

Our mesquite trees put up seedlings in many places. I remove the ones in places where I don't want them.

Your mention of an increase in Copperheads reminds me of the wanton slaying of rattlesnakes. Because of this many rattlesnakes lack the rattle. The rattle-less rattlesnakes survive better. Leave the snakes, bees, and other pests to the professionals who know what they are doing.

**Erik Biever (No Fair!):** I discovered a fire hydrant about a mile away from our house, but I have not idea whether

it is in working condition. Fortunately we're unlikely ever to have enough snow for anyone to have to worry

about digging it out.

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## MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #338

**Joyce Maetta Odum (Sunshine Rulers and Corners):** The bug bite effects went away after a week or two. The bite itself remained visible for a lot longer but is now all cleared up.

**Erik Biever (Six Right Gloves):** Since my zine in September, we've had over an inch of rain, most of it fairly recently.

**Ruth Odren (The Once and Future Zine):** We short women get no respect. I always have to ask a taller person's help in the grocery store. I could not get an electric assist bike like Mike, because none are made for anyone as short as I. Fortunately when we built our house, I could specify the height of all the counters in the kitchen and bathroom.

**S. H. Rayne (My Page):** I'm so sorry to read about Gregory Clark. It is criminal that such things happen in this country.

I just double-checked, and snowflakes do have six points.

**Dale Cozort (Space Bats & Butterflies):** I always resolve to exercise more, but I rarely get beyond a bare minimum.

Everything I've read and heard tells

me that wearing masks helps to limit the spread of Covid-19.

Mike and I rarely watch TV together. He doesn't really watch much beyond the news and football. Also I like to DVR everything to avoid having to watch commercials, while he'd rather watch when something is actually on.

**Lucy Schmeidler (Don't Ask #28):** Mountain driving can be difficult for several reasons. Mountain roads are rarely very wide, most being just one lane each way. They tend to switch back and forth a lot. A driver needs to watch for others who don't stay within a lane. At night most mountain roads are not lit. For passengers prone to motion sickness, mountain roads can be trying.

**Marge Sehnert (Mamma's Mutterings):** The reason we could see a fire twenty miles away is because we are on a hill and have a western view that is mostly lower land with mountains in the distance. We bought the land partly because of this view.

Our wildlife camera is on a pole near our main bird feeding station. The camera also has a view of most of the birdbaths and the back of our house. It is motion activated.

**Kathy Sidles (Looking Around):**

Tell your husband to go to [weasner.com](http://weasner.com). There are a lot of astronomy photos on the Cassiopeia Observatory.

**Jacky Boykin (Hollywood 101: the “Talk” of the Town):**

My sympathies about the effect Covid-19 has had on your industry.

**Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits):** What are the characteristics of a “Minnesota speech style”? I never noticed that John spoke in any way that is different from others. I went to college in Minnesota, and most of the students were Minnesotans, and I never noticed anything different about the way they spoke.

I’m so sorry to hear about your continuing problems with your left ear.

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**\* 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.

**Richard Dengrove, richd22426 at aol dot com**

**3 November 2020**

First, my comments on the Editorial. You’re in a less citified place and you have had a problem getting decent Internet reception. I think everyone should have decent Internet reception. Otherwise, you’re not part of the world these days. In the DC area, we have had that for a long time; so I never have any problem with it at home. However, I never know when I am going to need GPS service, which depends on decent Internet reception. When I was younger, I had no problems with maps. Now I need GPS service or I keep getting lost.

That is about Internet reception generally. About using the Internet for APAs, I am of two minds. I am willing to do both paper and Internet. Like I have been doing with JOMP all these years. I am used to paper because I started APA hacking in 1984. There wasn’t anything else then. However, in the 2000s, people started sending me e-mails for JOMP and other zines. Now I have accepted them for more than a decade and am used to e-mailed LoCs.

My usual procedure is to comment on Laurraine’s editorial. For this issue, I did something out of the ordinary: I stopped in the Kritter Korner to look at the pictures.

Those of Nebulae, in particular, were beautiful. Unfortunately, no comments on them for now.

((The astronomy photos were in the Astronomy section.))

We go from APAhacking to cons. Discussing the distant future at ReCONvene, the panel claimed that sentient creatures have free will. That entails a bunch of tough philosophical problems. I remember Jean Paul Sartre writing in *Being and Nothingness* that there is no difference between free will and determinism. We will always do something for a reason as much as we try to escape all reasons. If free will exists, it has to be because we are the only creature on Earth now who knows that our behaviour is caused.



From cons, we go to reviews. First the movies. You review the movie *36 Hours* (1965) with James Garner. The Germans use a ruse to get information on the Normandy invasion. It was based on a short story by Roald Dahl. The problem with the story is so much misinformation was being passed to the Germans that they still could not be certain where the invasion would take place.

Nonetheless, if it was a good movie, I would watch it. It is supposed to be fiction, isn't it?

Second in the Reviews, we go to a TV show, *Lovecraft Country*. It appears to be less about Lovecraft and more about race relations in Massachusetts. It's no wonder so many fans have been disappointed.

((Actually most of the action takes place in or around Chicago.))

From Reviews, we go to Letters to the Editor. The first letter was Timothy Lane's. I am glad Tim's nursing home is taking Covid-19 seriously. I hear what really helped it spread was nursing homes not doing that. Originally, they weren't changing their ways no matter how fast it was spreading.

The first letter is Tim's; the second is David Bratman's. He was afraid a big fire nearby might burn your house down. You answered him that you were happy the terrain was such the fire could not cross it. Knock on wood. There are advantages to living in rugged terrain. Or is your terrain rugged?

((There certainly is a lot of rugged terrain here. We live in the foothills of a small mountain range. The fire was in the mountain range. However the main reason the fire did not reach us is the superlative effort made by the firefighters to keep the fire from spreading to inhabited areas.))

The second letter was David's; the third was Justin Busch's letter. You tell him you miss the movies where you could see the larger than life scenes on the screen. Also, important was the shared experience. In the '60s, I would have agreed with you. Now, fate has made it so I rarely see movies in theatres; and I've lost interest in doing so.

((Actually I believe it was Justin who was interested in the shared experience. I prefer the privacy of my own home for a number of reasons. Among others I can take a bathroom break whenever I need to. Also the other members of the audience can be a nuisance.))

#

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

**12 November 2020**

From its looks, the spiny lizard you mention is what we used to call a horny toad back when we lived in Galveston (from 1957 to 1959). And I should have guessed that the figures at the top of the title page were by Sheryl Birkhead, but it's been nearly a decade since we dealt with art in *FOSFAX*.

((Yes, it's frequently called a horny toad; but, of course, it isn't a toad.))

Actually, the 1632 series starts in 1631, though the first book extends into the next year. I don't know why Flint called it that. Of course, not being interested enough to read the books . . .

I suppose I've read books by astronomers, though probably none that discussed the practice. The closest I've probably come to anything like that is probably a few chapters in Fred Hoyle's *The Black Cloud*.

Elizabeth used to cut my hair when we still lived in a house. Now that we live in separate nursing homes (and Grant McCormick in a third), that's no longer possible. Of course, I don't have as much hair to cut now.

The really bad period of the 1918 Spanish flu lasted a few months in the autumn, though there was an early and less deadly outbreak in the spring and periodic and lesser outbreaks later. Most of the methods being used to deal with the Wuhan coronavirus weren't used then.

James Garner also starred in the comedy *The Wheeler-Dealers* during the early 60s. I seem to recall seeing it back then, which would probably have been while we were living in Kifissia outside Athens (1961-4).

With no visitors here, it's always good to keep in touch with people somehow. Thank you all for providing me some extra intellectual input.

#

Commenting on *Purrsonal Mewings* #76.

In the editorial, you talk about backing up your computer. There are problems with backing up programs, like Word and Excel. Certainly you can't transfer them intact from one computer to another. However, backing up files, like Word and Excel files, is easy: USB storage has taken long strides. Right now, I back up by hand all the files I care about once a week.

((I do three levels of backup. The first is document backup, as you describe. Second is automatic backup of everything to an external disk. Third is cloning just before I do any major software upgrade.))

The next thing I want to talk about is in the Kritter Corner, some great pictures of birds.

As for conventions, you attended the virtual Ring of Fire Con. I attended a virtual CapClave recently. The DC con. DisClave is no more. The virtual CapClave had interesting Zoom presentations. One of the most curious one was the last panel of Saturday – from Australia. It started about 10:30 PM in the DC area and a sane hour there. The young people who conducted it were very entertaining, just mixing anecdotes and fancy. Lots of stories of being afraid. One concerned a little creature who somehow got into a mosh pit. I have forgotten what it was. However, because it was scared, it scared the audience.

In the Reviews, Michael Weasner reviewed *The Stargazers*. I will use that review as an excuse to comment on another aspect of astronomy. I hear pro astronomers depend, to some extent, upon amateurs. And amateurs do not mind taking orders from them. A book I read recently, *The Scientific Americans*, contrasted this attitude with that of ghost hunters, who are competing against scientists.

In StippleAPA #337, Jeanne Mealy says the only comics she gets are Doctor Who and anything published by J. Michael Straczynski. I don't know about his comics. I really liked his Babylon 5 series. I notice a lot of the series was written by Straczynski himself. At last, a space opera with politics, religion, and a few non-humanoids.

((Those were my comments to Jeanne.))

In letters to the editor, I want to comment on three letter writers. Of course, one of them is me. I noted that many science fiction novel covers in the '50s were painted half abstract half realism. You responded that that sounded like Richard M. Powers's art. I looked on Google; and, sure enough, much of it had to be. In fact, the Wikipedia article claimed he was the unofficial art director of Ballantine Books.

My second comment goes to Lloyd Penney. He said he walked once every several weeks. I walk more than once a week. I am sure I have more time, though. Also, how much I

walk depends on the weather, how I feel, and what I have to do. Not like when I periodically walked on a treadmill in a gym.

My third comment is for Tom Feller. He describes the *Red Sun* as a combination of samurai movie and Western. The two genres have their similarities. I remember *Mad Magazine* calling a samurai movie a Japanese Eastern. It struck me as just right.

Next, a fourth comment is for Lloyd's second letter. He speculates that the year 2020 should have been cancelled. I agree. However, I hope 2021 isn't cancelled. We have two vaccines with 90% plus effectiveness – I hope. Maybe there will be more. 90% effective would render Covid-19 as dangerous as ordinary flu.

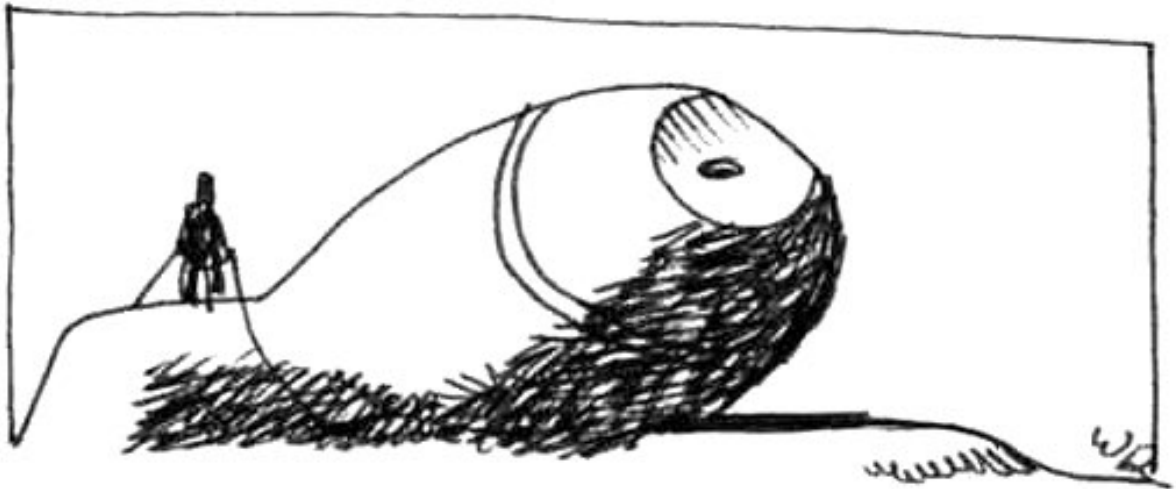
((But only if seventy percent of the population are inoculated.))

#

**Lloyd Penney, penneys at bell dot net**

**9 December 2020**

Thank you for *Purrsonal Mewsings* 76, and it is late in the year, so I am attempting one big catch-up to give myself a break in the SFnal year of 2021. Here goes, and let's hope



it makes a little sense.

We have a little snow on the ground, but that really didn't start happening until the middle of November. We still had a few warm days before the temperatures dropped, and we'd get a white dusting. I wish we had more wildlife visible in this big city, but we do have rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, coyotes, foxes, and birds galore. There's been a few times over the years that we've seen cranes in the Humber River, and once there was a hawk perched on the edge of the balcony. No spiny lizards here...

I am pleased to read all about virtual cons, for I think we will be attending these for at least the next year or so. The vaccines have finally shown up, and they will be distributed as soon as possible, notwithstanding anti-vaxxers/anti-maskers and the like who see all of this as a hoax or an inconvenience or even an infringement of their liberties.

We ran photos online of how long our hair was getting, perfecting the mad scientist look (Bwa- ha-ha-ha!), but we did get it cut eventually. We're on the edge of needing that cut again.

My complaints about offerings on TV...I believe that broadcast television and networks will go away or merely run run-of-the-mill stuff, for all the new productions will go to streaming services that we can't honestly afford. That's okay...I have paid a small fee for perpetual downloads from YouTube, and our interests are eclectic, so we can download what we want and watch it as we wish. Also the PVR on our TV catches some gems, so we're good for TV. Often we're too busy with creating stuff to worry about TV. We do have all of *B5*, and we should be starting that again soon.

Yvonne's been busy with making even more Hawaiian-style shirts and lots of masks, and I have been busy with editing, copyediting, and proofing books and magazine, which includes *Amazing Stories*; so we have not been bored, and we're getting through the pandemic relatively well. And these fanzines keep me busy too. Many thanks for this one, and I am sure there'll be another arriving in my IN box soon.

#

IAHF: Tim Sullivan, Alan White, Roslyn Willis

\* \* \*

## \* Closing Remarks

As 2020 comes to a close, I am hopeful for 2021. My sister, a paediatrician in Tacoma clinic connected to a hospital, has had her first Covid-19 vaccination and has an appointment for the second one. Eventually the rest of us will get the chance. I'm hopeful that some measure of sanity will return to Washington, DC, as Biden takes office.

The winter weather outlook for this area looks to be colder than average, at least as far as nighttime temperatures go. I have heard that most of the country east of the Rockies is facing a lot of stormy weather; I wish everyone good luck surviving it.

With best wishes for the new year, I look forward to hearing from everyone.

*Laurraïne*

28 December 2020