

Purrsonal Mewsings #85



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.

It is distributed through StippleAPA and sent to other friends and family. It is available for the usual (a response of any kind, including letters, e-mail, and phone calls of comment; trade; contributions of illos, fiction, or articles; or even money: \$5.00 per issue). The zine will be placed on the web shortly after paper publication; please let me know if you prefer just to read the web version. I can also e-mail this in Word or rtf format. Kattesmint Press #511. ©2022 R-Laurraine Tutihasi.

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#85

January 2022

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Cover Illo—Taken by editor at Dzibilchaltun in the Yukatan
Title page header—Sheryl Birkhead
Photos—p. 3—Trailcam, pp. 3-5—Mike Weasner, pp. 6-7—Rogue Theatre publicity, p. 27—Marcia Meldrum; all others taken by editor
Illos—p. 23—Ray Nelson

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

My new iPhone arrived early in November, so I had plenty of time to get used to it before my Yucatan trip at the end of the month. Now I have to order my new iMac as soon as I have caught up from my trip and can find the time to do it.

Our weather station is dying, or at least it's become less reliable. We ordered a new one, received it, and set it up. At first everything seemed to be fine, but it keeps falling off the Internet and disconnecting from the Weather Underground site. The vendor has been in discussion with us, and a replacement is being sent.

November had very little rain; but December gave us almost four inches of rain and also was colder. About mid-December we covered my orange tree and the saguaro just in case. Temperatures fluctuated during the rest of the month, but it was never very warm. It got cold enough a couple of times that ice formed in a couple of the birdbaths. January brought us a hard freeze; after that it warmed up and is still fairly warm for this time of year.

My life is running out of control with too much to do. A couple of you know that I joined ANZAPA about a year ago when it changed into a PDF APA; before that the complexities of getting a printed zine to Australia were more bother than I was willing to go through. The immediate motivating factor in changing from paper to PDF was COVID, but it may have happened eventually anyway. You may have noticed that postal costs aren't getting any cheaper. A few members dropped because of the change, but many more signed on because of it. There are other activities taking up more of my time as well. I'm spending a lot more time feeding the birds. I find myself with little or no time to read and do other things I would like to do. I've decided I will only contribute a zine every other collation; I will do the same with ANZAPA. I'll see how that goes. If this measure is not enough, I will probably drop StippleAPA. I will keep you posted.

At the end of December, Mike was injured when a car tried to hit him when he was trying to make a left turn off a state highway onto our town's main street. Fortunately he was okay except for bruised and contusions; he is still suffering from some pain in a few places. Mike had the right of way. The other car was making a left turn off American Avenue onto the state highway. He briefly stopped at the Stop sign then proceeded to turn. Mike braked to avoid hitting the car and fell onto the highway. Although he has a camera mounted on his bike, it failed to get a photo of the licence plate. We have a good photo of the car, though; and we think we've seen the car at the Oracle PO.

* * *

* Kritter Korner

Here's a photo of Cato all relaxed on our bed.





To the left is a rare photo of a male Gambel's quail in flight. They don't fly very much, but they can fly well enough to get to our bird feeders.

* * *

* **Astronomy**

Here are a few of the photos Mike has taken since last time.

In mid-November there was a partial eclipse of the Moon. Mike created a nice collage of it.



On the next page is his annual montage for 2021.



Highlights from 2021

Finding my Way to the Stars

Michael Weasner

In this new "Jupiter's Moons" book, Michael Weasner takes a look at the four major moons of Jupiter, Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto, and how they have shaped the planet's history. He also discusses the discovery of the Galilean moons and the role of the Galileo spacecraft in studying them. The book is available on Amazon and other online retailers.

Lunar Eclipse
19 November 2021
iPhone 13 Pro Max
12" LX600

Here are a few more photos.

		
Great Nebula in Orion	Dumbbell Nebula	Comet Leonard (taken shortly before Xmas)

* * *

* Books and a Play

***Nala's World: One Man, His Rescue Cat, and a Bike Ride around the Globe* by Dean Nicholson, Grand Central Publishing, 2020.**

I read about this book in someone's writing, possibly a list of books read. I no longer remember where. But the book interested me, and I found it at the local library. A young Scot found himself at loose ends and decided a bike ride around the world might clear his mind. He started with a friend, but it became clear that he and his friend weren't on the same page. Somewhere in central Europe they parted ways. While biking through mountainous country, he came across a young kitten that someone had probably tossed away. He fed him a bit of food; it was obvious that the kitten was starving. He started to peddle away, but he couldn't leave the kitten behind. He consulted a vet at the earliest chance he had and decided to keep her. He eventually named the kitten Nala. Nala seems to be an unusually loyal cat, possibly because of her early kittenhood abandonment and rescue. The book contains photos of Nala riding the bike with Dean. You can see more in Facebook; look under "1bike1world". He also has a youtube site. He has other accounts at other social media sites.

Later in his trip, he saved two dogs. Unfortunately the second one turned out to be suffering from parvo and eventually died. It's obvious that Dean was an animal lover. He mentioned having a family dog in Scotland. After he set up his social media accounts, he was amazed at the following he got, and the numbers of followers kept growing. He was persuaded to write a book about his adventures, and this book is the result. He has been using profits from books sales and other merchandise he later published or made to help animal shelters around the world, especially in places where they don't have much local support. I try to keep up with his activities almost daily.

COVID kept him in central Europe for a year, but he has managed to get a bit of

mileage this year. I recommend this book for all animal lovers.

#

***Harrow the Ninth* by Tamsyn Muir, Tor, 2020.**

According to information on the book and elsewhere, this is book two of a trilogy. I recall being unable to get into the first book at all, as the protagonist did not at all interest me. I gave more effort to read this one because of it being a Hugo nominee, but at the end I couldn't really tell you anything about it. It was very confusing. All the characters seemed to be made up of pieces from corpses, but they weren't zombies. They ate and slept like other people. There seemed to be some sort of war or other confrontation. At the end the characters all seemed to die, though that seems difficult to believe, since they weren't really alive to begin with. The ending just fizzled. It looks to me like I just wasted all that time and effort in reading the book.

#

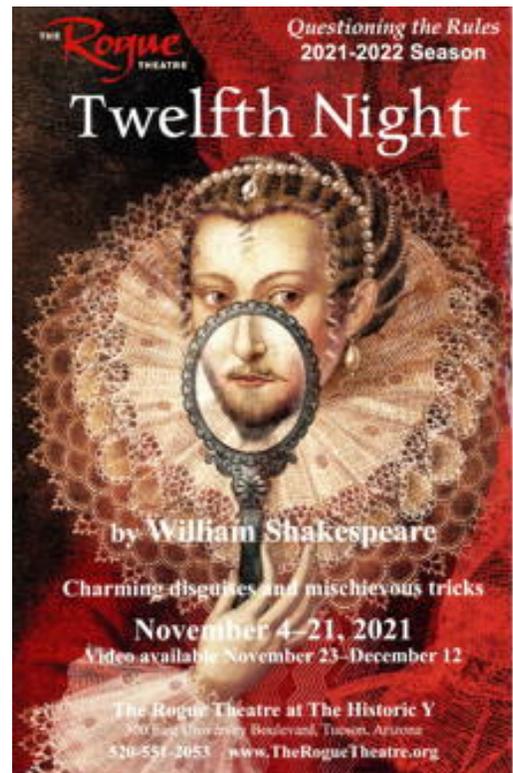
***Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare, performed by the Rogue Theatre in Tucson.**

I saw it early in its run at the beginning of November with a friend. I wanted to maximize my preparation time before a trip to the Yucatan that started in late November. Before ordering the tickets, I made sure they followed strict COVID protocols in order to protect ourselves. The theatre is very small, and the actors are never very far from the audience.

For readers who may not be acquainted with the play, it's a comedy, in the bawdy sense of the term. As the programme notes say, this play "predates our contemporary notions of gender". So it looks like we are making a large circle to thinking in Elizabethan terms again. The plot centres around a brother and sister who are marooned after a shipwreck in the kingdom of Illyria, ruled by a nobleman named Orsino, who is in love with Lady Olivia, who has refused him. The brother and sister, who are identical twins (clearly this was written before the science of genetics was even dreamt of). They are separated before they land, so each believes the other to have perished. Viola knows that it is unsafe for a lone woman, so she dresses as her brother and uses the name of Cesario.

The story continues with the story of Orsino and Olivia. Viola (as Cesario) becomes the servant of Orsino. Orsino keeps sending Viola to Olivia to court her. Rather than win her over for Orsino, she has to fend off Olivia's advances toward herself.

There is a subplot involving ridiculous Malvolio, the steward of Olivia's household. He makes things tough for the rest of the household, who decide to play a prank on him. Another character is Feste, a jester of sorts.



When Sebastian eventually arrives in Illyria, much of the plot revolves around mistaken identities. Of course, since this is a comedy, everything eventually ends up in a happy ending.

I very much enjoyed the production. It was the best version I've seen. However, this is also the only production I've seen in the flesh, as far as I can remember. The others have been on TV. Whether this made a difference I don't know. I was quite taken with the actor who played Feste; he played the part marvellously. There was a discussion after the play, and I was able to convey my congratulation to him on his excellent performance.



The photo at right (courtesy Rogue Theatre) shows Feste above and Malvolio below.

* * *

* Circumnavigation of Iceland

This was a trip taken with National Geographic and Lindblad. To avoid any potential problems with airlines such as those that happened last year when the voyage was initially intended to be, I made first class air reservations through National Geographic as well. As it was, the routing was much better. I flew via Icelandair through Seattle to Reykjavik. The domestic portion was on Alaska Airlines, which I cannot recommend. Before the trip we were required to have negative COVID tests no more than a specified time before boarding the cruise ship. Iceland also required a similar test no more than a specified time before we entered the country. I had never done this before and to avoid any problems, I actually had two tests done.

In order to catch my first flight from Phoenix, we had to leave our house before breakfast, which I ate in the car while Mike drove.

Things started getting interesting when we got to the airport. My itinerary said Terminal 2, but there is no Terminal 2. Mike ended up exiting the airport and had to get back. We stopped at Terminal 3; I ran in to see if it was the correct terminal. I was told it was, so I returned outside for my luggage. Check-in took a fairly long time.

Lunch was served on the plane about noon. I had cod with vegetables.

Our flight landed in Seattle about 14:00. I had to take a series of trains to connect with my Icelandair flight. I had a lot of help in finding my way from an airport employee. I also met a couple of people headed for the same flight. They were also going to do a circumnavigation of Iceland but with Viking (Ponant).

My seat mate on Icelandair was Nicholas, a young man (34) moving to Iceland for school. He was a mechanical engineer hoping to further his education. We had a lot of interests in common and talked during most of the flight.

Dinner was served on the plane; it consisted of chicken and some things I couldn't/

didn't eat.

We kept talking until I realized we needed to try to get some sleep.

I awoke shortly before landing in Reykjavik on Tuesday, 3 August. It was a fairly lengthy process to disembark and walk through immigration, baggage claim, and customs. I and others in our party were met by the Lindblad people. Eventually the group walked to a bus parked a distance away. The drive to our hotel, Grand Hotel Reykjavik, took about forty-five minutes. At the hotel there was some paperwork and a COVID test. Then we picked up a bagged breakfast and went up to our individual rooms to rest while the tests were processed.

Lunch was served off the lobby about noon—a very delicious meal of ox.

After lunch we were given a tour of Reykjavik that was marred somewhat by fairly heavy rain at one of two stops. It was still raining fairly heavily when we reached our ship, the National Geographic *Explorer*, the same ship I took to Antarctica five years ago. This first day aboard was all about introductions and eating. There was also a lifeboat drill.

Dinner was about 20:00. Service was all sit-down due to COVID, no buffets. The naturalists accompanying us were not allowed to mingle with the passengers during meals. And there was no dinner “with the captain”.

I slept somewhat fitfully that first night aboard ship; this is generally what happens to me on trips.

Breakfast started about 06:00.

For some day's outings, we usually had a choice. This first day's choices were 1. waterfalls of Hraunfoss & Barnafoss, 2. Krauma Geothermal Baths, and 3. Ice Caves. I chose the Ice Caves. We were the first group to leave, about 07:00; we took a bus to an artificial ice cave that was built for research purposes. It took a while to get there. We stopped near the glacier where we picked up waterproof shoe covers and raincoats. Then we took a specially designed bus with treads rather than tyres to the cave entrance. I had a small mishap stepping off onto slippery wet snow. I let myself fall; it was a short fall, and the snow was slushy and soft. A short way into the ice cave, we were given crampons similar to the ones I'd used at Yellowstone in winter. The whole cave tour probably took about an hour. It was very drippy and slippery. Another traveller named Kimberly took a photo of me with her cell phone, but you can't tell it's me because of the lighting. My camera became useless after a while because of high humidity; it didn't occur to me to use my iPhone.

For lunch our group took over a restaurant; we were served by people from our ship. There was entertainment by a couple who played folk style music; they stayed with us for the rest of our trip.

After lunch we went to a waterfall that was more horizontal than vertical, but horizontally it was extremely wide.

At the top of the next page is a photo of Hraunfoss (Lava Waterfalls). This was taken as a panorama shot with my iPhone, so there is some artificial curvature, but you can see how wide this falls is.

Back on the ship, I got a bite for tea. Then I rested in my cabin. Shortly before 19:00 I went up to the lounge for the Captain's Welcome Cocktail Party.

Dinner was at 20:00.



Thursday morning my cabin was freezing. I reported the problem to reception. The way the cabin thermostats work is by using a small heating unit in the ceiling. Mine had apparently broken early on, but I didn't notice until the weather turned cold.

I went up to breakfast about 07:30 and joined another traveller.

Our morning excursion was to Flatey (Flat Island) where we saw puffins and other avian critters. There was also a church with a unique Biblical interior painting job. We took Zodiacs (wet landing, meaning there was some wading on shore) there and back. Zodiacs are motorized rubber boats that can hold up to about a dozen people.

Lunch was served back on the ship at 12:30. I had plaice (I hadn't had any since I was in England) with soup and a gluten-free dessert. Following that my TV, which never worked (turned out to be dead battery in the remote) and heating system were repaired.

Following lunch was a fascinating talk given by Thora, the Global Perspectives speaker, titled "From a Pauper to a Prince—How Iceland Came to be So Expensive!" For a long time, Iceland belonged to Denmark. The people were kept in their place by the Danes. Iceland gained independence over the course of a number of years from 1918 to 1944. Iceland has been a republic since then. For many years the fishing industry kept Iceland afloat financially. In 2003 Iceland moved into the financial arena. After a financial crisis, tourism eventually become the dominant industry.

A note about Icelandic names. Most Icelanders don't have surnames as such. What may appear to be one is probably an indicator that tells people whose son or daughter they are.

Then we went to see Kikjufell mountains and associated waterfalls just outside the port town of Grundarfjörður. A mountain (more like a large hill) used in *Game of Thrones* is there (see right). In the series it was snow-covered, if I recall correctly; when we saw it, it was green. We had the option of taking a bus both ways, walking both ways, or taking a bus one way and walking the other way. I rode a bus there and walked back two miles taking photos along the way. Back on the ship, we had some free time. Then at 18:45 there was a talk given by some of the National Geographic scientists.

Dinner was about 19:30.



After dinner there was a short performance by Myrra and Julius, the couple who entertained us at lunch the previous day.

On the following Friday, the plan was to see Dynjandi (thunderous or resounding waterfall). This is a falls that was visible from the ship. I decided to stay in to take care of some personal business. Since the falls were visible from the ship, I took photos from the deck (see right). The adventurous took a long hike; they were taken to shore a few miles from the waterfall and walked to the falls, where they were picked up. Others were taken to the bottom of the waterfall and could walk as far up the falls as desired.



In mid-afternoon I went out on a Zodiac cruise around a fjord. We saw two kinds of jellyfish, moon jellies and one that looked like a fried egg. We also saw many eider ducks and some sheep on shore. It got a bit chilly, as it was foggy with very little sun.

Dinner was about 19:30.

After dinner we were entertained by our musicians again.

The next day after breakfast there was a talk by naturalist Dana Johnston on “Plate Tectonics and the Geology of Iceland”; the North American and European plates meet in Iceland. After that I joined an outing to Vigur Island, where Eider down is collected and cleaned. The ducks use the down to line their nests. After the ducks finish using the nests, the down is collected and cleaned, a process that can take months. The island also has many puffins and Arctic terns. I was in the second group to tour the island, so I had some free time before then. On the other hand, we returned to the ship after lunch had started.

For lunch I joined a group that included David Wright, a nature photographer, originally from Australia, and his wife, Mimi. He often does work for National Geographic, but he was on vacation this time. He was testing out a new monochrome camera.

The afternoon was unplanned but got filled with humpback whale sightings (see right). A bit later there was a brief presentation about the options for the last three days of the trip. A bit after that there was a talk about the birds of Iceland. Later there was the daily recap.



Dinner was about 19:00, but it took longer than usual, because it was a several-course Icelandic feast.

At night was a concert given by Julius and Myrra.

About 08:30 on Sunday I took a Zodiac to Grimsey (the “ey” means island). Grimsey

is the northernmost island off the coast of Iceland. All but the southern coast consists of steep hills. It lies on the Arctic Circle, but the island enjoys a mild climate and supports many large bird colonies. The island has a population of roughly 155 people. I took a bus to the official marker (see right) for the Arctic Circle, which has actually drifted further north. From there I walked a short distance to the cliffs, where many puffins (see photo at top of next page) and other birds were visible. I continued walking back to port and took many more photos of puffins and other birds before returning to our ship. Along the way I saw an unusual sight—a fogbow (see next page).



After lunch the ship sailed just north of the Arctic Circle and offered people the chance for a “polar plunge “. I filmed a few (fool)hardy souls from above. In mid-afternoon, David Wright was interviewed about his photography work for National



Geographic. A bit later Thora answered questions about Iceland's economy.

We had an early dinner at 17:00.

Shortly after dinner we had an outing to a waterfall and a hot mud location (see below) where electricity is made. The latter reminded me a lot of Lassen Volcanic National Park, except there were lots of sheep grazing on the abundant grass. The



waterfall was a bit like Niagara (see below). When we returned to the ship, we were fed Icelandic hot dogs.



Monday the seas were a bit choppy, and I suffered from mild seasickness.

After breakfast we had presentations by Dana Johnston about glaciers and geo energy and by Thora about an artist ancestor, American-Icelandic sculptress Nina Saemundsson (this formulation of a surname would indicate “the son of Saemund” and was probably adopted to fit in to American society; proper Icelandic form would be Saemundsdottir).

In the afternoon we went for a Zodiac ride, but it was soon cancelled due to fog. Instead there was a talk by Tua Pittman, a cultural specialist from the Cook Islands about the sailing boats that went from Polynesia and from Norway. They met on the Erie Canal. I was too sleepy from the seasickness pill to go on the afternoon zodiac ride.

On Tuesday we chose from three options. Option one, which I chose, was a glacial lagoon. Option two was a moderately difficult hike. Option three was an easier hike. At about 08:15 I boarded a Zodiac to go ashore at Djúpivogur, where we boarded one of two buses to head to the Fjallsárión Glacial Lagoon. Djúpivogur (“Deep Harbour”) is one of the best natural harbours on the southeast coast of Iceland. There was a rest stop on the way, and we were offered Nature Valley oat snack bars. At the lagoon we split up into small parties to get on Zodiacs for a ride around the lake. We were provided with heavy jackets and life jackets. We got a close look at the glacier and many chunks of ice floating on the lagoon and even saw a harbour seal (see top of next page). On the return walk after the ride I managed to trip and bruised my knees. The Apple Watch fall



detection alarm system worked; I had to turn it off before it tried to call an emergency number. There was no damage other than bruising, though it took a long time to heal completely.

After the ride we were served lunch in a special room off the main dining room.

On the way back to the ship, we stopped at Diamond beach, so-called because of glacier fragments that are blown ashore and gleam like diamonds. Then we continued the bus ride with a comfort stop along the way before we reached the dock to board a Zodiac to take us back to the ship. Back on the ship, I went up for cocktails and had a Cosmopolitan to make up for the fall. Although on my previous trip to Antarctica, cocktail were not covered in the trip cost, on this trip they were; I don't know whether this was a special consideration in view of COVID.

Dinner was about 19:30.

After dinner I went up to the lounge to listen to some singing.

Wednesday was another day with options. One was a coach tour of Heimaey, an island south of Iceland—the one I chose. The second option was a rather steep and difficult hike.

The morning was free to spend as we liked. There were COVID tests in preparation for our return to the US. A pod of Orcas was spotted (see right), and I spent some time trying to photograph them.



We had lunch about noon.

In the afternoon I joined many others in a bus tour of Heimaey. The drive took us to scenic viewpoints, from some of which we could see smaller islands off Heimaey. We also saw the remnants of damage of a volcanic eruption that took place in 1973.

About 18:00 there was a cocktail hour followed by dinner.
The evening was spent mostly preparing for departure the next day.

Breakfast was earlier than usual on departure day. As there were several hours between our departure from the ship and our departure flights from the airport, there were three tour options. Option one, which I took, was a coach tour of Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark. Option two was a visit to hot springs. Option three was a somewhat difficult volcanic hike.

My excursion was delayed by the failure of our buses to arrive on time. Eventually we left about 08:45. The UNESCO Geopark was quite a distance away from the dock, so we got sort of a tour of Reykjavik as well. Eventually we reached our destination. There were several stops. The stops included thermal springs in an area where the Mid-Atlantic Ridge is visible above sea level, a beach with a sculpture of the last Great Auk (sniff!), and others.

For lunch we stopped at a restaurant in Grindavik, a fishing town, where we had a private upstairs room. We were served cod over creamed rice.

After lunch we were driven to the airport with an unplanned photo stop for a nearby active volcano (about 6-7 km away). The airport was something else. First off and the nicest thing was being able to use the Saga Lounge (for first class passengers). Several other tour members were also there. I chatted with one couple until they left for their gate. Because of the great Internet service there, I downloaded forty-four app updates and did other things I hadn't been able to keep up with on our ship. When I finally left for my gate, I discovered a controlled chaos. Everything moved quickly though. Pretty soon I was at my gate for further waiting. Eventually we boarded. My seat mate was a retired film teacher from USC. As is apparently standard, we were served a sparkling white wine. After takeoff we were served a beverage of our choice.

Dinner was served shortly thereafter. I could eat the steak and char (a salmon-like fish).

I spent the rest of the flight watching two movies: the Icelandic film *Agnes Joy* and *J. Edgar*, starring Leonardo di Caprio and Armie Hammer and also Judi Dench and Naomi Watts. I had a two and a half hour layover in Seattle. That turned out to be a good thing, because I had to go all the way to the front desk to get a boarding pass for the Alaska Airlines flight, which they had been unable to do in Iceland. By the time I got to the gate, it was less than an hour until boarding, except there turned out to be a one hour delay due to tyre trouble. On the very uncomfortable Alaska Airlines flight with no amenities, I slept in fits and starts. The flight was a half hour late in arriving in Phoenix. Then I had to wait a while for Mike drive from the parking lot where he was waiting to pick me up. It took a couple more hours to get home.

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* StippleAPA

StippleAPA is an amateur press association. An APA is like a group pen pal publication. 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 the other APA members.

MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #346

Covers (Moi): I just realized I left the disty numbers off the covers. Sorry about that.

Erik Biever (Central Standard Time): I thought I had caught all my prosciutto/Prosecco mixups; I guess not. I do know the difference; I just mix them up sometimes.

Bill Thomasson (Musings from the Gathering Dusk #44): We have dental insurance that is accepted by most dentists, though some charge us over and above what the insurance pays. We both have a lot of dental expenses. I buy the plan offered by AARP with the most coverage.

Thanks for clearing up my mistake about Johnson & Johnson and Janssen. This is something I was unaware of.

See my comment above to Erik about the prosciutto/Prosecco mixup.

Marge Sehnert (Mamma's Mutterings): While you may be right about needing a new computer, I've had similar problems with pictures not staying in place using Word. I eventually become flustered and switch to Pages, a word processor that runs on Apple computers. Pages has a few problems but nothing as bad as Word. There are programs that are designed for layout. Some are free. I've found that creating a table in

which to insert the photos can work.

The blood tests for allergies were all negative. Experimenting with eating small amounts of the problematical foods has revealed that small amounts eaten occasionally are okay, except for the grape skins. Even with the grape skins, eating a couple of grapes occasionally seems to be okay.

Justin E. A. Busch (Stipple-Ations):

I really need to get a copy of the *Sarah Jane Adventures* on DVD. I don't think all the seasons were shown where I was living. I've seen bits and pieces on Facebook, and I don't recognize a lot of them.

Congratulations for receiving the Neffy Award.

Good luck editing *Films Fantastic*.

Chrystine/Sparrow (A Sparrow's Perspective): So sorry to hear you haven't been feeling well. I hope everything has been fixed now.

Amy R. Clark (Hello and Enjoy the Ride! #3): The seasons progress in Arizona as well. We've had a couple of nights cold enough to form frost on our roof or ice over at least some of the birdbaths. Since the beginning of 2022, we've had one hard freeze.

Jeanne Mealy (Hello and Enjoy the Ride! #3): I wasn't very close to the puffins. I was standing close to the

edge of a bluff. They were on the rocky crags just below. My camera has a lens that can zoom in quite a bit.

Except for the grape skins, it seems I can have occasional small servings of the foods I have recently discovered an allergy to.

Mike can adjust the colour balance in photos. Also because he wasn't

using flash but just available light, it's much easier to see the people and the sky at the same time. Flash would just wash out the stars.

Good luck with your foot and hip pain. In Arizona under Medicare, we don't need referrals to see a physical therapist. My insurance so far has covered all the cost.

I hope to read all your zines again in a six weeks.

* 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

19 October 2021

This is my response to *Purrsonal Mewsings* 83.

First to your Editorial. I thought you out West were having hot spells and lots of fires. However, your July, with its rains, seems to contradict that. Of course, July was just one month. Who can predict for that? We have enough trouble predicting one year or one century.

((Actually our entire summer was quite wet.))

Next, I go to your Reviews and N.K. Jemisin's *The City We Became*. I used to live an hour and half's drive from New York City. It seemed like people reflecting the essence of their boroughs is in the past. With the decades, you could tell less and less. Not their language, not their world view, not their personality. I haven't been there in a while but I have no reason to believe that's changed.

Now to Mailing Comments on Stipple-APA. You tell Amy Clark that you needed a smart phone to get the COVID vaccine. For what it's worth, I found out about my shot on my personal computer. In fact, I got my appointment there. I was going to say you could always get the vaccine at a drugstore. However, remembering conditions early on, the answer originally was no.

((Not necessarily a smart phone but at least some sort of computer equipment. Some people have neither.))

Also, you tell her you were not a big user of local libraries when you were a librarian. I was a librarian for about thirty years at my Federal Agency. I can't say I was a big user of local libraries either. A lot of queries required specialized materials. Later on, you could get them from data bases. The big one was Medline, which I got for free because the librarian at the National Library of Medicine didn't want to be bothered with the paperwork needed for my interlibrary loans.

In addition, you tell Amy about your typing 120 words per minute. Forget that for me. Especially now in old age when I hit so many wrong keys.

((My typing speed deteriorated with computers, probably because it's too easy to make corrections.))

Furthermore, you tell Sparrow that the COVID vaccination has been safe and effective. I have to agree. Having said that, I admit some people have trouble with it. Someone will have trouble with any shot. On the other hand, opponents of the COVID shot have been using rare, and sometimes unique, problems as a reason to ditch it. That's unfair.

((Especially since COVID itself is usually much more dangerous.))

Finally, you talk about the Zoom interviews with the Trimbles. I was there. However, I've been a bad boy for the two last Zoom Fanac history interviews. The first time I forgot. The second time I found I had a commitment that took precedence. Such is what happens on my schedule and my priorities.

Now we go on to the Letters to the Editor. My letter came first so no problems with commenting on it first. I have to agree that if, in *The Relentless Moon*, mankind has met extraterrestrials already, and some people are suspicious of them, I could see how an Earth First Movement arose. I didn't know, in the novel, we had had contact with extraterrestrials. .

((No extraterrestrials were involved in the trilogy. The space race offered an alternative solution to the damage caused by the meteorite strike. It was predicted that the strike might eventually cause the Earth to become uninhabitable.))

About Mike's accident, things happen so fast in accidents that it's hard for crazy things things not to happen. Several years ago, I accidentally fell into a bathtub in such a way that I dislocated my shoulder. The doctor wasn't going to bother with surgery, but she had me stop my exercises for eight months.

About the anti-COVID vaccines, you say that vaccines still don't make people safe enough. The problem is how safe is safe enough. That's a problem. Politics plays a part. A substantial number of people get very sick and die from flu. However, not

enough to be considered a threat to the nation. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccines-work/vaccineeffect.htm>

Now we go to Lloyd Penney. He points out that British Columbia has had very hot weather and fires. They have not been restricted to places farther south such as California.

Also, Lloyd discusses COVID. He thinks the mask and vaccine are matters of empathy. I think they are a matter of politics. Many people believe that Liberals made up the COVID epidemic and there is no such thing. If they come down with COVID, it's not really COVID.

((People with empathy will follow the precautions, because they care about other people.))

Now we go to Trinlay Khadro. She and her family have finally been able to get the COVID vaccine. Good for her.

Now we go to Tom Feller. He says that two years of American history were required in his high school. If I remember correctly, I was taught world history there in addition to American history. In fact, I was also taught American history in grammar school. However, we never got past the Revolution. I guess history after that was considered too controversial for students that young.

#

Andy Hooper, fanmailaph at aol dot com

10 November 2021

A Letter of Comment to *Purrsonal Musings* #83

Since we are both in the general distribution APazine business these days, I thought a brief letter of comment was in order. I was impressed by the colourful Icelandic puffin on your cover – zines with a primarily electronic identity are an explosion of colour compared to the mustard-shaded wiltone that dominated the fanzines of our youth. It's one of my favourite things about contemporary zines, although I always feel like I am reduced to saying, "Ooh, Shiny!"

((*Purrsonal Mewsings* is currently actually primarily for a paper APA, but it has a relatively small distribution. More copies are mailed out or distributed electronically. All the printed versions are also done in colour; we have a colour printer.))

The quail family reminded me of the little birds that used to run across our path outside my mother-in-law's apartment at the retirement village in Las Cruces. They would dash across the arroyo as we approached and seemed to levitate as they jumped and scrambled back up the other side.

((Those may have been quails of some sort.))

My wife, Carrie, read Jemison's *The City We Became*; and I had the impression that she enjoyed it as much as the rest of the author's work. I must admit, however, she made it sound much less like a potential Marvel movie than your review did.

I was quite impressed by the number of well-known (to me) fanzine fans who appeared in your letter-column! An impressively thoughtful and detailed letter from Rich Dengrove and LoCs from Trinlay Khadro and Tom Feller, both of whom I seem to have lost track of. As I contemplate doing another issue of the paper-based *FLAG*, it is lovely to collect street addresses for some former correspondents, and I thank you for publishing them.

((I may have street addresses for others in my letters column.))

I will send electronic copies of a few issues of *CAPTAIN FLASHBACK* in trade; I hope you find something in its vast contents to amuse you.

#

Lloyd Penney, penneys at bell dot net

16 November 2021

So far behind once again, and so many other things to do too. I have *Purrsonal Mewsings* 83 here, and I will concoct a fast letter of comment.

We will be getting our annual flu shots on this Friday, and we are ready to get our booster shots for COVID at any time. Yvonne qualifies at this time, but I don't, at least, not yet. Part of the awareness of the benefits of the vaccine is offset by friends who confirm they have no intentions of getting any vaccinations. As Joe Biden has said, this pandemic is now for the unvaccinated; and they make up the majority of the hospital visits and the body count. Worldwide, I think we have passed five million.

((It is sad about the unvaccinated. There are even people who erroneously believe that they are immune after having had a case of COVID.))

It's not post-pandemic by any shot, but many are acting as if it were. We have our first SF event since March of 2020 coming up on December 5. A local anime convention is getting the word out about a festive holiday market, and we bought a table. We are hoping for some good sales, but we also have to be careful too.

Yvonne has had many food allergies, but we wonder if they are fading. Most of her life, she was allergic to strawberries, but now she enjoys them as much as I do. I think it's worth getting a wide-spectrum allergy test to see what allergies have faded, and see if any new ones have taken their place.

((Food allergy tests are notoriously unreliable.))

Yvonne and I had COVID-19 in February. It took a couple of weeks, but we did recover; and we honestly wondered if we were going to survive that virus. It's nothing I'd wish on anyone. That's one reason we're fully vaccinated and looking for more. We can't confirm we caught it from other people in our apartment building, but there are still many people in the building who do not and will not mask up. When this is over, some of them will crow, "See? You didn't need to put on a mask!" You don't want them to catch it, but if it's the only way to convince them how serious this is... We had no vaccine shortages anywhere in Canada. We had a choice of four vaccines, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna. Yvonne and I had the mix of vaccines, AstraZeneca and Moderna. The US government does not recognize AstraZeneca's vaccine for use in the US. That mix seems to be the most effective shield against COVID-19.

My letter...more assignments are past, and more are coming up—another thing to keep me away from letter writing. Still, the paycheques are quite attractive... The convention in Rochester was postponed until next year because of COVID-19 and the fact that the Biden government hadn't opened the border to Canadians going south, although the Trudeau government had opened the border to Americans going north. My weight loss continues; I weigh about 191 pounds now.

Time to go, it's quite late here. Thanks for this issue, and I plan to do better for next time, promise.

#

Alan White, podmogul at cox dot net

18 November 2021

Just yesterday I was in the store where they had some colour maps of the solar system and realized there was no Pluto. . . . and felt very sad. I want to know. . . just who let the dog out?

((Because of its small size and eccentric orbit, there was always a question about whether Pluto could be the ninth planet that scientists had sought. By 1978 the true size of Pluto was known. In 2006 professional astronomers came up with an official definition of the term "planet". It was decided that a planet had to meet three criteria:

1. The object must be in orbit around the [Sun](#).
2. The object must be massive enough to be rounded by its own gravity. More specifically, its own gravity should pull it into a shape defined by [hydrostatic equilibrium](#).
3. It must have [cleared the neighborhood](#) around its orbit.

Pluto failed to meet the third test.))

Have a good week and say "HI" to them rattlers!

#

Thomas Feller, PO Box 140937, Nashville, TN 37214-0937

24 November 2021

Thank you for sending *Purrsonal Mewsings* #84. I am enclosing one of my FAPAazines in trade.

I submitted my Hugo Award ballot. Here is how I voted in the Best Novel category:

1. *Piranesi*, Susanna Clarke
2. *The Relentless Moon*, Mary Robinette Kowal
3. *Network Effect*, Martha Wells
4. *Black Sun*, Rebecca Roanhorse
5. *The City We Became*, N.K. Jemisin
6. *Harrow the Ninth*, Tamsyn Muir

When we were still living in our house, we had a raccoon who liked to eat the cat's food.

Like you, I was reading science fiction almost as soon as I was reading at all.

When we moved into our house in 2003, we were informed that we had "Bill Clinton" toilets that used less water than the older ones. Apparently, there was some legislation passed during his administration that mandated the manufacture of toilets that used less water for environmental reasons.

In response to Rich Dengrove, for about the last twenty years of my career, I was responsible for coordinating my company's responses to general liability and workers compensation lawsuits. I don't think this experience affected my performance on juries, although a few times I believe I was not selected because of my work experience. My last time on a jury, I served as the foreperson.

My doctor advised me to take Claritin every day, although I am not aware of being allergic to anything in particular. Since then I have had fewer cold symptoms and no instances of bronchitis.

((I'm glad Claritin is helping you. I've been able to get off regular use of antihistamines since I cut most nightshades and grape skin out of my diet. I can still eat nightshades occasionally, but I really don't have much desire to do so.))

Anita and I are scheduled to received our Covid-19 booster shot next month.

#

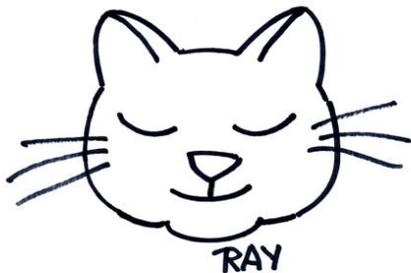
Murray Moore, murraymoore at gmail dot com

28 November 2021

This morning (Nov. 28) we awoke to see the first fallen snow of this winter. Which is why I am typing these words; I am indoors. Yesterday morning and afternoon, I was out of doors for maybe four hours, in our backyard and in our nonagenarian neighbour's backyard, mostly her backyard.

I rake her leaves and carry them to our backyard. I spread leaves on our garden beds. Through next year also, I will put leaves in our three compost bins, layering leaves between layers of kitchen waste.

Fair that I remove the leaves in her backyard, because most of them have blown into her backyard from our oak trees.



Our late-1950s neighbourhood was built among farm fields in a then-township. Instead of sidewalks we have ditches. Two options to dispose of leaves: rake them into the ditch, from which location a vacuum truck will remove them, or fill paper yard waste bags that are collected from the end of driveways on garbage collection day.

I like to have a lot of leaves. After dark one evening this fall, I went left and right on our street and acquired from ends of driveways bags of leaves raked and bagged by neighbours.

This past summer we paid two people to work in our backyard: Claire (to deliver and plant native plants and shrubs and trees, according to the plan she made for us last year), and Bobby, to create for us a pond.

Claire we would recommend without reservation.

Bobby we would recommend only to someone we do not like.

Bobby did the hard work. He and his pond-making partner dug the pond, mostly filling with soil one of those long bins you rent. They put into the pond the backing and the liner you need in sandy soil. And they came one Saturday to pump the water out of the pond.

But Bobby has not brought and installed the pump and skimmer and pipes for which we have paid Bobby. Boo Bobby.

I cannot assure you, Laurraine, that you will be able to enter Canada this coming March to attend Corflu Pangloss. You can enter Canada now. Americans were allowed again to enter Canada by land starting last Aug. 9. Three and one-half months from now? Let's be optimistic.

((I've decided against trying to attend Corflu Pangloss. There are just too many unknowns. At least on an organized trip, such as the ones to Iceland and the Yucatan that I went on, someone else gets to worry about those details.))

#

Robert Kennedy, podmogul at robertk dot org

29 November 2021

Thank you for #84.

Yes, I'm still here and very much enjoying *Purrsonal Mewsings*.

Neat cover. But no snow here as yet. There was some higher up in the hills. It appears to be gone. Good photos as usual.

I've now have had three virus shots and a Flu shot.

Richard Dengrove: Many years ago over a period of time, I served on (as I recall) six juries. Twice I was the Foreman. In one case there were three defendants. We got a low guilty verdict on two of them and Hung on the third who was the actual killer... There were two jurors (a male and a female) who were incapable of rational thinking. On another trial where I was the Foreman, there were two jurors voting Not Guilty. When we went to lunch one of them tried to discuss the case with me. I stopped her. When we got back she changed to Guilty. Obviously, she just wanted to have lunch. We finally convinced the other juror and reached a Guilty verdict. In a DUI case where I was the Foreman, we reached a verdict in ten minutes. In a case where a man was charged with contracting without a license, we quickly had a vote of 11 Not Guilty and 1 Guilty. The man (who had been on the DUI with me) voting Guilty went to the Rest Room. He then came back and voted Not Guilty. The defendant appeared stunned. Jury Nullification was never discussed. But I think that is what happened.

One thing that I got from jury duty is that there are many not rational clear headed people serving on juries.

((Aside from jury duty, I think it's clear that there are many people incapable of clear-headed rational thinking.))

Well, enough of that. It's probably more than interests most people.

Laurraine: I hope that you can get to your Iceland trip report next issue.

#

Ed Zdrojewski, ed at grainnet dot com

29 November 2021

Thanks for sending *Purrsonal Mewsings* #84. My comments this time won't be overly lengthy. The weekend following Thanksgiving was pretty much taken up with

automotive matters. The catalytic converter on my 2017 Hyundai Tucson started to go on my way home from visiting my sister in Cleveland, just seven months after I had replaced it. I'd promised myself that the next major problem with the car and I would trade it in on a Subaru; and a witch keeps his word, even when it's only to himself. The new wheels hold up a 2022 Subaru Outback, much more than I can afford, but with all that supply chain stuff you've been hearing about on the news, you take what you can find on the lot. It's quite nice, though, with a dashboard that looks like the one on the Starship *Enterprise*. There's a button on the digital display that says "Engage Warp", and I've been a little bit afraid to try it out. Great to be driving a Subaru again.

Thoughts and musings re #84: Your cover is absolutely delightful, and I hope that's not a depiction of winter in Tucson. Also love Mike's kitty and snake photos.

((It only very seldom looks like that in the Tucson area, although it has looked like that at the top of mountains recently.))

Now that the Biden administration has stopped scapegoating Moderna long enough for the CDC to OK its booster, I'll be getting mine Dec. 15, which is as soon as my clinic could schedule it.

Amazing shots of Jupiter and the Ring Nebula. I tried to shoot photos of the recent lunar eclipse with my cell phone -- somehow that didn't look anywhere near as good.

((There are astronomy photo apps that can help with cell phone astrophotography. Mike uses one called NightCap Camera with his iPhone.))

Sorry to hear one of your readers won't speak to conservatives. You can learn a lot from people whose beliefs differ from your own. By conservatives, I don't mean Cranks for QAnon or Trump Cult Zombies (Trump isn't a conservative in my book, just an authoritarian thug); but people who are well-read and think about things seriously, *Wall Street Journal* rather than Fox News. Your mind isn't going to be changed by exposure to this, but it's very helpful to understand what they think and why they think that way. The way this country is going, it's important to know what the other side thinks -- someday it might save your life.

Laurraine, I feel for you and Mary Manchester with your allergies. I can deal with most of mine reasonably well but really hate being allergic to cats. Cats are fine animals, and I like them a lot. That particular allergy is actually related to cat dander, which they develop from licking themselves. Before she died from cancer, my girlfriend, Dana, in Ohio had two very nice cats, Misty and Shadow. I found I could pet them and wake up with one of them sleeping on my head, and they never bothered me. This was a joyful discovery -- maybe I'd finally outgrown that allergy. No such luck, though. It turns out Dana washed them with a medication that suppresses the dander. It worked very well, though the cats really didn't care for the procedure, which is why most cat owners who have heard of it won't use it.

((Mary doesn't have any allergies; you must have misread something. In fact I am slightly allergic to cats and get allergy injection again that. Another friend of mine finds that he's only allergic to some cats.))

I'm pretty diligent about masking and other COVID safety procedures but can be pushed only so far. That's why I never double-masked, even at the peaks of the pandemic in 2020, before there were any vaccines. I also drove across two states to attend my mother's funeral in April 2020 back when that was a crime. I'd feel sorry for the state trooper who tried to arrest me on my way to my mother's funeral -- as a former PR executive, I can tell you that it's amazingly easy to create a Massive Media Circus. Only time I've ever obeyed speed limits, though.

I don't generally drink Riesling but love to cook with it, the dry ones anyway. Come to think of it, you do have to do something with the bottom inch of liquid in the 750ml bottle, so I guess I do drink it. Occasionally.

#

Lloyd Penney, penneys at bell dot net

28 December 2021

Many thanks for *Purrsonal Mewsings* 84...sorry this has taken a while to get to, but I took some time off from my fanzine duties to actually edit a book. It's an e-book, and came in at 488 pages, and it took up every bit of free time I had on hand. Now that it's done and off to a happy author, I have a LOT of catching up to do.

I do not have a smartphone; but I do have a tablet, an old Samsung Galaxy Tab E, a very basic unit. I bought it in time for our first trip to England in 2016. A piece of electronics I was told would last about 2.5 years is ready to enter its sixth year of operations; and while it is slowing down a little, regular maintenance keeps it going fairly well. The prices of smartphones these days...I am happy with my little flip-phone, and it does the job.

Yvonne and I received our booster shots just over a week ago now, so we have had a shot from each of the major COVID vaccine brands here—Astra-Zeneca the first, Moderna the second, and now Pfizer the third. I have heard some rumours that if time goes on, we might need another booster or possibly a full fourth shot.

Because of climate change, opossums have now moved northwards into southern and central Ontario. So we are only now getting used to them. The local raccoons, of which there are legion, don't like the new competition. Opossums are good for keep numbers of ticks and other such insects down to manageable levels.

My LoC... We are still masking, and the city of Toronto bylaw department has been here to put up again the signage about masking and social separation that should be on the wall of every building in the city. The Cloverdale Mall that we can see from our balcony? It may be a few years yet; but this mall with such a long history and record of being a busy mall, will be torn down to make ways for (what else is built these days?) luxury

condominium buildings. As soon as they move in, they will wonder where can I go and shop around here? Both Yvonne and I did get some great paycheques with the company that supplied registration staff, and another show is lined up for next month, but...let's see what Omicron does and what gets cancelled.

Greetings to EdZed! It has been a very long time; I think we were in TAPA together. It's good that the USA border will accept Canadians with Astra-Zeneca vaccinations because it was accepted by the CDC and the WHO. As of the moment, Americans and Canadians can fly and drive across each other's side of the border; but there may be changes in that status because of Omicron. I think that the folks who are staging the Corflu in Vancouver might have a back-up plan to have it in Seattle instead.

Time to go and get this to you, and with luck it might even get into your next issue. Take care; and to you and Mike, a happy, COVID-free, mask-free and socially close 2022. We all need that.

#

Marcia Meldrum, penneys at bell dot net

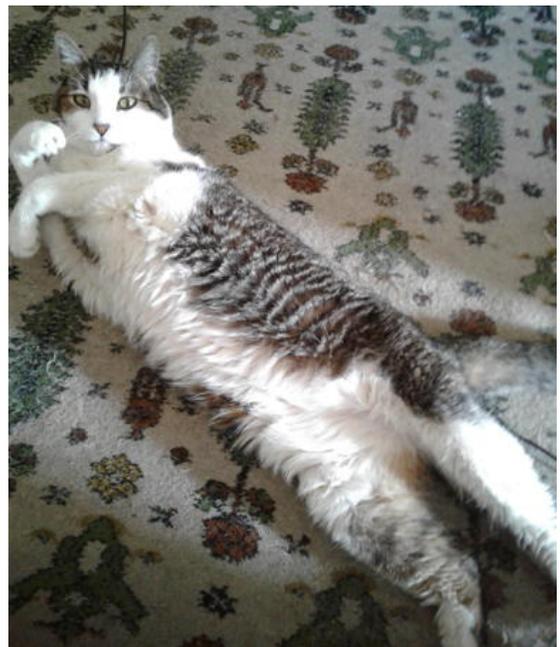
28 December 2021

I always look forward to your photos of wildlife, cats (loved the picture of you and Cato), and the heavens above. Am impressed by your intrepidity in continuing to travel, when so many of us (me) have barely left the house.

((The trips I took were relatively safe. All the passengers on my air flights were required to submit a record of COVID vaccinations. The trips themselves also required vaccinations and some testing.))

Last week I was finally on the road once more; my sister and I went to Anza-Borrego State Park in the desert. It rained buckets, but we enjoyed some interesting scenery in intervals between rain showers; the play of the light on the mountains and occasional rainbows were spectacular.

((She also shared a photo of her cat, Tolly.—see right))



#

IAHF: Mary Manchester

* * *

*** Closing Remarks**

If all goes according to plan, my next issue will be at the beginning of April. Deadline will be about two weeks before then.

The temperature is trending downward again, and rain is in next week's forecast.

Laurraïne

8 January 2022