

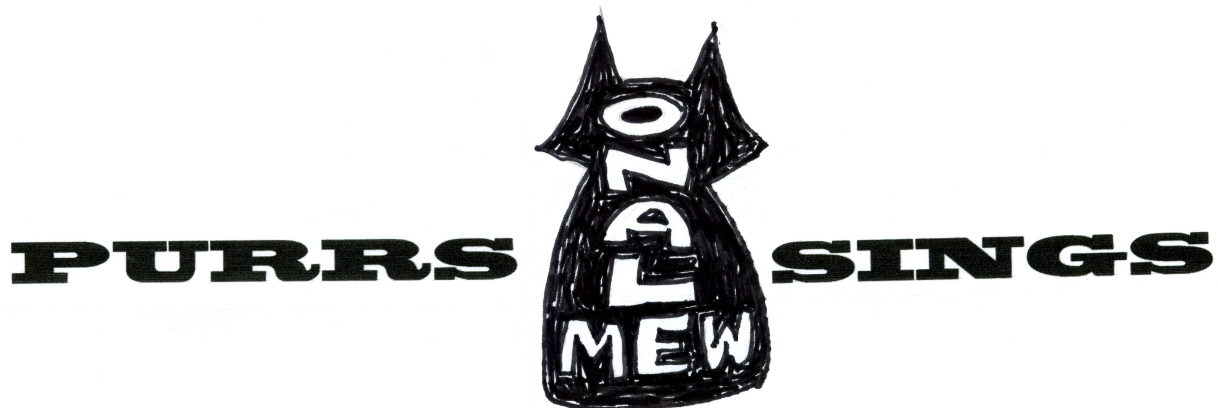
# Purrsonal Mewsings #88



*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 twelve 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 #517. ©2022 R-Laurraine Tutihasi.

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#88

October 2022

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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

August was an eventful month. The month started out with my trip to Minnesota for my Carleton College makeup reunion, some sightseeing, and visiting friends. Everything went pretty smoothly.

About mid-month our AT&T router died, and we were without Internet for a few days. I used my iPhone as a hotspot. The new router is better but not perfect. For now it will have to do.

We had a lot of electrical storms, some of them accompanied by rain. We've had a large number of fruit bats visiting at night, so I've been putting up two feeders for them at night.

We had about three and a half inches of rain in July, and August gave us about twice that.

September is much drier. Monsoon is about over by the middle of the month. We've both had our flu shots and have appointments for the new Omicron booster.

\* \* \*

## \* Kritter Korner

I managed to get some neat photos with my Nikon since last time. The first one is a mother quail and her chicks. The other one is a group of antelope squirrels, probably a family.



Mike also managed to get a photo of a bull or gopher snake:



I also got a photo with my iPhone of a desert cottontail resting.

In addition our trail cam caught some interesting photos:



				
Bat at feeder	Black-headed grosbeak	Roadrunner	Western kingbird	Yellow warbler

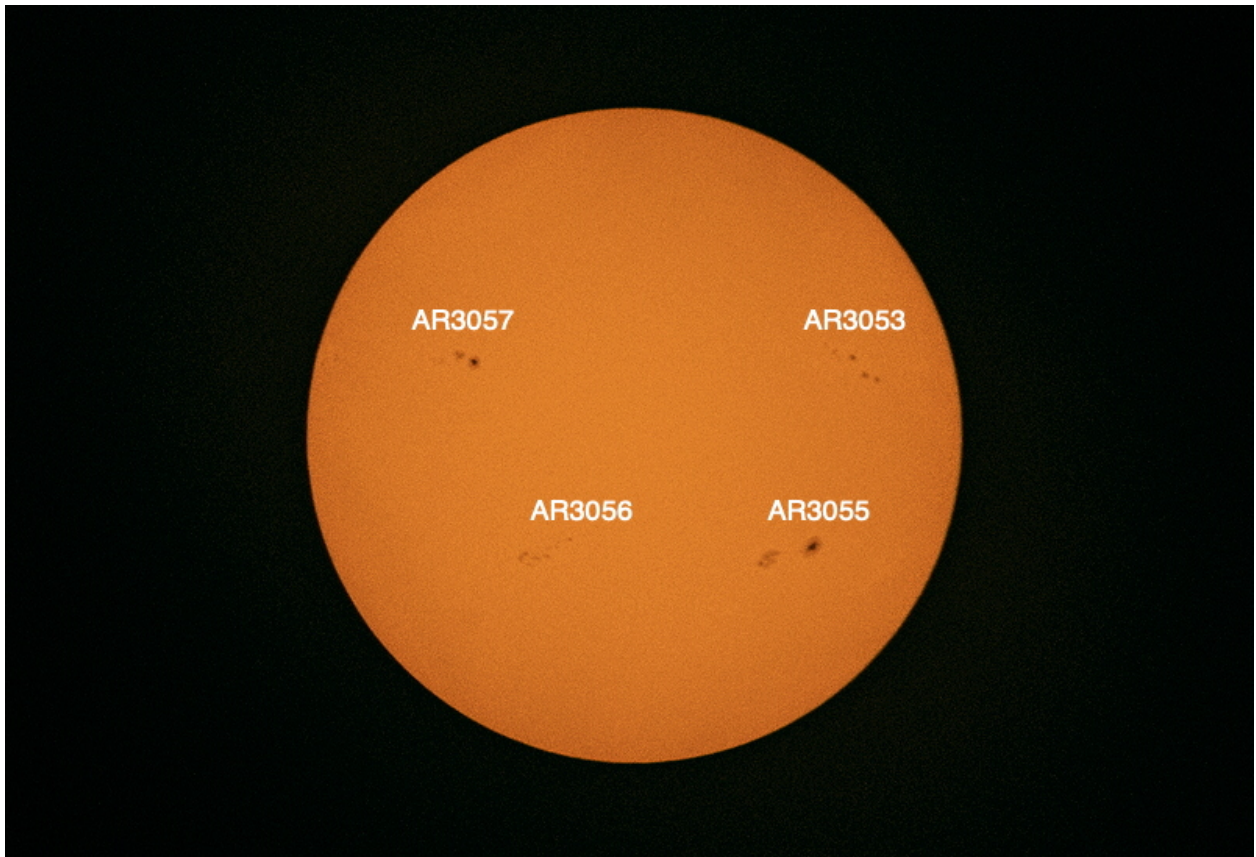
\* \* \*

## \* Astronomy

Clouds got in Mike's way most of July and August. Each month had only two good observing nights. However, he did manage a few nice photos. Here's a photo of NGC6951.



He also earlier managed a nice photo of the sun with sunspots.



\* \* \*

### \* **Notable Books Read and Movie Seen**

*Light from Uncommon Stars*, by Ryka Aoki, copyright 2021, Hugo nominee.

This is a strange mix of fantasy and science fiction. The sf part has visitors from another world setting up shop at a doughnut store. The fantasy part has a violinist trying to recruit victims for the devil to buy herself fame and fortune. The story takes place in Los Angeles, which appealed to me because of my association with the place. The familiar mix of cultures was presented in the book. There is really more than one main character. One is a trans person who has been rejected by her biological family. She finds solace in playing the violin. Another is a violinist who sold her soul to the devil for fame and fortune. The captain of the aliens is another main character. The interactions among these and their interactions with other characters are very important to the book. I found the book entertaining and satisfying.

#

***The Speed of Dark***, by Elizabeth Moon, copyright 2002, Nebula Award winner for 2003.

This book was chosen by the Worcester [MA] Public Library's science fiction book club. It takes place in the near future when great advances have been made in medical science and treatment. The plot focuses on Lou, who is autistic and is working with a group of other autistic people for a company. We follow his day-to-day activities and developments in his life. It's shown that his life is not static. He changes, albeit slowly, because of incidents in his life. When he is given the opportunity to undergo an experimental treatment for autism, he takes time to research all the pros and cons.

I enjoyed this book, because I've been interested in psychology since junior high. The main characters and a few of the subsidiary characters are developed well. The book moves along quickly. I was drawn into Lou's mind.

#

***Jurassic World: Dominion***, starring Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, Laura Dern, Sam Neill, Jeff Goldblum, *et al.*

If you've been following the "Jurassic" movie series, then I don't need to tell you much. If you haven't, there's not much point. Some of the actors from the original movie were brought back for this one, nostalgic for those of us who have been watching all along. The plot revolves around the search for the origin point for some strange animals that have shown up here and there. It involves car chase scenes that seem *de rigueur* for action films these days. But it gets more interesting. We also get to follow the story of the dinosaur that escaped in the previous movie. After a lot of *sturm und drang*, I got an ending I was happy with.

#

***The Galaxy, and the Ground Within***, by Becky Chambers.

This book is about several aliens stuck at an outpost when something blows up and strands them. The place is a hub where several wormholes open to various destinations. Three strangers and the two people who run a way station find themselves spending much more time together than they otherwise would. I found it interesting to get to know the aliens and read about the mini adventures they have. It's an entertaining read that was nominated for the Hugo.

#

***Belfast***, written and directed by Kenneth Branagh.

I finally caught up with this on HBO. It's based on Branagh's childhood in Belfast when the "troubles" began that eventually caused the family to move to England. The "troubles" began in the summer of 1969, and the family moved in spring of the following year. The weird thing for me is that this was the time when I was in England. I flew to London at the end of August and attended Lancaster University. I was even in Belfast during part of spring break. Of course, the "troubles" took place only in certain parts of Belfast; and my hosts kept me away from any dangerous areas.

Aside from my personal connections to the events, the film brings home the effects of the "troubles" on ordinary working class people. It's filmed in black and white with

occasional splashes of colour when the family go to the cinema. Because of my personal connection to that time and place, I can't objectively judge the film. However, I know that many viewers found it to be a fine movie.

\* \* \*

## \* **Carleton College Reunion/St. Paul-Minneapolis Trip**

This reunion was a make-up reunion for the one that could not take place in 2021 because of COVID. Although we had a Zoom reunion, it was later decided that we would have a make-up reunion. The classes of 1970, 1971, 1995, 1996, 2015, and 2016 were part of this event.

My trip started on Friday, 5 August. Mike and I left our house about 08:00 and reached Sky Harbor airport in Phoenix about 10:00. Mike dropped me off with plenty of time to spare. Everything proceeded smoothly until I tried to enter the secure area, and the machine objected to my online boarding pass. I had to return to the ticketing area to get a printed boarding pass. After that things were okay. I caught up with e-mail and Facebook until boarding the American Airlines plane. The plane took off more or less on time about noon. The airport was warm, but it was chillier on the plane; luckily I always travel with a jacket or sweater.

About 13:15 drinks were served, and I had a snack bar that I brought from home for lunch.

Landing in Minneapolis about 17:30, I thought about getting dinner at a restaurant there, but my appetite said no. To reach the area where the buses would pick us up required taking a tram. I had a fairly long wait for the 19:30 bus, but I spent part of the time talking by phone with a Carleton rep whose presence in the baggage area I'd missed. I made the call to make sure I was in the right place. Otherwise I read e-mail and Facebook. The bus arrived about 19:00. I was one of the first to get on. We arrived at Carleton about 20:15. Because the bus driver gave out misinformation, I walked to Watson Hall, where I bumped into Kim, a friend who started out in the same year but graduated a year early. Eventually I was shown the way to Cassat Hall, which turned out to be kitty corner from Watson. The downside of Cassat is that the rooms don't all have mirrors. The British have it over the Americans in this regard, since their dorm rooms all had wash basins with mirrors.

When I went downstairs to the lounge, I asked about getting food. Someone found me a box of food. I had to eat a Subway sandwich without the bread, which was messy but worked. I bumped into Yvonne, another classmate, and her roommate; and we talked for a while.

When I contacted Kim again, she was at a concert and suggested getting together the next day. In the bathroom I ran into Nan and Bev. Nan was a person I'd only known in passing; perhaps we had some class together. I had roomed with Bev sophomore year. The dorm's central air seemed to be not working, and each room had an AC machine. The noise of the machine blocked out other sounds, which I found useful. I got to bed about midnight. It took me a while to fall asleep. This is typical for me. I never sleep very well the first night away from home.

Saturday morning Beverly and I walked to breakfast about 07:30. We took a circuitous



way, because we weren't too sure of where it was. Kim joined us there later.

After breakfast I attended a panel on "Sustainable Endeavors to Combat Climate Change" with Toivo Kallas '70, Joe Foran '71, and others representing '95, '96, and '16.

Then there was the "Parade of Classes and Alumni Convocation".

Lunch was a combined class affair under a large pavilion next to Skinner Chapel. It was raining off and on, so the tent cover was very welcome. I ate with Beverly and Kim. The food service was excellent. Almost everything was gluten free.

After lunch I returned to my room to pick up a couple of things and attended the tail end of "Alumni College: Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity" that included the president by Zoom. She had hoped to be on campus, but her flight had been cancelled. Then I attended "Arctic Art to Actions Ahead" presented by Kip Lilly '71. I left that one early to make sure I got to the "Wind Turbine" visit. Kim also made it at the last minute. Among other things that Carleton College did in its bid to be energy independent, was build a windmill in a cornfield (see photo below). Carleton also built a second windmill that serves the community of Northfield. After that was the class photo session; each class in attendance was done separately. Following that there was a reception. I had a bit of Pinot Grigio with a few appetizers. Beverly and I joined Kim. Jerry Mohrig, a retired chemistry prof who had taught organic, joined us; he is wheelchair bound now but cheerful. Kim had also done some research for him.

The class dinner was about 18:45. There I met Kitty and Dan, two people I used to hang out with senior year. We were seated with Jerry Mohrig. After we ate I talked at length with Kitty and Dan. Beverly found us later. I also had a chance to have a good conversation with Jean, who was my "little sister" and married Alan Thiel, one of the organizers of the reunion.

I stayed up way too late yakking with various people in Cassat lounge. I talked way too long, and my throat got quite sore. I got to bed about midnight.



I got solid sleep and got up to my alarm at 06:00 Sunday morning. I packed my carry-on bag.

I got to breakfast shortly after 07:00 and sat down by someone I had previously not known. Then classmate Tom and Beverly sat down with me. Beverly had to leave about 07:30 to catch the 08:00 bus to the airport.

I returned to Cassat, brought my carry-on down, and sat in the lounge talking to people until it was time for the memorial service at the chapel. The service was respectful without being maudlin. Kitty conducted a small choir. Afterward I returned to Cassat, retrieved my carry-on, and read some e-mail until I went out to check in for the bus to the airport. The girl signing us on let me know that the rental car places were probably right where the drop-off was at Terminal 1; she was right. During the bus ride, I had an interesting conversation with a 2015 graduate who was a journalist in NYC.

Picking up the car was relatively easy except that I was allowed to wander the lot looking for the compact cars and needed assistance. I finally chose a Nissan compact SUV. Mostly it was similar enough to Toyota that I had little trouble driving it. I used Maps on my iPhone to get me to my hotel in St. Paul.

Lunch was not available at the hotel, so I had a snack bar for lunch.

I spent the remainder of the afternoon reading e-mail. Then I left to get a beverage at a supermarket and drove to StippleAPA friend Kathy's house. Jeanne, who runs StippleAPA, and her husband and Kathy's husband were also in attendance.

We had dinner on their back porch. Dinner was cheeseburger and corn on the cob with several side dishes consisting of fruit and veggies. It was good food and good company.

Afterward I followed John's car, and we went to a place where goats were being used to eat an overgrown field. They were cute and enthusiastic and were surrounded by an electrified fence. Then I followed John and Jeanne to their house where I met Nixie, their friendly little black cat. I used Maps to get back to my hotel. It had started raining, so I drove pretty slowly, as other drivers did as well. Back at the hotel, I caught up with reading e-mail. I got to bed sometime shortly after about 22:00, being too sleepy to do anything more.

I got a solid night of sleep and got up to my alarm at about 06:45 on Monday.

After breakfast at the hotel, I had time to catch up with e-mail and touch base with Facebook until it was time to pick up my friend Gerri to go to the Minnesota Zoo. I managed to fall down off a rock trying to get a better vantage at one of the exhibits, but managed to get by with only scrapes and cuts.

We had lunch there about 13:00 after checking out a couple of eateries.

After lunch we finished looking over all the exhibits. Then we had a bit of an adventure looking for my rental car. Gerri thought she remembered where I had parked, and I had no idea. After finding the car, we found an Italian restaurant that looked good nearby.



A couple of the best photos I took at the zoo are here. Above is a tiger playing with an

empty container. To the right is a Japanese snow monkey with her little one.

Andiamo in Eagan nearby was great. They had gluten-free garlic bread, an item I hadn't had since my coeliac diagnosis. I also ordered their cheesecake for dessert and had to bring most of it back along with two pieces of garlic bread. While we were at the restaurant, I discovered that my walking shoes were falling apart.

Getting Gerri back to her apartment turned out to be problematical. Apple Maps did not recognize her street (the physical address, not mailing address). Google claimed to recognize it but brought us to her mailing address. She finally gave up and allowed me to drop her off at the mailing address. After I returned to my room, I showered. I got to bed about 22:15.



I got up to my alarm at 06:00 on Tuesday. I got down to breakfast about 07:00.

After breakfast I read e-mail, then left for Como park a little after 09:00. I discovered that the rental car has cruise control. I arrived there about 09:30. Jeanne and Kathy told me they'd wait near the conservatory. I wasn't sure where the conservatory was, so I spoke to the woman at the gate. After I found out where the conservatory was, I headed there and saw Jeanne and Kathy almost immediately. We got in line at the entrance until 10:00, when the place opens. We spent about ninety minutes looking at the animals then sat down for the Sparky show; Sparky is the name of a seal. Then we visited the conservatory and Japanese garden. While walking in the Japanese garden, I discovered that my walking shoes were in worse shape than I had thought.



Here are two of my best photos from Como Park. Above is a mountain lion at rest, and to the left is one of the tricks performed during the Sparky show.

Kathy found a nearby restaurant for lunch. Keys is sort of like Bakers Square in California. They offered a lot of gluten-free choices, so I had French toast.

We parted ways after lunch, and I returned to the hotel, where I threw out

my walking shoes. I'd be wearing my travel shoes for the rest of the trip. I read e-mail, touched base with Facebook, and napped for about an hour. I heated up yesterday's leftovers and discovered I wasn't really hungry. About the same time Facebook friend Dee Koski texted and proposed we have dinner at the hotel. I put the leftovers back in the fridge. I met Dee on Facebook through her cat, Spaghetti Bob.

We met in the lobby and went to the hotel restaurant. I just had tortilla chips and salsa with a Cosmopolitan. She had a real dinner. We turned out to have a lot in common. So we had an enjoyable conversation.

Back in my room I prepared stuff for the next day, read e-mail, and touched base with Facebook. I got to bed about 23:15.

I got up to my alarm at 06:00 on Wednesday and got down to breakfast about 07:00.

Back my my room, I had time to read e-mail and touch base with Facebook before leaving for the Wildlife Science Center, which is north of the Twin Cities. It took about forty-five minutes to get there. I arrived several minutes before they opened. The place is somewhat smaller than I expected, but they had more variety of animals than I'd expected. There were numerous wolves and also black bears, a couple of bobcats, a porcupine, a raccoon, caribou, and raptors. Many of the animals were rescues; others were their descendants. They study the animals with conservation as the goal.

I noticed a Village Inn on my way there, and I had lunch there.

The return drive became somewhat hazardous toward the end, because I started to succumb to postprandial sleepiness. Back at the hotel I napped for about an hour.

I had leftovers from Monday for dinner about 17:00.

At night I showered and washed my hair. I got to bed about 20:30.

Thursday morning I got up to my alarm at 05:00. I thought my sore throat was going away, but it's still with me.

I went down to breakfast about 06:00.

I had about an hour back in my room before I checked out and drove to a gas station to feed the rental car and then to the airport. Signage at the airport was very clear. Security was slow. For one I had forgot to empty my water bottle. Then it turned out that my camera in my carry-on was a problem. I got a free ride to my gate that was almost at the far end of the concourse. A man with a wheel chair gave me the free ride; I think he was going my way anyway. Shortly after I sat down at the gate, I had an interesting conversation with a passenger headed to LaGuardia on the flight before mine. I also had some interesting conversations with a Delta pilot and a United pilot, who were both hitching a ride on my flight. After I got on the Delta plane, I found myself seated in Comfort+ next to the parents of a young man headed to college at ASU to study economics. He was riding in coach. They had flown out from Cincinnati and were making a connection in Minneapolis.

There was snack service sometime after 13:00. I managed to snag three snacks plus a beverage.

I read a bit in the plane. We landed just before 14:00. I called Mike. There was a bit of confusion about which exit I was near, but he eventually found me. The dryness here was welcome to me. I dozed off a bit on the drive home.

Later on I discovered that the sore throat had been aggravated by postnasal drip. I have since taken steps to alleviate that. My throat is okay, but I'll have to work on

recovering my singing voice.

\* \* \*

## \* **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 #351

**Amy Clark (Covers):** Your covers are lovely—playful and colourful.

**Jason K. Burnett (Just Keep Swimming #5):** Although Mike doesn't usually stay up late, he will if there is something interesting going on, such as an eclipse. He'll also get up in the middle of the night for such events.

When I was in junior high deciding what to do "when I grow up", I thought astronomy would be interesting. However I didn't relish having to be up during the night to do my work. Although I didn't realize it at that time, had I become an astronomer, the need for staying up all night as a professional was mostly gone by the time I would have been looking for work. That said, there are some astronomers who mostly work helping other astronomers, and they do have to stay up all night frequently.

Your mystery ice cubes might be explained by the way a modern frost free refrigerator works. The moisture automatically removed from the

freezer might end up in your ice maker.

I joined ANZAPA as soon as I learned about the change to PDF. If you're interested in joining, contact David Grigg at david.grigg@gmail.com.

**Dale Cozort (Space Bats & Butterflies):** Sorry to hear about your knee. I hope all is well again.

Breathing and paying attention to your breathing is another way to fall asleep. You're paying so much attention to breathing that your mind isn't able to wander.

Exercise is always good for a variety of reasons.

Being paid for writing books seems to be a strange thing. Mike has written a few books—non-fiction about or related to astronomy. He manages to make pin money with them. On the other hand, he wrote an article for an astronomy magazine and was paid \$500!

The way some people rate books for Amazon or elsewhere doesn't always

make any sense. For a while I was editing book reviews as well as writing them for an organization. I know for a fact that one reviewer gave every one of her books five stars. I would rarely be that generous. A book would have to be outstanding to get five stars from me.

Good luck with your renovation!

Word can be very trying. The other day I created a simple document. When I printed it out, I noticed several missing lines. After converting the Word document to PDF, it printed okay.

**Bill Thomasson (Musings from the Gathering Dusk #49):** There's no rule against switching point of view in a book, but an author can run into trouble if he doesn't know how to carry it off correctly. If a reader gets confused, the author loses him.

I found your review of *She Who Became the Sun* interesting because of the way your views differed from mine.

I would hardly advise anyone to rely totally on bank interest for saving for retirement. One needs to invest in some kind of mutual fund. Unless you plan on having a relatively short life, I would advise having a million dollars minimum with a good financial adviser. The mutual fund family of American Funds is a good one to invest in. Spread your retirement money over several of the funds.

ANZAPA mailings are distributed via Dropbox. When each mailing is available, our OBO sends out e-mail

with the link.

If you fall and are able to get up with no ill effects, you probably don't need a doctor. However, it's quite different if you fall and cannot get up.

Mike published his last book on Amazon. Amazon provides some guidelines on pricing. There's probably a floor, but the author can pick the price.

**Kathy Sidles (Looking Around):** Around here the "weed" to pull up is Buffelgrass, a plant used ornamentally. It spreads like wildfire around here and supplants many native plants. It's also very flammable. As far as I know, there isn't any in Oracle.

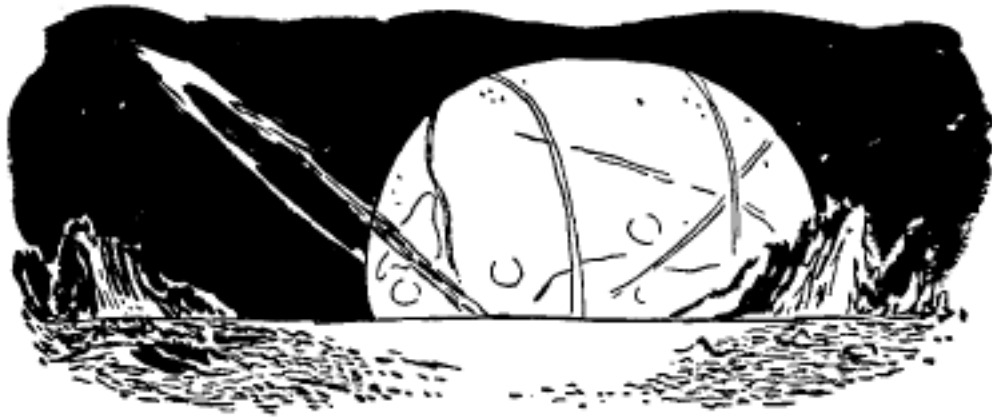
Good to know about birds that look dead but aren't.

**Lucy Schmeidler (Don't Ask #41):** I believe Dean Nicholson, who write *Nala's World*, still plans on completing his round the world travels. First COVID, then the Ukraine invasion have made things difficult. He is currently back in Scotland and has refurbished an old Volkswagen van that he plans on driving around Scotland.

**Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits):** So sorry to read about your cardiac problems.

The bird flu in our area did not affect our bird feeding. I'm glad to hear you can get back to it.

\*\*\*\*\*



### MAILING COMMENTS ON STIPPLE-APA #352

**Justin Busch (Cover):** You compose music too?

**Kathy Sidles (Looking Around):** I'm glad you were able to travel without catching COVID.

Thank you so much for your hospitality in providing dinner at your place. I also enjoyed your company at the Como Zoo. Can you e-mail me a copy of the photo you took at Como Park?

**Cy Chauvin (Amazons & Swallows Forever! #88):** My understanding is that the thatched roofs are the ones that existed or might have existed at the time of the Mayans.

Getting a bruise at the site of a blood draw is not uncommon. Few phlebotomists can do it without leaving a mark.

**Bill Thomasson (Musings from the Gathering Dusk #50):** Definitely outdoor cats and other pets can cause massive environmental damage.

According to a report published by *USA Today* in April 2020, pet owners reported an average of 3.5 prey a day. That adds up to an average of 14.2 to 38.9 prey per 100 acres per year. The effect of house cats on native species is two to ten times bigger than that of natural predators.

To get a different slant on American news, I read *The Guardian*.

I hope your confidence that things will come out okay is justified.

**Marge Sehnert (Mamma's Mutterings):** I keep a diary and try to keep good notes during my travels. Additionally I use pamphlets collected during a trip or the Internet to fill in details.

Forty miles is a good distance to go to see a doctor. Most of our doctors are within twenty miles of our house. My husband has one doctor who is almost forty miles away

**Joyce Maetta Odum (Rise It Down):** We didn't have much rain until the

second half of July. Since then until the end of August, we had quite a bit of rain as monsoon kicked into high gear.

I only had one other ear infection problem when I was a teenager. That one was not very serious.

Although one shouldn't allow cats to go out unaccompanied, there are pet doors that are keyed to the microchip in your pet. Other animals will not be able to get in.

**Erik Biever (Under Construction):**  
I'm so sorry you had to suffer COVID.

**Jeanne Mealy (Quirky Bits):** One bird I'd happy to see less of are the white-winged doves. They discourage hummingbirds, so I moved the hummingbird feeders away from the other feeders. I've ordered a new feeder that reacts to the weight of a bird or other animal, and I hope to set it so that it won't open for the white-winged doves, which are quite large. The feeder will also keep seeds from just falling out. I have other feeders, so the white-winged doves won't be totally shut out. They only started showing up as the weather became warmer over the years.

The monsoon did bring rain. Thanks.

Our problem isn't just Internet speed falling low. We have dealt with that kind of thing with various providers. Our original AT&T router died. We have a new one now. It also has problems but not as frequently.

Mike thinks the problem may be caused by some older equipment he has on our system. We don't have a lot of options right now, so we'll just have to live with it.

I have not succeeded in reading any books by Arkady Martine. I think her style is just opaque to me.

The Yucatan style of cooking is typified by a certain flavour, probably the way they use seasonings.

I only noticed the animals on our flight, because there were so many of them. The smaller animals were in carriers, but the larger ones were only on leashes.

The shuttle landings were too far away for us to see anything. Their flight paths never crossed the sky over us.

The Canadian healthcare system is basically Medicare for all. There are also private health insurance plans.

Linda Deneroff has been active in the World Science Fiction Society for a number of years. She usually takes the minutes at meetings and does other things as well.

If you go to <https://ew.com/movies/2019/11/27/knives-out-production-designer-crazy-house/>, you can see a photo of a room that seems to include an award that looks like a Hugo.

Ed Zdrojewski reports on farming in the Midwest, so a grain elevator is a frequent backdrop for much of his work.

I don't know how many irises I have. I don't pay much attention to them as long as they behave.

\*\*\*\*\*



I hope to read all your zines again in 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.

**Cathy Palmer-Lister, cathypl at sympatico dot ca**

**18 July 2022**

I so enjoy reading your zine and especially seeing the photos. It's so interesting to see the wildlife in your part of the world, so much of it very different from what I know. Tell Mike I always look for his astrophotos! Great work!

#

**Murray Moore, murraymoore at gmail dot com**

**24 July 2022**

As of 10:50 a.m. on July 22, according to my first Rapid Antigen Test result, I do not have COVID. Friends with whom we had a brief meeting, outdoors, two days previous, are infected, and the reason for me to walk to the pharmacy in our nearby plaza and bring home a free COVID test kit. I am Moderna x 4 (two vaccinations + two boosters.) Good that I am not infected, because tomorrow (July 23) we are hosting, 3 p.m. to 8 p.m., our Back Yard Native Plant Garden Open House.

Here is a link to an article, a multi-photo-illustrated description of us and the result of our 2020 decision to change our conventional back yard into a space of native plants (and shrubs and trees) and a bog + pond: [http://www.bloomingboulevards.org/post/murray-and-mary-ellen-moore?utm\\_campaign=7f2d4067-9772-4faf-abcb-8518d480b7e8&utm\\_source=so&utm\\_medium=mail&cid=459a69bf-4064-43ac-8dde-b85367f5351d](http://www.bloomingboulevards.org/post/murray-and-mary-ellen-moore?utm_campaign=7f2d4067-9772-4faf-abcb-8518d480b7e8&utm_source=so&utm_medium=mail&cid=459a69bf-4064-43ac-8dde-b85367f5351d)

((I urge everyone to check out the site. It's a nice article with photos.))

One of the benefits of native plants (and shrubs and trees), once established, as I expect you know, is they are happy without the regular watering that lawns require to remain green. Lawn grass roots are several inches long. Depending on the species of native plant, native plant roots are two-feet- to five-feet-long, or even longer.

Still, I am watering, because our 2021-planted plants, and shrubs and trees, are still growing their roots. And late spring and summer-so-far 2022 are dry. June rainfall: 40 per cent of normal. July rainfall to July 22: 32 per cent of normal.

((I'm finding out that with climate change, even native plants and other drought-resistant plants sometimes need some watering. I need to pay more attention to the weather.))

Yesterday the Monarch butterfly was declared to be endangered. We had two Monarch caterpillars on a swamp milkweed growing adjacent to our pond. The smaller caterpillar disappeared. A couple of days later the larger caterpillar was gone. We don't see chrysalis.

((A friend in Florida protects her Monarch caterpillars by using potted milkweeds in cages. When the butterflies emerge, she releases them.))

Until last month (June), since we returned by car from Corflu Heatwave (Mar. 13-Mar. 15. 2020, College Station, Texas) every night we slept at home. Last month we were away for four nights, visiting a cousin and her partner in her cottage on a lake west of Sudbury, Ontario.

Getting to her vacation property means a 15-minute ride in a boat. So we were exposed to fewer people than if we had stayed home. We stayed in a bunkie, a modern bunkhouse. During our four nights, a total of five mice were trapped in the bunkie. I wonder where the mice come from, inasmuch as the area is Canadian Shield, thin soil and evergreen and deciduous trees.

Black flies were done. Mosquitoes were few in number (and not a potential source of malaria). The wildlife novelty was the chipmunk that a human (unknown who) had taught to beg for a peanut. This chipmunk would run and sit at my feet. When I was sitting several times it ran up my leg. We have chipmunks in our yard, all of which react to us, instinctively, correctly, as potential dangers.

Update. Nine adults and two children visited between 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Three people who intended to come, a couple and an individual, stayed home because they have COVID. Those who did come arrived sufficiently spaced apart that they were able to talk to one of us as long as they wished.

#

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

**29 July 2022**

Your prickly-pear-flower cover for *Mewsings* 87, and apple-tree flowers on p. 23, were swell. Also Mike's astronomy photos as ever. Also I liked the grosbeak and cardinal and bobcat. I saw lots of cardinals while living in Chicago (State bird of Illinois) but not here, although I'm told they're around.

Glad you report Mike's confirmation that *Top Gun: Maverick* (J. Kosinski director 2022) is realistic. I see few movies but might catch this one.

Again I warn you about identifying with characters in books. Not only I think that's an unwise way to read, but so does (literary present tense) Nabokov. "I have tried ... to make of you good readers who read books not for the infantile purpose of identifying oneself with the characters, and not for the adolescent purpose of learning to live, and not for the academic purpose of indulging in generalizations ... [but] for the sake of their form, their visions, their art" (*Lectures on Literature*, 1980; *L'envoi*).

Hurrah for your Carleton College alumni trip to Yucatán! The photos were very communicative. I hear sisal rope, like manila rope, is named for its place of origin, i.e. Sisal in Yucatán.

"Common" in the phrase "common knowledge" means knowledge people have in common. With diversity this is harder to ascertain -- one reason I've said obviousness is relative.

You'll expect me to urge that APAs shouldn't go all-electronic, and I do. One reason is that pressure to go that way seems to come from raising too high the consideration *too much trouble* -- which is the beginning of the end. Unless *what's it good for?* is higher, anything is too much trouble. In the conclusion of John Barth's *Floating Opera* (1957; I haven't seen the rev. 1967) the protagonist, who's been struggling with *There's no reason not to commit suicide*, realizes at last *Or to commit suicide*. Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) called despair "carrion comfort".

Sorry not to see you at Westercon LXXIV. It was fun. Next year's will be in Anaheim; year after that in Layton, Utah.

#

**Tom Feller, PO Box 140937, Nashville, TN 37214-0937**

**5 August 2022**

I have not read *Mrs; Dalloway*, but I once read Woolfe's *To the Lighthouse* for a Great Books discussion group. If you haven't already seen, it, you might consider the 2002 film *The Hours* featuring Nicole Kidman in her Oscar-winning role as Woolfe. Meryl Streep also appears playing a character based on Mrs. Dalloway.

My review of *Project Hail Mary* is in the [enclosed] SFPazine. I liked *A Desolation Called Peace* more than you and finished it.

Anita and I went on a western Caribbean cruise in 2012 and visited the Mayan ruins at Kohunlich.

We have had three [COVID] shots so-far but.anticipate.getting our fourth when we get our flu shots this:fall.

#

**Ed Zdrojewski, ed at grainnet dot com**

**14 August 2022**

Thanks for Issue #87. Thoroughly enjoyed as usual.

I finally received my second COVID booster on July 20, Moderna, which has supplied the vaccine for all my shots so far.

Don't know if this will help, but coconut milk is found in Indian cuisine mainly from the southern part of the country, Kerala state for example. It's a little closer in flavour profile to southeast Asian food, which uses coconut milk in almost everything. That doesn't go for coconut oil, which can be used in any Indian dish anywhere, at the discretion of the chef. (In a restaurant, ask.) If you're trying to avoid coconut milk primarily, be especially careful with Thai and Malaysian foods.

((Thanks for the warning, reminder. I think it's primarily coconut milk, but I'm leery now of anything from the coconut.))

I really liked your bobcat photo. Kitty has an expression like it wants to rip someone's lungs out.

Notes on Yucatan trip: You are a very enjoyable travel writer. I've been to the Yucatan twice, the first and most memorable in 2007 was to get married to Penny in a shamanic ceremony on the beach in Playa del Carmen. The second was a week at a seaside resort a few years later for a remarkably low price through the Travelzoo web site. This is a little more touristy than Merida, where you went -- well, a lot more touristy. A colleague in my industry commented that Quintana Roo easily could pass for the 51st state, assuming that everyone speaks Spanish.

Extremely late dinners are pretty much the rule throughout Latin America. I spent a week on business in Rosario, Argentina in the 1990s. The first night in Rosario, I wandered into a restaurant at 10 p.m. looking for dinner. The owner said they weren't quite open for dinner yet, but he'd make an exception for the ignorant Yankee.

I am pleased you were able to visit Chichen Itza (pronounced by ignorant Yankees everywhere as "chicken itchy.") Penny and I didn't get there on either of our trips, although we did see ruins at Tulum and Coba, both of which were impressive.

Your pork and flan dinner was the exact same dinner I had in Playa del Carmen after our wedding on the beach. (Penny thought it looked good, but she was vegetarian and didn't try it.) I liked it and was intrigued by the taste that was more sour than spicy.

I never contracted malaria on either trip to the Yucatan, which I attribute to the large amounts of tonic water I drink (contains quinine). Unfortunately, Montezuma had his revenge on me both times. General tip I was given was to eat only things that have been cooked, nothing raw, and don't put ice in drinks. That's harder to do than you might think. For example, think about small amounts of lettuce snuck onto a sandwich. The worst of it for me was having it coming back through customs, then through TSA on the way home through Miami International, both of which involve what seems like miles of walking.

((We returned through Dallas, and the procedure seemed fairly benign.))

Note to Richard Dengrove: I've had four COVID shots so far, two of the vaccine and two boosters (all I quality for). All of them were free, and all were from Moderna. I hope I didn't contribute to their financial woes, but probably not, since the government would have purchased that vaccine from Moderna.

Note to Lloyd Penney: I'm thinking proof of vaccination must still be involved somewhere in travel to and from Canada. Every Major League Baseball team travelling up to play the Toronto Blue Jays ends up leaving at least a few team members behind for lack of vaccination. No doubt, this works out to the advantage of the Blue Jays.

Notes to self: I've been thinking about my aversion to watching figure skating on TV (other than the Chinese operating the Beijing Olympics like a Xinjiang death camp). I spent a couple of years as Class Victim in the Catholic equivalent of junior high (some researchers would refer to this as the role of "omega dog" in a pack). Naturally, I looked for escapes. One for a while was Winterhurst, an ice skating rink about a mile and a half from my house in Cleveland. After a while I got better at staying upright, even started to develop a little grace at it. Then, one of the local bullies spotted me coming out of there. The next Saturday, a dozen or more of my local tormentors were there, waiting to throw a Cleveland Browns defensive line tackle on me every time I stepped out on the ice. A stainless steel skate blade to the crotch is a sensation that you will never forget. These pitiful excuses for human beings had closed down something that could have been part of my life for years to come; and to this day, I have never forgiven them. Also, part of a long list of reasons why I'm not a Catholic.

On a cheerier note, I read the *Locus* article on Uncle Hugo's Science Fiction Bookstore reopening in Minneapolis, thanks in large part to a GoFundMe drive fuelled largely by science fiction fans. (I'd have sent some money had I known about it.) Makes you feel good about the world again. I spent a weekend in Minneapolis in July, but unfortunately, the store had about three to six months yet to go before it would be in any shape to reopen. However, a full inventory was waiting in boxes to go up on shelves, as soon as the store is ready.

((As with other projects of this nature, everything took longer than planned for. I read that it's now open on a limited basis. The news about this was covered on Facebook and by File 770.))

#

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

**14 August 2022**

This responds to *Purrsonal Mewsings* 87. If I'm too late, I'm too late. Forget me. Too many fanzines I'm trying to deal with this time around.

MARK TRAIL  
THINKS ABOUT  
CHANGES

((No problems. I'm only publishing approximately every twelve weeks now.))

About your introduction, you're really affected by the weather. If you're trying to grow something or raise something, weather is it. It's even something if you're not. When the temperature hits 95, as it has done for a number of days, I stay inside. That's our weather, to a great extent, in Virginia. It would have been better if the landlord hadn't decided that now is a perfect time to renovate my apartment.



((I'm finding that weather, and specifically climate change, is really affecting how plants grow, even those that are thought to be "drought tolerant". My rule of thumb for staying inside is as follows: If the humidity is low, as it is most of the year in Arizona, it can be comfortable up to 90° F for yard work. If it's humid, the cutoff point for me is 80° F. I still spend short periods of time outside to take care of the bird feeders and birdbaths, but I try to do it before breakfast or just before the evening meal.))

About your "Kritter Korner" and "Astronomy", again great pictures of animals, at least some of whom I won't be able to see in Virginia. About the eclipse, isn't it that a total eclipse means that the Moon has disappeared altogether?

((The Moon never disappears during a total lunar eclipse because of refracted sunlight around the limb of the Earth. It just turns a dark red.))

About the "Notable Books, Plays and Movies", you have a number. I guess this is the notable section. First is the notable play *Mrs. Dalloway*. There you talk about a shell shocked soldier and you wonder how well the doctors in those days handled shell shock. I do not know about World War I. I do know that my father, a physician in World War II, treated shell shock with sodium pentothal and having the air man relive the incident that caused it. He said it worked like a charm but that cure right now seems forgotten.

((My understanding from reading about it, is that the process might take a long time and doesn't depend necessarily on drugs.))

Next is a notable novel from the “Future Shock” series. You talk about time travel. Of course, one problem with time travel is it changes the centuries it goes to. The butterfly effect. Of course, won’t changes from it overwhelmingly be small? Not like in Ray Bradbury’s short story where someone kills a dinosaur millions of years ago, and that affects a recent election. The problem with the butterfly effect is that it’s improbable. Overwhelmingly, it wouldn’t affect very much.

((I believe that the butterfly effect is real if one assumes that time travel is possible. The size of the effect is dependent on the length of time between the past and the present as well as other factors.))

So the big problem with time travel remains that we don’t have it.

Next still is the notable novel *Project Hail Mary*. I liked it too. There may not have been any real facts but there was real science. Plus there were people that were sufficiently real as well. With that mixture, whatever might have been a problem didn’t bother me.

About your trip to the Yucatan, here are my comments. With the food you ate on the plane, I could tell you weren’t in first class. It’s true I’ve never flown first class, but one time I missed my flight and the only empty seat on the next flight was in first class. Boy, was the food good.

((True that first class has much better food service. However, I won’t put out for first class on such short flights.))

With many of the sights, they are astronomical. I hear the same is true of many ancient sites in Europe. I gather, in both Europe and Mexico, the idea was some way to tell the time for all sorts of reasons. In fact, Plato said that the stars were created so man could tell the time.

With Mexico, it was ruled by one party as the Institutional Party of Revolution, or under some other name, from 1929 to 2000. Of course, now a lot of Mexico is ruled by gangs.

With your anti-malaria drug, since it gave you headaches, I am glad you didn’t have to take it.

With the shower you got, I’ve had experiences like that at convention hotels. However, the reason for it has been more that I didn’t know how to run the shower than there was an actual lack of hot water.

With COVID, I got it recently. Fortunately, it was only like a bad cold. On the other hand, I could have handled it better. I found out later than I should have. I should have had the test immediately and quarantined myself. Then, I could have also taken Remdesivir, which lightens the effects of COVID.

With airports, I'm always worried my luggage won't be there. One of the reasons is that it has, on occasion, really happened. Still, while I may have slept in the clothes on my back, I always got my luggage back. In fact, the airlines would follow me to my hotel.

((The few times when the airline lost my luggage, I eventually got it back.))

About Stipple-APA 349, here are my comments on your comments. To Garth Spencer, you say that few people have all the knowledge which is claimed to be common. I started to disagree with you. Common knowledge is, by definition, known universally. However, I thought about it and you're right: few people know all knowledge deemed "common".

To Bill Thomasson, you talk about your first experience gambling. While you won, I lost. However, it was only ten dollars. Like with your winning five dollars, it was just as well that I stopped then.

To Jeanne Mealy, you say you spent a lot of your first convention soaking up movies. It hasn't been conventions for me. Instead, I have been meeting with a group for over ten years which shows one movie a month. However, some of the movies are rather strange. One particularly strange movie was the Japanese *Monster Seafood Wars*.

About Stipple-APA 350, more comments on your comments. To Justin E. A. Busch, you comment on *Knives Out*. I really didn't like the original, so I am not so certain I will see the rest. The problem was too many of the plot twists didn't hit me right. On the other hand, while a lot of people didn't like Daniel Craig's accent, I wasn't bothered by it.

With the letters to the editor, I have comments on them too. Let me start with my comments on the your comments to my letter. On your comment on Arizona, I didn't mean that Arizona had no rain because you've told us that you get some rain.

On your comment about Daniel Craig's accent, you say you heard it from a professor of yours. I bet that was the accent Craig chose to use. British actors are very much into accents. They have to be. It's just that lots of people didn't like the accent he adopted.

On your comment about Apple software and Windows, I didn't mean to insinuate you could run Apple on Windows. However, you can certainly run Windows on Apple.

Now it's time to get to the rest of the letter. For Taral, I was curious about a movie he describes of a deer killing a hawk. It does sound like the deer was angry at the hawk for hunting rabbits. Why, I couldn't say.

For Amy Harlib, I decided on one comment. She was rightly angry as all hell that she can't get a gig. I don't blame her. I was wondering, though, if she could tell us the many ways she still can flex her body at 67.

((If you've ever seen a contortionist's routine, that's what her routine looks like.))



For Tom Feller, I decided on two comments. He says an astronomy professor who taught him was a believer in life in outer space. Maybe methane can support life; maybe life on Earth is a freak. We don't really know. Not that I don't hope there is life out there. Also Tom says in response to my comment that he was once rejected from a trial because he knew too much about payroll law. I say knowledge of payroll is exactly what a jury needs. Those guys are crazy. As for myself, I don't know what I could add to a jury.

((I believe life has been found on Earth that can survive in methane.))

I also decided on two comments to Lloyd Penney's letter. The first one is I had COVID, which I've already commented on. The second one is I'm glad luck finally shone on Lloyd. The COVID epidemic has ended in a way: like with flu, people are dying but far fewer than at the disease's heights. Nonetheless, a lot of people are still afraid and don't want to go back to working. That means employers cannot afford to treat Lloyd like an old futz, and his many talents have gotten him jobs. ...Hooray for Lloyd!!

For Ed Zdrojewski, I once again decided on two comments. First, is he ever right that the the end of the COVID epidemic depended on politicians getting re-elected. Also, I would furthermore like to point out that there were lots of politics in-between the beginning and ending of COVID. Second, I am glad someone verified how awful I-95 in Virginia is. I remember an hour or two on it when I presumed the signs had remained the same, and made a wrong turn into I-95. I haven't done that again.

For Murray Moore on Opuntia, I have one comment. I can't tell one cactus from another. I do remember being with a group in the late '60s that stopped in Nevada. At that time and place, I remember the cacti smelled really great. I wish I knew what genus of cacti they were.

With closing remarks, I just have one comment. Did you get the rain that was predicted?

((We did in fact get some rain at the end of June.))

#

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

**23 August 2022**

Thank you for *Purrsonal Mewsings* 87. I admit it's sat for a while, because life has been busy with conventions (and selling our goods there) and lots of editorial work at home or in a remote office. Time to get back on track and get moving.

Good to see you have your second booster shots. I've heard rumour of a fifth shot here, so if it happens we will definitely get them. Based on a shot no sooner than every five months, our next one should be available for us by October 20. After that the shots may become part of our regular flu shots.

The anime con I've mentioned before...not the convention, but the convention centre the con was at, the Toronto Congress Centre, demanded that all who attend anything within

their walls be fully vaccinated and masked as condition of entry, and the convention agreed to enforce that policy. Some had to be reminded to keep their masks on, with a variety of reactions, shall we say... Others were ejected from the convention, because they couldn't or wouldn't prove they were vaccinated or they refused to wear a mask. The convention hit a record 35,000 people this year, and I have heard nothing about any outbreak of COVID-19. Yet. So many still think it's a hoax; but I have read that up to this point in 2022, about 225,000 American have died of COVID, so many that didn't have to die at all.

I hope I am wrong in seeing Amy Harlib as an anti-vaxxer. I am a healthy eater, but still caught COVID in February of 2020. Diet alone cannot keep you from catching it. My good diet, plus the full spread of vaccinations and regular use of masks in public settings, has kept me COVID-free, for the moment. It's no guarantee that you won't or can't catch it.

My LoC...I am currently working on a third D.J. Holmes book, and I still go into the offices of PAL Communication to work on editorial quality for their three publications. With September almost here, work may start up again with BBW International, the agency that supplies workers, especially registration workers, to conference and trade shows. We all get told it's a gig economy out there, and I seem to be proof of that.

More on the anime con...we got the vendors' hall mostly sold, and the convention was quite the success. The main reason we didn't sell the room out was five vendors who, near convention time, decided to announce that they were not vaccinated and had no intentions of masking up either. Some were surprised by this, in spite of the fact everything we sent to them had reminders of this, which means they didn't read anything we sent to them, including the contracts they signed. We had no choice but to refund their tables, or roll them over to 2023. We have decided to help friends again and run the vendors' hall for 2023.

Comments from Ed Zed...my journalistic training included the use of the *Canadian Press Stylebook*, plus *Caps and Spelling*. I have tried to keep up, and I have the 17th edition of the *Stylebook*; but for my editorial work, I have the *Chicago Manual of Style*, also in its 17th edition. Is fish expensive in Iceland? My sister-in-law and her husband went there a few years ago...everything there was expensive, so I assume fish is, too.

((Meal prices were included in our tour price, so I have no idea of the costs.))

Just made it to the second page, so I think I have this done. Many thanks for this issue...I am still having a tough time keeping up; but given the book I am editing is almost done, I may have more time shortly. See you with the next.

#

**We Also Heard From: Leah Fisher, Trinlay Khadro, Mary Manchester, Alan White**

\* \* \*

**\* Closing Remarks**

I'm finishing this up early, as life is becoming very busy for me shortly. Oracle is hosting a star party sponsored by Explore Scientific, and I will be participating in some of the activities. About two weeks later, Explore Scientific is also sponsoring a trip to Mt. Wilson just north of Los Angeles. We will be driving out for that a week early in order to visit friends and do some sightseeing.

Deadline for next issue will probably be sometime at the beginning of January.

*Laurraïne*

*13 September 2022*