

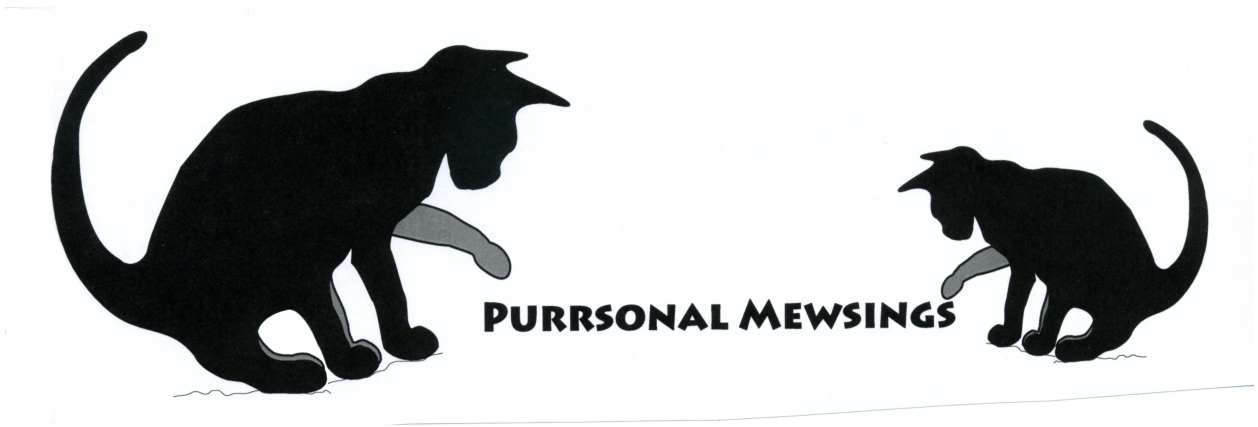
Purrsonal Mewsings #91



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 or so.

It is distributed to 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 #529. ©2024 R-Laurraine Tutihasi.

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#91

March-June 2024

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

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

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

* Editorial / Introduction

The problems we had at the end of 2023 and the beginning of this year have been resolved. To keep it short, one had to do with having to change our bank account when our old bank merged with a larger one. Because of automatic deposits by a few parties and having to set up new payment arrangements with our new bank, it was a time-consuming process. Some deposits are made rarely, and we actually forgot about one, and it's only now (end of April) being taken care of.

Another problem reared its ugly head when DirecTV had a months long dispute with the owner of the NBC affiliate that we'd been receiving. I thought everything would be settled after a couple of weeks, but they weren't. Mike decided not to wait and subscribed to Peacock TV. Eventually he had a rooftop antenna installed; we get a lot of stations over it, which surprised us; but the NBC station has frequent problems. Peacock TV was also been giving us problems with their nightly news show (this problem seems to have cleared up for the most part). Anyway in the end we unsubscribed from DirecTV. I have subscribed to a number of streaming services. We have intermittent problems, but it's usually the fault of our Internet service; we frequently reboot it.

The third problem was much less serious and had to do with a dying printer. It started giving us problems about a year before. We started seeing streaks in our printouts. Those of you receiving the zine in PDF format wouldn't have noticed, of course. We tried all the steps recommended for cleaning the printer, but nothing made a difference. Eventually the problem became bad enough that I decided we would replace the printer when we were on our last batch of printer cartridges. Actually we didn't quite get there, as the black cartridge ran out when I still had an unused magenta cartridge. After shopping around a bit, we settled on a Brother printer; we're very happy with it. It offers a subscription service for the toner cartridges so we should be able to avoid having unused cartridges.

We just had enough time to take care of the problems before we left on our eclipse trip to Seymour, Indiana, which I will eventually write up.

After returning home from the eclipse trip, I managed to get my personal daily schedule in order. I have answered all the personal correspondence that had been waiting years for me to catch up. In addition I've managed to read more than I have in years.

* * *

* Kritter Korner

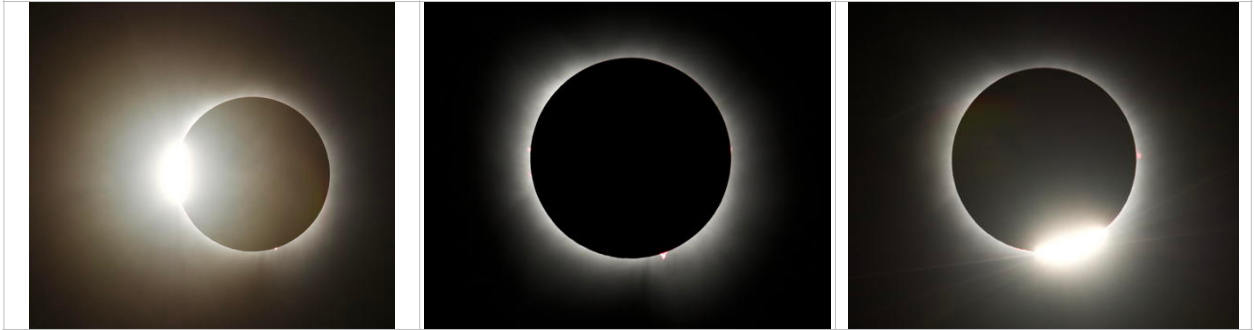
Cato continues to do well, though I had to change his diet to one that is more renal-friendly. Fortunately he eats his new food as heartily as his previous food. I started taking him for walks. He seems to be okay with a leash.

* * *

* **Astronomy**

Although the rest of the trip will have to wait, I will share with you photos from the eclipse that we saw in Seymour, Indiana.

Below is a sequence of photos taken by Mike that shows the eclipse.



* * *

* **From Where I Sit:** My Opinions, Views, Etc. about Books, Plays, Movies, etc.

ESPionage: Regime Change, by Tom Easton and Frank Wu.

First I must apologize. When Frank Wu asked me to review his book, I started reading it almost immediately. Unfortunately my life was turned upside down (see above) about the time I finished reading it. I'm hoping "better late than never".

This is a bit different from any other book I've read. It's basically a spy novel with ESP ability on both sides, or possibly there are more than two sides. It gets a bit confusing. Each side must shield their thoughts from others in order to get a leg up on the others.

In the mix is a love story of two people who had met long ago and are meeting again.

Much of the action takes place at a restaurant. The action is fast-moving and sometimes confusing. Everything happens so fast that it's hard to put the book down.

Allen Steels has called this an example of a genre he calls "sci-spy".

#

Heartbreak House, by George Bernard Shaw and presented by the Rogue Theatre in Tucson during September 2023.

I vaguely recall seeing this before back in Los Angeles, but I didn't remember it well. It portrays an English family on the brink of the Great War (WWI). It's about an upperclass family, and they seem to lead a somewhat bored existence. They are so steeped in ennui that they look upon the prospect of war as something exciting. The characters have no real aim in life other than to enjoy themselves. None of them seem to be accomplishing that goal. War to them seems like a novelty to look forward to. Of course this class doesn't have to worry about having to become personally involved. Their servants seem much better connected to reality.

As usual the Rogue Theatre cast performed excellently.

#

Under Milk Wood, by Dylan Thomas and presented by the Rogue Theatre in Tucson during January 2024.

This was presented by actors representing the characters portrayed in Thomas's work. The work was originally written to be performed as a reading or a radio play. The Rogue Theatre brought it to life by creating a set to represent the Welsh village of Llareggub. As each character speaks, he stands in an appropriate location on the stage. All the actions take place on a single day, which is representative of their lives.

It was excellently done and reminded me of a production of *The Spoon River Anthology* I saw performed at one of the high schools I attended. It turned out that the director had that poem in mind as he created the staging of this production.

#

An Iliad, by Homer and presented by the Rogue Theatre in Tucson during February and March of 2024.

This was different from other productions I've seen there. It was a one-woman production. She played the bard who is reciting the poem for an audience. As the well-known climax approached, she linked the classic war story to wars that have taken place closer to our time. This, especially references to Israel and Ukraine, created gut-wrenching reactions in a number of audience members, including me. During the discussion following the play, I couldn't speak. If I had tried, I would have burst into tears. I told the actress that afterward, and she gave me a hug. It was truly a memorable performance.

#

Love's Labor's Lost, by William Shakespeare and presented by the Rogue Theatre in Tucson during April and May of 2024.

I don't know why "Labor" wasn't spelled the original way, but I'll let that slide. It wasn't performed with a British accent either. But it was nevertheless very entertaining. Since this isn't one of the most popular of Shakespeare's plays, I'll give a brief description. It is one of Shakespeare's earlier plays. Four young noblemen take a vow to study, fast, and see no women for three years. Almost immediately they are visited by a French princess and her escorts. Technically, of course, the four noblemen are already breaking their vows just by speaking to these women. However, they tell the women that they must camp in the nearby forest and cannot enter the castle at all. Of course all the young men fall in love. A compromise of sorts is reached at the end when the women agree to go away and return after a year. It's anyone's guess what might have happened a year later, since there is no known sequel.

It was amusing to watch as each of the men tried to hide his feelings of love from his comrades. Notes to the women didn't always reach the correct target. It was excellently performed as usual.

* * *

* **Australia/New Zealand Trip**

In spring of 2023, a college friend and I signed up for an eclipse trip to Australia. We added a bunch of stuff at the end, probably too much, in terms of both money and time. But we're not getting any younger. Saturday, 8 April 2023, was a very long day. I flew to Los Angeles, where I would meet up with my travelling companion and friend, Marcia. I overdid leaving plenty of time between the flights, so I had all sorts of time to kill. I checked in to my flight on Air New Zealand to Sydney, Australia, before my friend arrived at LAX. After check-in I was referred to the Star Alliance lounge, and I rested in there with a glass of OJ until Marcia was at the gate. I joined her there until boarding time. Our business class portion of our flight had seats that change into beds.

After dinner about 23:30 I had my seat converted to a bed and lay down to eventually sleep.

We lost the next day due to crossing the International Dateline.

I slept on our flight somewhat fitfully, but I did sleep. Toward the end I kept waking up. I eventually asked the flight crew to fold up my bed.

Breakfast was served about an hour before we reached Auckland, New Zealand. My gluten-free meal included a large muffin and other things. I can highly recommend Air New Zealand, at least for international flights. Service was great, and my gluten-free meals were excellent.

In Auckland I accompanied Marcia to the boarding gate of our connecting flight. This plane was smaller and seemed to be all one class. We were served another breakfast. Mine included a fried egg, sausage, a small frittata, fruit, and a small muffin. The second breakfast made up for the two-hour time difference between Auckland and Sydney.

In Sydney we basically sailed through customs and immigration. Then we took a taxi to our Four Seasons Hotel.

After regrouping we had lunch at the restaurant downstairs. We both had a chicken salad, mine without avocado, and a hot chocolate. Many of the nearby restaurants were closed for Easter Monday.

We spent the afternoon resting.

We had dinner about 19:30 in the the hotel restaurant.

Not surprisingly I slept rather fitfully the first night; this is par for the course for me. I got up shortly after 06:00 about dawn.

We went down to breakfast about 07:30. I had my usual bacon and eggs, just more of it than usual; on the other hand, there was no fruit.

A bit later we left for the Taronga Zoo, which was across a bay from the hotel. The ferry was easy to find, but we inadvertently ended up buying duplicate zoo tickets. After we reached the zoo, Marcia decided she wasn't up to all the walking. Because of her inactivity during the COVID shutdown, her stamina had deteriorated; she hadn't realized this and only learned after trying to be as active as previously. Instead we split up and took different routes. She ended up taking the main trail. I went off to the Australian exhibits which were up a gentle incline.

We met back up for lunch, where we found a varied offering. I had a poke bowl with

chicken.

Then we parted ways again. One trail I took to see the tigers (see photo at right) was almost too much for me, as it was steeply uphill all the way. On the other hand, the return was on the same route, so downhill all the way. In any case we met up at the Zoo Shop earlier than expected, and we missed the first return ferry and would have to wait two hours. After some thought and discussion, we decided to call a taxi. We returned to the hotel about an hour later. Below is a photo I took of Sydney from the zoo.

About 18:30 we had dinner downstairs. I had beef tenderloin, which is the Australian version of filet mignon, and a cappuccino. It was quite filling.

Breakfast was about 08:00 on Wednesday, 12 April 2023.

We relaxed until it was time to meet up with the



Insight Cruises people. We each received a name badge before boarding a bus for a harbour cruise with lunch.

Lunch was very nice and filling. Mostly Marcia and I talked. We'd both been to Sydney before, so we didn't really spend a lot of time looking at the scenery.

After we returned from the cruise, we had a couple of hours to regroup.

We went downstairs for cocktail hour. I managed to get a large pile of gluten-free food and had no need for a separate dinner.

Back in our room, I reorganized my belongings. We were encouraged to leave some

things behind during our excursion outside Sydney. I managed to get to bed about 19:30.

The next morning we took our luggage down to the third floor after unsuccessfully calling for assistance. The tour people collected the luggage and tagged the ones to be checked into the plane. We also left behind some loose things we wouldn't need in the next few days; the hotel provided us with bags.

We had a buffet breakfast about 06:00.

We boarded a coach about 06:30 and drove to the Sydney Airport. The domestic area is much more primitive than the international area. Everything went smoothly until we were ready to board; then the plane had technical problems, and our takeoff was delayed. Our arrival in Tamworth, however, was only five minutes later than scheduled.

After we landed we boarded a coach that took us to Coonabarabran.

There we had lunch at Tibuc Gardens about 13:30. I had shrimp and calamari on a bed of rice (or something similar) noodles. My dessert was blueberry cake.

In the afternoon we toured the Anglo-Australian 4-metre Telescope (photo below shows the observatory and surrounding area). While there we saw a number of kangaroos and wallabies, which I unfortunately didn't have the chance to photograph; they moved quickly to avoid our cameras. On the way there, we also saw emus. Afterward we checked into the Matthew Flinders Motor Inn. The room had been sprayed with a horrible pseudo floral scent that I found irritating.



We had dinner about 19:00. I had soup and chicken, though I was unable to finish. We had mousse for dessert, and I had an Australian white muscat. Marcia was too tired even to finish dinner.

At night we made a brave effort at stargazing, but clouds prevented us. I got to bed about 22:30.

We left for the Parkes radio telescope shortly after breakfast at 07:00. On the bus we started viewing the movie *The Dish*; this movie covers the story of the telescope's part in the 1969 American Moon landing. There were problems because of high winds. Telescopes are very unstable if there is wind; so things were touch and go. If you've never seen the movie, I highly recommend it.

We stopped for lunch about mid-day.

We continued on to Parkes while we finished watching the movie. In Parkes we visited the radio telescope (see photo at right). It's still being used daily, so we couldn't go inside. However we watched three short films related to radio astronomy. We also listened to a talk about the telescope as we stood near the telescope. I tried to take some photos of birds and bought a postcard. Afterward we checked in to the Station Motel in Parkes.



We had dinner about 18:30.

At night a bunch of us headed out to a dark site and observed the night sky. It's weird seeing Orion upside down! I eventually discovered I was underdressed for the cold and sought shelter on the bus along with Laurel from just south of Phoenix. Back at the hotel, I got to bed far too late at about 00:15.

On what would have been tax day at home, I got up to my alarm at 05:30.

We had breakfast about 06:30.

We left the Station Motel about 08:00 and drove to Scenic World with one comfort stop. On the way we watched the documentary *Good-Night, Oppy*, about the Mars Exploration Rover *Opportunity*. At Scenic World we had a choice of activities. I did everything: the railway, skyway, and gondola. The problem was having to wait long times in line, because it was a Saturday. The crowds made things less enjoyable; I couldn't really see much with all the other people blocking my view.

We had lunch about 13:15 at Lookout at Scenic Point. This is the area where the Three Sisters are. Because I had seen them before, I didn't try to get to the viewpoint. The place is so built up now that all the charm of the place is gone.

After that we drove back to Sydney and the Four Seasons.

Because we were running late, we had no time after getting to our rooms before we had to head down to dinner.

After dinner I organized things for the next day's early departure. I got to bed about 22:15.

The next day I got up to my alarm at 04:30. We left the Four Seasons hotel about 06:00. We reached the Sydney Airport with time to spare. Unfortunately just before boarding had been scheduled to start, we were informed that a mechanical problem had

been found and there would be a delay of nearly an hour. The airport WiFi was the pits. We started boarding our plane to Perth about 08:40.

Breakfast was served about 10:15. I had omelette with sausage. It also came with spinach.

After breakfast I dozed off intermittently. We landed in early afternoon, giving us no time for lunch. After we got to the Intercontinental Hotel, we retrieved our luggage and got our room assignments.

There was a cocktail party at 15:00. Almost no food was gluten-free, so I didn't eat anything. The Schweppes soda I had provided me some caloric intake. I think it was guava flavoured.

Dinner was about 17:00. The food was satisfactory.

At night I prepared things for the following day.

On Monday, 17 April 2023, I got up shortly after 06:00, because I was essentially awake and I kept hearing someone's alarm from another room. We did our COVID testing and took photos of the results as requested by the ship we would be boarding.

We went down to breakfast about 08:30. While we ate I had conversations with people sitting nearby; they were also here for the eclipse but were travelling on land.

After breakfast we picked up our souvenir hats. Then we adjourned to our room to finish packing and use the remaining time as wisely as we could. I mostly caught up with e-mail. We got on the tour bus about 13:00 for a tour of Perth and Fremantle.

We had no real lunch, just some snack food.

We stopped in King's park for an hour. Marcia informed me that we would be staying near there later. The coach dropped us off at Fremantle pier, and we were able to board the *Pacific Explorer*. Boarding was pretty complicated, but we eventually both got to our room: 10011. My luggage arrived not too long after. Marcia's went astray, but our tour leader Tim managed to find it in front of the wrong cabin. Tim and his wife were our minders for Insight Cruises. I haven't been able to find out how big the ship is, but I don't believe it held not much more than a thousand passengers. I also don't know how big our Insight Cruises group was, but the ship had other groups and many individuals travelling on their own.

Dinner was about 19:30 at the Dragon Lady restaurant. I had a beef curry and crème brûlée. I tried a Pinot gris, but it was only passable. There were four restaurants on board where we could eat at without paying extra.

After dinner we were too tired to spend too much time doing much other than preparing for bed. I got to bed about 22:45.

I got up the next morning shortly before my alarm went off at 06:30.

We had breakfast about 08:00 in the Waterfront restaurant. When we were not eating as a group, the restaurants on board gave us the option of sitting with other passengers. This way we had the opportunity to speak with a variety of people, which I enjoyed.

Then Marcia did her laundry, and I went in search of a trivia game. It turned out I had the wrong time, and there were two trivia games. I was too late for the first one but played the second one with two women from the Perth area. I also walked in on a dark skies talk.

About 12:15 I had lunch at the Waterfront restaurant with a couple from Baltimore

and a woman from Brisbane.

After lunch I looked around on the next level and found a store that sold sundries and bought a large packet of facial tissue. Then I returned to our cabin, where Marcia was resting. About 14:30 we went down for a talk by Kelly Beatty about the eclipse, which was well attended. Kelly Beatty was the Insight Cruises organizer. He was recently retired from working for *Sky and Telescope* magazine. He also organized the eclipse trip we took in 2017.

Afterward I returned to our cabin, where I caught up with reading e-mail and touched base with Facebook.

We had dinner about 19:30 at Angelo's. We sat next to a couple from Brisbane. Service was quite slow.

After dinner I went upstairs on the ship for stargazing. I didn't stay long, because there were too many people to stargaze comfortably. I got to bed about 23:00.

I got up to my alarm at 06:30 on Wednesday, 19 April 2023.

We got to breakfast about 07:45.

Toward lunch I texted Marcia but received no reply. I went down to lunch anyway and joined two Aussie sisters, one who lives in Perth and the other in NSW.

After lunch I texted Marcia one more time. Then I saw Elise and Tim and spoke to them about my lack of recent communication with Marcia. So started a search. Elise asked me to return to our cabin, so she could call me with progress reports. Tim went up to the Pantry to see if she was there. After Elise's first phone call, I finally heard from Marcia; apparently Airplane Mode on her mobile phone was interfering with communication. The ship had told us to put our phones on Airplane Mode; after the problems we had, we did not follow their instructions. She returned to our cabin, and we both stayed there until it was time to go to a trivia game. The game turned out to be quite fun, and we didn't do at all that badly. Afterward we sat in one of the comfy areas near the Waterfront restaurant until it was time for the late dinner seating about 20:00.

Dinner at the Waterfront was quite enjoyable.

At night I organized things for the next day. I got to bed about 22:45.

The next day I got up to my alarm at 06:15. We went up to the Pantry for breakfast and sat down with an Aussie couple from a small town in northern NSW. This was on one of the upper decks that is partly uncovered.

Then we patiently waited for the eclipse. I read some e-mail, but the wi-fi was very slow. The eclipse started shortly after 10:00. Totality started about 11:30 and was spectacular. I saw the diamond ring at both the beginning and the end. In between I saw prominences. It only lasted for about a minute, but it was very beautiful. I didn't get quite as emotional as my first time back in 2017. We watched



the last part of the eclipse for a while until Marcia started getting hungry. I didn't get any photos, but a few others shared theirs. On the previous page is one taken by Manny Leinz.

Our search for lunch ended up at the Waterfront, where we were seated with a couple from Perth. The husband, Keith, was originally from Coventry in England and was a very young lad during the blitzkrieg.

After lunch we returned to our cabin to rest and regroup. We left the cabin for a trivia game. We did pretty well, but some others did better. In the end four teams had to play a tie breaker.

We had dinner about 19:45 at the Waterfront. Our table had a couple from Redondo Beach, CA, and a family from Wellington. One of the Wellington people has seen Mittens the cat but recommended another cat named Sylvester as easier to find. Of course, our chances of seeing either were slim, considering we would only be there for a couple of days. Mittens has a Facebook page.

After dinner we returned to our cabin. I tried to catch up with my e-mail as best as I could. Some e-mails were reluctant to load. I got to sleep about 23:15.

On Friday, 21 April 2023, I had breakfast at the Waterfront about 7:45 with a couple from Kent, Washington.

Then I went to an Insight Cruises group photo session at the Marquee about 8:45. Photos were taken with and without our eclipse souvenir hats. I returned to our cabin afterwards to regroup. Marcia had just finished her room service breakfast. After about an hour, I left in search of a game called "Where in the World?" which turned out to be fairly tame. However afterward I had an enjoyable conversation with a local couple. I learned a lot about vegetable gardening, but of course I've forgot everything.

I headed to lunch at the Waterfront about 11:15, but I found that lunch would not start until noon. I returned shortly before noon with Elizabeth and Margaret (Peggy) from Perth and somewhere in NSW. I had Philly cheesesteak with sorbet for sweets.

I returned to the room, where Marcia still was. Abdul was cleaning up. After he finished I packed my checked luggage; we put our large luggage outside before we left for dinner. I spent the rest of the afternoon updating my diary, reading e-mail, napping, and touching base with Facebook.

We had dinner about 20:00 at Angelo's. Dinner was excellent. I had salad and fish with a custard-like dessert.

After dinner we returned to our cabin. I got to bed about 22:15.

I got up to my alarm at 04:30 the next day. I had breakfast about 05:30 in the Pantry, the only restaurant open so early.

I returned to the cabin before 06:00, but Marcia had already left. I finished packing. Then I went in search for her; with little trouble I found her and proceeded to wait together for disembarkation. I read e-mail until the wi-fi deteriorated. We disembarked after a long wait then waited a long time in the taxi line. When we arrived at the apartment, we discovered that we had to climb stairs to the bedroom and laundry. Because there were no railings for the stairs, this was not going to work for Marcia; so I made reservations at the Hyatt Regency Perth. I also ordered a taxi using the Internet. We managed to get down to street level, with the kind assistance of a resident, just before the taxi drove up. The Hyatt Regency appeared typical for the chain. I e-mailed

my husband about our change of location.

After dropping our belongings in our room, we got lunch downstairs at the Café. I had salad and tea.

After lunch I unpacked. Marcia took care of some business with the apartment manager and lay down for a nap. I read whole bunches of e-mail.

After looking about unsuccessfully for a dinner venue, we ate in the hotel. We both had barramundi. I had sorbet for dessert.

At night we checked out a list of restaurants we got from reception, and I read more e-mail and touched base with Facebook. I got to bed about 22:45.

That night I slept straight through and awoke shortly before my alarm went off at 06:30, at which point I got up.

We went down to breakfast about 07:45.

After breakfast we took a cab straight to Kings Park. I got dropped off at one end, and Marcia continued on to the spot where our coach took us before we boarded our cruise. With the assistance of many other park visitors, I managed to find the elevated walkway (see photo below). It's quite impressive, and the views are very nice. From there I



found the baobab tree. Then I was close to where we'd previously been. Marcia was nowhere to be found, so I called her and she answered. We sat talking for a while outside.

Eventually we moved closer to the restaurant with the expectation that we would develop an appetite for lunch. Marcia had a muffin but ate only a part of it. I eventually opted for hazelnut and pistachio ice cream.

Soon after that we decided to get help getting a cab. The volunteers at the park were extremely helpful. We spent the afternoon resting.

We went to dinner at the Maruzzella Italian restaurant not too far from the hotel. The food and service were excellent. We used a taxi both ways, as Marcia wasn't up for walking.

At night I read e-mail and Facebook and made dinner reservations for the next day. I got to bed about 22:00.

On Monday, 24 April 2023, I awoke quite a while before my alarm went off at 06:30, but I stayed in bed until then. It was raining when we got up. After that it was intermittent.

We had breakfast about 07:30.

Not long after breakfast we went to the Perth Museum. It turned out to be very different from what Marcia had expected. We decided to go to the Western Australia Museum after that, but that turned into an adventure. Marcia tried to get to a nearby taxi stand that was slightly uphill from where we started. She had trouble after a short distance. A helpful businessman aided us, but she still had to get up the rest of the hill. We finally got a taxi. We ended up getting memberships at the museum in order to allow us to go there at least a second time. It was relatively inexpensive. We looked over exhibits concerning the aboriginals.

Then Marcia wanted to get lunch. There was a restaurant connected to the museum.

I thought we were going to look at more exhibits, but Marcia wanted to return to the hotel. It was a challenge getting a taxi until I asked a cafe worker to call for us. We spent the afternoon in our hotel room. I read e-mail and Facebook.

For dinner we went to the Oyster Bar on the Quay. It was very good. When we emerged from dinner, it was raining again.

The next day we went down to breakfast about 07:30. I tried their yogurt but didn't much care for it.

We stayed in during the morning. Most things were closed for ANZAC day.

We skipped lunch.

In the afternoon we went back to the Western Australia Museum. I looked through the third floor "Wild Things" exhibit (basically natural history) while Marcia looked through historical exhibits. We returned to the hotel fairly early.

We had dinner in the hotel about 18:00. I had a half chicken, which was too much.

At night I read e-mail and Facebook. My asthma and allergies appeared to be in full force; there's a lot of eucalyptus blooming in the area. I got to bed about 21:45.

On Wednesday, 26 April 2023, we had breakfast about 07:45.

Marcia wanted to stay in. I went for a walk around the block, and she used the hotel pool. I heard from my friend Sarah in Melbourne. We had planned to get together, but she came down with COVID, so I had to make hotel reservations in Melbourne.

We had lunch in the hotel about 13:15 and shared a pizza.

We stayed in all afternoon. I read e-mail and Facebook.

We had dinner at the hotel.

At night I made dinner reservations for Friday, got my laundry ready to send out, and read e-mail and Facebook. I got to bed about 22:45.

I got up to my alarm at 06:30 the next morning.

We went down to breakfast about 07:45 after calling for laundry pick up.

Shortly before 10:00 we left for the Art Gallery of Western Australia. The exhibits were interesting. One was a sort of playroom where people could assemble things or draw things. Another was an imaginary world creation (see photo below). The elevator was fur-lined with the same fur as the carpet in the photo.



We had lunch at the café outside their gift shop.

Then I took a spin through the 1st floor historical exhibit in the Western Australia Museum. We had a challenge getting a taxi, because we got the street names mixed up. We had to ask a second person to call a taxi for us. Back in our hotel room, my laundry was eventually delivered; but one sock was missing. I spent time reading e-mail and Facebook.

For dinner we went to the Boatshed, which turned out to have very good food. The place is on the water. From the restaurant window, we saw a great egret and some black swans. On the taxi ride over, we passed the zoo.

At night I ordered in-room breakfast for the next day, but it was unclear whether it

would be delivered on time. I got to bed about 22:15.

I got up to my alarm at 5:30 the next day. We got room service breakfast, because we were leaving too early to allow us to eat in the restaurant. It arrived a bit late, but we had time to eat without hurrying.

We left about 07:30 to walk to the Mantra Hotel on Hay Street. We got there early, but the pickup bus was late. However we reached the Rottneest Island Ferry terminal in ample time. The ferry ride to the island took about forty-five minutes. We had ample time to walk to the train station (see photo below) for a tour despite stopping a few times to get directions. The train ride took us to the location of a war defence post.



Unfortunately the tour mostly involved steps, so Marcia and some others had to sit it out. The rest of us were taken to an underground defence station and shown rooms that used to house armaments and the machinery needed to use them. It was very interesting. The place never saw action. There is an empty gun placement above

ground, again involving stairs.

After we boarded the train again, we were given boxed lunches. Mine was a salad and cookie.

In the afternoon we boarded a chartered bus and were driven all around the island with one stop where we could disembark. There are a lot of beautiful beaches and coves (see photo below) around the island. After the drive we were let out in the Settlement,



where we saw three quokkas; they are a small marsupial about the size of a domestic cat. The town quokkas are not healthy from eating too many things that are unhealthy for them. They like to hang around the bakery. Their lifespans are half those in the wild. The town quokkas are often seen during the day, though the wild ones are nocturnal. Out of three we saw, two were sleeping. We reached the nearby dock shortly before the ferry began loading. After we returned to the mainland and boarded the shuttle, Marcia asked to be let off at a hotel different from the pickup one. We lucked on a taxi at a stand and took it to the Hyatt Regency.

I went up to the room to drop off a few things, while Marcia waited for me to join her for dinner. I had a Cosmopolitan and bream with cappuccino after.

Back in our room, I read some e-mail until I began to tire. I got to bed about 22:15.

I got up to my alarm at 06:30 but didn't feel as rested as usual. Marcia said she didn't

sleep well but said she'd be okay. We're not having such a heavy day, so I thought we'd be okay.

We went down to breakfast about 07:45. Afterward I walked to the corner in search of non-aerosol hair spray but with no luck. I returned to our hotel room, where Marcia wanted to delay our departure for the zoo in order to charge her phone. However when the time approached for our departure, she told me she was too tired. So I went on my own. I took a taxi, since going by bus required too many changes. The Perth Zoo is relatively small but interesting despite much construction work. Quite a few Australian animals, including quokkas (see photo below). The place is not much bigger than the Tucson zoo but more interesting to me.

I had an ice cream bar for lunch.

I had to ask the zoo to call a cab for me. My attempt had failed. Marcia seemed much better when I returned to the hotel. I read e-mail and napped for a while in the afternoon. I also started packing for our early departure the next day.

We went downstairs for dinner. Service was slow and erratic; they seemed quite short-staffed.

At night I finished most of my packing and retired relatively early.

I got up to my alarm at 05:00 the next day.

Our room service breakfast, ordered off the late night menu, arrived at 06:00.

About 07:00 Marcia requested help getting our luggage down. As soon as the help arrived, we went down to check out and got a taxi to the train station. At the train station, there was a long wait; I don't know why they asked us to be there so early. We boarded about 09:00. The train started moving about 10:00. Our car was one away from a lounge and two away from a dining car. The lounge car had wi-fi but just barely. I managed to clear the already downloaded e-mail.

Lunch for us was served about 13:15. We ate with a couple from New South Wales. The dining car resembles the ones I've seen in movies about the Orient Express.

We returned to the lounge car for the afternoon, which included a trivia contest. Our team won. I got an Indian Pacific mug. Otherwise I talked with other passengers or





read. The wi-fi was spotty. The photo above shows the route of the train.

Dinner was about 19:15.

After dinner there was a rush to get ready for our first outing in Kalgoorlie to tour Paddy Hannan's Ounce of Luck, where gold is mined today. I got to sleep about 00:30.

Sleep was off and on with the train rocking back and forth and sometimes stopping. After the sun rose, on Monday, 1 May 2023, I got up. It was about 08:00.

Shortly afterward we crossed into the next time zone, so it was suddenly ninety minutes later. It was time for brunch. I ate with Elva and Louise and a man.

The afternoon was punctuated by one stop, where the train stopped for servicing at a town of population four. Most of us got off to look over what had been a sizeable community. I also got a nap sometime later.

Dinner was served for us at 18:00. We sat with the couple from the Isle of Wight.

I got to bed about 21:30.

The next morning I got up to my alarm at 05:00.

There was an early breakfast about 06:00 that I partook of.

Then we arrived in Adelaide, where we divided up into tour groups. Some people disembarked there, and some new people boarded. We had opted for the countryside around Adelaide, but the weather was not good for this option. It had rained, and the area was still covered with clouds and fog. In addition raindrops fell from the trees. On Overlook mountain we had a second breakfast. There was a gift shop there, and I bought some postcards. We returned to the train.

Soon after we sat down to lunch.

In the afternoon I read some e-mail. There was some musical entertainment. There

were games led by a drag queen, who also did a dance number. Many of us had our photos taken with him (see photo on right).

Dinner for us was about 18:30, just before we passed into another time zone and gained half an hour.

Marcia and I talked for a while afterwards before retiring. I got to bed about 22:30.

On Wednesday, 3 May 2023, I got up to my alarm at 06:00.

I had breakfast about 06:45 and sat with a man originally from Victoria, Canada, his Australian wife, and another Aussie woman. We had a kangaroo sighting!

After breakfast we sat in the lounge. Marcia retrieved her belongings from the room, so I did as well eventually. We got off the train about 12:15 and caught a cab to the airport about fifteen minutes later. The cab ride took a while. I was dropped off first. With the help of an airline (not Qantas) employee, I found a manned check-in desk and managed to catch an earlier flight.

The flight boarded shortly after 14:00. The back half of the plane were sent to the stairs, and I struggled with it. Another passenger helped me with my carry-on. The flight attendant told me I didn't need to use the stairs, that I could stay put and disembark through the connecting ramp.

Lunch was a snack served on the plane.

When we landed everyone exited via jetway. It was cool but mostly dry. During my cab ride, it started raining again. There was a beautiful double rainbow. The cab was a Lexus!

Shortly after I checked in to the Crowne Plaza Hotel, I went down to dinner at the hotel restaurant. I had prawns, fruit, and a cappuccino. By the way this was the same location where the Aussiecon (the World Science Fiction Convention) was held in 1999; I think it had a different name then.

At night I organized clothes for the next day and got to bed about 22:15.

I got up about 07:30 on Thursday, 4 May 2023.



I had breakfast about 08:45 at the hotel restaurant.

I walked to the train station in the morning to add funds to the MYKI card that the hotel let me use and to scout around. The card is used to pay for tram and train rides. I also found a new bottle of hairspray and two Kind snack bars from shops at the station. I spent the rest of the morning reading e-mail and Facebook.

I went down about 13:00 to get lunch but was a bit disappointed. The web site had claimed that salads would be available, but they weren't. I got a muffin (cupcake) and OJ.

After "lunch" I read e-mail and Facebook and napped.

I met Bruce Gillespie in the lobby shortly before 18:30. We went together on the tram to the Spaghetti Tree restaurant, which seems like a pretty nice Italian place. Four others also came—Anne Poore, Alan Stewart, Terry Morris, and Kam Ho. Four of us shared a pretty good white muscat, best Aussie wine I've had. Much of the conversation was about science fiction fandom. Terry and Kam Ho escorted me on the tram most of the way back to the Crowne Plaza, as their route coincided with mine.

After preparing things for the next day, I got to bed about 22:45.

The next day I got down to breakfast about 07:30. I had an omelette. I tried a gluten-free muffin, but it was way too sweet.

I returned to my room to change for the Melbourne Zoo outing. About 09:00 I headed out to the Southern Cross station. With helpful assistance from station staff and other passengers, I boarded the correct train and reached the zoo early. I waited past the agreed upon meeting time. Anne was the first to arrive. We waited quite a while for LynC and were in the process of calling or texting when she showed up. She had been delayed by some problems. We had time to look for the elusive platypus before we congregated in the meeting place for a close encounter with kangaroos. Eventually the time arrived, and a small group of us headed to the kangaroo enclosure. We all went in and sat on benches. The zookeeper put some food into a trough, and most of the



kangaroos gradually came over. One female roo had a joey in her pouch. One kangaroo snuck up behind me, sniffing away, before joining the others at the trough. I took many photos.

Then we toured the other Aussie exhibits before turning our thoughts to lunch. I got a couple of sushi rolls of a sort. We were joined by Leigh Edmonds.

Anne and Leigh left after eating. LynC and I went back to the platypus exhibit and hit the jackpot (see photo on previous page). We also saw dingos, a Tasmanian devil, two lions, a red panda, and a snow leopard. LynC walked me to the train stop. A fellow passenger gave me aid in catching the right train. I got back safely to the hotel, where I read e-mail and napped.

For dinner I went down to the hotel restaurant about 17:30 and had pork chop and a cappuccino.

At night I packed, got clothes ready for the next day, and retired early.

Saturday, 6 May 2023, I got up to my alarm at 04:15. After packing up everything, I called down for help with my luggage. I had to pack up some last minute things, but then I was on my way. I checked out and got in the taxi that had been arranged. We arrived early at the airport, so there was plenty of time to find the correct checkin desk. The man there was pleasant and helpful. There were security and emigration gates to go through.

The Qantas flight to Auckland boarded late, apparently due to some technical problems. I dropped off soon after the flight took off.

Lunch was a couple of gluten-free snacks that were available.

We landed in Auckland late. My luggage took forever to emerge. Then the luggage inspection line went on forever. Marcia started texting me, wondering where I was. I finally reached our hotel in Auckland as a meeting about our coach tour started.

This being Saturday night, we had dinner at the hotel about 20:30 as all the area restaurants were full up. It's a vegetarian restaurant, but it wasn't at all bad.

At night I shifted the things I use daily from my purse to the back packs we received. Then I prepared things for the next morning. I got to bed about 22:15.

On Sunday I got up to my alarm at 05:45. We got down to breakfast about 06:45 and found people already eating. We sat with Donna from Brisbane.

We were delayed a bit departing from the hotel because of late arrivals for our tour.

Marcia and I had lunch at a CBK Bar and Kitchen by the ocean in Kerikeri. I had a cheeseburger. In both Australia and New Zealand, there was usually plenty of gluten free food.

After lunch we drove to a viewpoint beside a golf course. Then we checked into the Copthorne Bay of Islands, a resort hotel. Shortly after I went for a walk along the rocky shore.

Dinner was about 18:30 and was served buffet style. We had a very enjoyable conversation with the people sitting near us.

We went down to breakfast about 08:00 the next day.

Immediately after breakfast, or as immediately as we could manage, we walked to the Treaty Museum and grounds nearby. We signed up to see the tribal performance. Unfortunately Marcia found herself out of energy before she made it to the performance place, so she returned to the museum by the front entrance. It wasn't a huge place, but there was some walking involved between buildings. Some of the walks were at a slight incline. I went through the house where the treaty had been signed and to a museum called The Price of Citizenship. Shortly thereafter I saw the Māori tribal ceremony. It bore a resemblance to the Hawaiian ones that I've seen. After that I started back toward

the entrance. I looked over the gift shop but didn't buy anything. I eventually caught up with Marcia at the front door. The museum people called a taxi for us, and we returned to the hotel.

It was about 12:30 when we ordered lunch at the bar. I had soup and salad with iced tea.

After lunch we rested in our room.

We went down to dinner about 18:00, forgetting about the 19:00 reservation we had made. But it turned out okay. There was a downpour during the meal.

At night we packed for the next day's departure.

I got up to my alarm at 05:45 the next day, which was a Tuesday. It's raining pretty heavily.

We got down to breakfast about 07:00.

We got off to a late start because of the weather. One of our activities, a Hole in the Rock Cruise, had been cancelled because of it. In mid-morning we had a pit stop in Whangarei.

We started off for a museum in another town, but the road conditions got increasingly worse; and Matt, the coach driver, decided it was safer to go straight to Auckland. About that time most of our phones received a series of alerts from the Civil Alert service in Auckland. We had to get back to the main road, and it was a bit dicey at times.

We missed lunch, but that couldn't be helped. Our safety came first. I had a snack bar.

Our coach rode pretty high on the road, so we were reasonably sure we'd make it okay. The diciest time was crossing a bridge whose access ramp was starting to flood. We reached the Sudima Hotel, where we'd stayed before, about 14:30. We're in room 308, which was nicer than the room we had before.

We had a group dinner about 18:30. We sat with couples from Hobart and Melbourne. One of the Melbourne couple was from Hong Kong. The husband of the Hobart couple was from southern Italy.

The next day we got ready for departure and then went down to breakfast about 07:00.

The coach drove to the Waitomo Caves, where we took a tour to see the glow worms. Unfortunately Marcia didn't go, because we had to go up and down many stairs. It was slippery in spots as well. Photography was not allowed. At the exit we were guided to the gift shop.

We drove to a nearby restaurant for lunch. We ate at a decent sushi place.

Our coach drove us to the Sudima Hotel in Rotorua, famed for their hot springs.

We had dinner about 18:30 in the the hotel restaurant. It was very good. A fish dish was tailor-made for me. We also shared a prawn starter. I had a chocolate mousse for dessert and also a cappuccino.

We went down to breakfast about 07:30 Thursday morning. I had my usual bacon and eggs, just more of it than usual; on the other hand, there was no fruit.

About 07:15 we were picked up for a tour of Hobbiton (see photo below) that we had signed up for. It took a couple of hours to get there. Our bus driver arranged for Marcia



to tour in a golf cart. The rest of us walked in the rain for much of the tour; the rain wasn't continuous. We still had a good time and took lots of photos.

After the tour we got a free pint (mine was ginger beer) and lunch with gluten-free selections. Because of construction on the site, we were also gifted with limited edition souvenir mugs.

During the bus ride back to Rotorua, I fell asleep for a while. Back at the hotel, we had about ninety minutes before our evening outing. Then we were driven to the Te Puia experience and dinner. There are mud pots and geysers there. They're also breeding kiwi birds. I got to see two of them—much bigger than I expected. Photography of the kiwis was not allowed.

The buffet style dinner was about 18:00. Everything in the buffet was labelled as gluten-free, vegetarian, or whatever. This was true elsewhere we had gone to with buffets.

After we ate there was traditional Maori entertainment that was very similar to the one I saw at Copthorne Bay. We got back to the hotel about 20:00.

Friday, 12 May 2023, I got up to my alarm at 05:45. We got our luggage ready for pickup.

Breakfast was about 06:45.

The bus got underway about 8:00. The day was clear, sunny, and cold. From our bus

we could see obvious evidence of New Zealand being volcanic. As we drove south, we started seeing snow-covered mountains. We stopped about 09:00 at a waterfall-like feature created by water going through a narrow bore. A while later we made our morning coffee stop. The place was by a lake with beautiful views of mountains.

Our lunch stop was about 13:00 in a small town with restaurants that seemed below par, but we managed to get food of a sort.

The afternoon was spent driving to Wellington. We arrived at the Travelodge Hotel about 16:30. This is probably the least impressive place we stayed in New Zealand.

We went downstairs for dinner about 18:00. The restaurant seemed sub par as well.

The next morning we went down to breakfast a little after 08:00; this was the last bit of our trip included in the coach tour.

After breakfast I walked to the Museum of New Zealand (Te Papa Tongarewa); that turned out to be quite a walk for me. Marcia was the one who really wanted to see the place, but she was too tired. She wouldn't have been able to do the walk, which turned out to be much longer than we had been told. There were also steps involved. There were many exhibits relating to the unique fauna of the islands and immigration.

About 12:45 I took a lunch break and had a fruit bowl, a gluten-free cake, and coffee.

After lunch I finished looking at the exhibits and took a taxi back to the hotel. With all the walking to get to the place and the walking inside, I didn't have much energy left.

We had dinner about 17:00. I had a steak and cappuccino.

At night we settled our accounts. I packed and prepared clothes for the next day and made arrangements for an early departure.

Both of us had trouble sleeping. We had to leave early in the morning, and I guess we were both anxious. We had lots of trouble getting our luggage down to the lobby. We had asked that the night manager help us, but there was no sign of the night manager. We had locked our keys in the room, so I couldn't get a luggage cart up; the elevator required a room key to go up. I ran out to see if our taxi was there; he was and I spoke to him to reassure him we were on our way. I got locked out of the hotel. Fortunately the night manager finally showed up; no one had given him the message about helping us. I hustled him up to the hallway where Marcia waited with our luggage. The cab took about half an hour to get to the airport. Then we had to wait another half hour for the ticket counters to open. Security was really careful and checked inside my carryon and purse. Marcia wasn't at the gate when I got there. Apparently she got taken to the business class lounge, which she said was freezing. Eventually we met just before boarding.

We had breakfast on the flight to Sydney.

We had about an hour before our flight to LAX.

On our long flight, we were served lunch starting from about 12:45 that was stretched out for about two hours.

I didn't sleep well on the flight.

We were served breakfast about 21:30; this was the time by my watch. Since we were in airplane mode, my watch was unable to update.

We landed in Los Angeles shortly before 07:00. I walked with Marcia to baggage pickup, since she had both our luggage tickets. We parted ways after she managed to

contact the friend who was picking her up. Then I walked to the Delta terminal, which seemed to be mobbed. I stood in a long line in the hopes of getting an earlier flight but no dice.

I grabbed lunch from a Jersey Mike's, since they offered gluten free. It was okay, but not great.

I eventually boarded my flight home shortly after 15:00. There were four airline personnel flying with us, including a pilot seated next to me. Mike picked me up as planned. It was a long trip, but I enjoyed it. You can see more photos of the trip on my web site: http://www.weasner.com/vacations/AU_NZ_2023/index.html

* * *

* 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.

Trinlay Khadro

2 Mar 2024

Glad that the lizard was successfully rescued from Cato. Fujin and Raiden are very excited that the house sparrows have returned to our yard. "Ke ke ke ke!" they yell from the window sill; "chirp chirp chirp" the little brown birds reply. We've had a day last week that was 60°F then a night of storms and 21°F again plus today back to nearly 60°F.

I love the wild life photos (bats!) My mom in Indiana puts out orange slices for the orioles.

((I put out orange halves for them.))

My family are looking forward to the April eclipse. We hope to be able to be visiting Mom in Michigan City in Indiana for it. I think I've been to Seymour, maybe a college roommate was from there.

((I hope you were in a part of Indiana that saw the eclipse. We had an excellent view.))

#

Tom Feller

10 Mar 2024

I read *Rendezvous with Rama* shortly after it was published and remember that I really enjoyed it. I don't recall reading any of the sequels.

I managed to get my supporting membership recognized by the Chinese Worldcon, although with the Hugo scandal, I'm not sure I did the right thing by participating.

I read and enjoyed *The Spare Man*. I've never read *The Thin Man*, but I have seen all the movies starring William Powell and Myrna Loy, so I think I got all the in-jokes.

((I have also never read *The Thin Man*. I base all my opinions on the films.))

#

Lucy Schmeidler, Lucys at panix dot com

10 Mar 2024

Thanks for the *Purrsonal Mewsings*. The hawk on your cover looks at first glance as if he has a moustache. Great picture.

I am charmed by the antelope squirrel, as usual.

Finally, this "poem of comment":

CATO AND THE LIZARD by Lucy Cohen Schmeidler

Not an exciting toy, this one.
Ah, but it moved!
Not fast enough to get away from me.
I am a mighty cat, as you will see.
But first pretend I'm bored, and turn away.
Perhaps I'll give it chase--another day.
Turn back--it isn't where it was before,
But there's a scuttling sound across the floor.
I pounce, and catch it in a four-point cage.
Hold it till I've satisfied my rage.
I lift it gently, safe within my claws,
And transfer it to rest inside my jaws.
It trembles in my jaws. I like that fine,
Close them lightly just to prove it's mine.
Loud footsteps, and I'm told to put it down.
My human friend, his face an angry frown.
Mike, why did you take my toy away
Just when I was teaching it to play?

((Best poem of comment I've ever received.))

#

Jeanne Mealy, jmealy-in-mn at comcast dot net

22 March 2024

Thanks for PM #90. Gorgeous cover of the Harris's Hawk.

You two did have a lot going on. I'm still jealous of that Down Under eclipse trip. How's Mike's hip? I hope the bank business is settled. And then there's taxes!

((Mike's hip is doing very well. The bank situation seems to be under control. Taxes were straightforward.))

Hot, dry weather. Fingers crossed that we all get enough rain THIS year.

((The weather was dry from the beginning of April until mid-June, and there have been many reports of small fires around the state.))

I always like the photos of critters and space sights. My favourite was the space launch. I was amused to see a credit for "Turkey Vulture (Mike Weasner) on page 3. I know it's listing him as the photographer, but my silly side JUST had to point out the humour.

Mighty Hunter Cato! Great photos. I hope the lizard stays far away from your house. Lucky you to see a partial solar eclipse in October.

((Lizards can come near the house. I just have to keep Cato under better control. A lot of animals come near the house to be in shade during summer.))

Thanks for sharing Mike's review of the eclipse guide for Indiana. And congrats to him for being a guest speaker at his hometown's Total Eclipse Festival. Really hope you get to see the total eclipse.

The book reviews were informative, just what I'd like to know before choosing one. I suspect one or two may appear on my To-Read stacks, like *The Spare Man*. I liked the Thin Man movies and wonder if I would get the same impression from the book.

2022 Loscon 48 was awhile ago, yet your con report is worth reading. Lucky you to get such a cool seat mate on the plane from Phoenix. Thanks for the con natter, notes, and photos. Tanya Huff has a nice smile. How was John Hertz's moderating too heavy-handed? WHAAT? There were people at the parties that you didn't know? Just kidding. You do know a lot of people.

((I think John could have been more generous about other people's opinions and reactions to the material.))

I enjoyed the Letters to the Editor. It's fun when I know the people. According to Frank Wu, a bat was found in a solid lead wall. *boggle*

Thanks. Looking forward to seeing you back in Stipple-Apa. Until then, take care.

#

Thank you for *Purrsonal Mewsings* 90; and based on the notes I made, this letter might just break the page. Now to see what really happens...

Changing banks is a pain I've not had to endure in some time. I've been with RBC for decades, but was with TD for many years before that. TD was miffed that I dared to change banks, mostly because the fees they charged were ridiculous. For many Americans, TD and RBC adorn the names of arenas. For the record, TD standing for Toronto Dominion, and RBC stand for Royal Bank of Canada. Those arenas were financed by Canadian banks.

((Something similar happened to our insurance agent. I went into his office because of some paperwork for life insurance. He also had to change banks because of ridiculous fees.))

Cato found a new toy, I guess...at least he didn't try to gift you with a portion of that lizard. Not many cats love you so much that they save some of their catch with you.

The coming eclipse will come close to Toronto (Niagara Falls will have the eclipse total), but I am sure that given our past record, the skies here will be cloudy when the eclipse happens.

((I have received reports from some friends who tried to see the eclipse from upstate New York. It seems that many were clouded out. Friends in the Adirondacks were able to see it.))

We intend to go to Loscon 50 this year...will we see you there? Any convention numbered 50 should be a big one. L50 will be at the LAX Hilton, next door to the LAX Marriott, mostly because it's bigger. I remember telling Tanya Huff she'd have a great time at Loscon when she was announced as a GoH. I've known Tanya since our university days. We also plan to go to the NASFiC and World Fantasy Convention, mostly because we can drive to both.

((I have purchased my membership for Loscon 50. I'm planning to drive there. It takes almost as long to fly there, and driving myself is much less of a hassle. Also if I drive I can take the time to do other things in the area. My plans aren't yet set in stone though.))

My LoC...yes, we'd been talking about Loscon 50 even at this time last year. We have our sixth shots for COVID-19, and our seventh comes along next month. Because of a revival of measles here and there, we will be getting our measles shots, too. Thank you, Richard, and I am trying my best to fill the position, and perform all my responsibilities as best as I can. The learning curve was steep at first; right now, getting people to fulfil their own responsibilities is my biggest problem.

((I have my appointment for my next COVID shot. My sister the paediatrician assures me that I'm still immune to measles even though I was only a teenager when I had it.))

Frank Wu...I had a great time working on *ESPionage* with you and Tom Easton, and I hope to work with you on any upcoming sequels.

Well, not quite the page, but still, not bad at all. It looks like the frequency of issues will be going down, but please do keep sending them, and I will enjoy just letter-writing.

#

Richard Dengrove, richd22426 at aol dot com

26 Mar 2024

Ah, you have returned from gafiation. Things are complicated now for me too. My wife was living with another man but he died; and she decided to come back to me. Now I am living between my apartment and her town house. I have hardly any time for fandom; and, with some things, I'm gafiating.

About the banks paying your utilities and such, it sounds too complicated. On the other hand, if you have a lot of people who bill you, it's a load off you when the bank pays. I don't do it because I have too few bills.

((I don't use autopay; I'm too much of a control freak for that. However, I have to have all the information for each payee set up.))

KRITTER CORNER. If the cat played a lot with the lizard, I can see why he didn't stay.

BOOKS, ETC.. As good an author as Aaron Linsdau is, I don't think he figured out what information his book on eclipses in Indiana should have. At least in helping the eclipse watcher. Not from what you say.

The Gone World. Tom Sweterlitsch seems to have figured out what his time warp would be like. That sounds very creative.

Rendezvous with Rama. The problem I had with that novel was that I missed characterization of people exploring the alien spaceship. I guess I'm not a scientist at heart.

((It's true that Clarke's writing is a bit weak on the character development front. I guess I still enjoy his writing from a scientific idea standpoint.))

Klara and the Sun. The problem with robots is they are built by humans or at the behest of humans. One would think they are made to accept their lot. Does Klara accept her lot?

((Yes, she does.))

The Spare Man and *Angel of Europa*. It seems that science fiction that is placed in our solar system is coming back. Solar travel is more realistic than galactic. It's more scientific. Travel to the stars has to go faster than light, an impossibility to science. Of course, if you're writing science fiction, it doesn't matter – it's fiction.

LOSCON 48. I remember getting a delicious breakfast at LAX when I was leaving Los Angeles. The counter I bought from had a really delicious breakfast wrap.

All sorts of people talk to you. I'm jealous. I apparently don't look like someone people want to talk to.

((I probably initiate most of my conversations with people. Sometimes people don't respond in kind, and that's okay.))

At Loscon, the panels concerned many different novels. On the other hand, I have recently been involved in several doozies – and no panel. I have recently read several novels by Chinese authors. The ones I have read aren't anti-Western but, otherwise, their authors have strange minds.

Talk about the sexes at Loscon. People can't seem to figure out whether men and women are the same or different. It depends on what you're talking about. I don't think anyone has proven that men can have babies. On the other hand, a man can have an operation and be "accepted" as a woman by other men. Nonetheless, people ignore one definition and always stick fast with the other – even in situations where that doesn't make sense.

I love bacon burgers.

((I do, too, and occasionally have the opportunity to have one. On the other hand, I'm finding that the bread is superfluous. If I try to eat the bread, I can't eat the whole burger.))

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. David Bratman. I should see *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. Then I could advise other people too.

ROBERT KENNEDY. Before I read this zine, I only knew about the balloons that exploded that the Japanese sent us. Now I know, during World War II, they did try to hit targets in North America by other means. Didn't do much good for their war effort, though.

I have lived near Washington, DC, for a long time; but none of the relatives came here for the museums until a niece and nephew showed up last year. Forget the great libraries that many places have.

LLOYD PENNEY. I can understand why people don't read contracts. They are usually written in a convoluted imitation of English.

((I think the only recourse is to have a lawyer read each contract you are asked to sign.))

MYSELF. You were gafiating to travel and I was gafiating, too . Once I'm safely ensconced in my wife's town house, however, I won't need to be.

HEATH ROW. Ah, George Phillies, the head of N3F. I hope you get your book reviews into one of its publications.

FRANK WU. The problem with crypto-zoologists is they too often have the conclusion before the crypto is actually discovered. In fact, a TV show was on the air for over ten years even though the intrepid (?) searchers never saw a sasquatch.

CLOSING REMARKS. Good luck in making *Purrsonal Mewsings* quarterly.

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We Also Heard From: Torun Almer, Chris Hopf, Robert Kennedy, Mary Manchester, Trisha Millman, Kat Templeton, Roslyn Willis

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* Closing Remarks

The last several weeks have been definitely summery, and monsoon started a few days ago. Although we keep cooler here at our house in Oracle, much of the state has frequently been in the 100s during the day. We had no rain since early April until mid-June. Monsoon seems to be getting off to a good start.

I understand much of the rest of the US has been suffering from unseasonable heat. Wherever you are, please take care.

Laurraïne