

DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS CONTINUES

by Dorothy M. Kurtz
#7 Spring 2009



© L. Pezzuto 2009

For a paper copy: in USA: A legal sized, self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE). In North America, outside USA: A large, self-addressed envelope (SAE) and one International Reply Coupon (IRC). Overseas: A large SAE and two IRCs. DIMENSIONAL PRESS, 230 Kings Highway East, #188, Haddonfield, NJ 08033
Email: dottymk@yahoo.com Web site: http://members.tripod.com/lp_web4us/

Copyright © 2009 by Dorothy M. Kurtz

Hello, and welcome to a few changes: The picture above is of the ESPN Zone in Washington, DC, because from now on, I plan to write about my DC trips and Lunacon in the odd-numbered issues of this publication. Lunacon is the New-York-City-area science fiction (SF) convention (con). A NYC-area SF club, the Lunarians, run this SF con--hence the name Lunacon. For more information, the address is Lunacon, PO Box 432, Throggs Neck Station, Bronx, NY 10465.

Want to help make many of your space-SF dreams come closer to becoming space-science fact? Then join the National Space Society (NSS), 1155 15th St., NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC, 20005 (202-429-1600). This space-interest organization publishes *Ad Astra*, their quarterly magazine, and they include other benefits to their members, especially the option of joining local chapters!

Now I have some sad news to tell. Majel Barret-Roddenberry (born Majel Leigh Hudec) died on December 18, 2008 of complications from leukemia. She was born in 1932. Ms. Barret acted in different films and TV shows before performing in the many versions of *Star Trek* (ST). For the first ST pilot, she played Captain Pike's (played by the late Jeffery Hunter) first officer of the *USS Enterprise* called "Number One." During the original ST TV series, she portrayed Nurse Christine Chapel, and she provided the voice for the ship's computer. She also became the voice of Nurse Chapel and several other female characters in the ST animated series. In *ST: The Motion Picture*, she played Dr. Christine Chapel, MD. Finally, for *ST: The Next Generation* and *ST: Deep Space Nine*, she portrayed Betazoid Ambassador Lwaxana Troi. Additionally, she acted in other SF TV shows and films, and she was the executive producer of the SF TV shows, *Earth: Final Conflict* and *Andromeda*. In 1969, she married ST creator Gene Roddenberry (1921-1991), and she is the mother of Gene Roddenberry, Jr.

(born 1974). I've seen her at different ST cons, and I spoke to her a few times; she seemed like a very nice and personable lady.

Another person who passed away was Forest Ackerman on December 4, 2008 from a long illness: He was born in 1916, and that made him 92. I'll have more about Forrie (or 4E) Ackerman in the Lunacon report.

Friday, March 20, 2008: After a three-hour drive, I arrived at the Hilton Rye Town, Rye Brook, NY, and attended my first event at this con: (1) The Lunacon Programming Scheduler Application. In this informal demonstration, the fan-guest-of-honor, Leigh Grossman, showed how he used his web-based application on his laptop computer to put together Lunacon's schedule. Then I went to the (2) Opening Ceremonies where the convention chairman (con chair), Mr. Shirt (a.k.a. Michael E. McConnell), introduced the guests-of-honor, exchanged humorous banter with the guests, and answered questions from the audience while wearing a brightly-colored-Hawaiian shirt. Next, I listened to (3) Film and TV Production Done on the Cheap where the panel explained how computer technology has helped to lower costs in filmmaking. They also suggested taking filmmaking courses and gave several hints on lowering costs. Nevertheless, a cheap film could cost around \$10,000. In (4) The Year in Computing, the panel talked mostly about the iphones, itouch, and ipods and the latest features that these gadgets offered. Later, (5) Health in Space had a panel of a few physicians and some people who work in high tech mentioning what weightlessness and radiation in space could do to the human body. They also discussed how they might perform first aid and operations while in zero gravity. The last thing I did that night was visit (6) the Con Suite. Here, the Lunacon committee offered plenty of snack foods: dips, chips (crisps), and vegetables as well as candies (sweets), cookies (biscuits), and soft drinks. I also had the opportunity to relax and talk with other SF fans.

Saturday, March 21: On the con's busiest day, I entered the (7) Art Show room where I noticed that about 90% of the art themes showed fantasy art and the rest were SF and space. Meanwhile, 80% of the art medium displayed paintings and drawings, and the rest exhibited other kinds of art: sculptures, jewelry, and other items. At my first Saturday panel, (8) When Does the Singularity Become the Matrix?, the panel speculated on how advances in artificial intelligence will effect humans as well as what high-tech devices may help humans. Do we want these changes? What might be the disadvantages? The next panel, (9) Sigma, a SF Think Tank, mentioned an organization of hard-SF writers that the different branches of the US Government consulted with in the national interest. They said it was all volunteer work having to do with how certain devices may or may not work and for what purpose.

That night, I watched (10) the Masquerade. Out of 16 costume entries, 14 costumers wore fantasy costumes and two wore SF costumes: Gus the Airship Captain and Queen of the Moon Women. The latter entry wore a silver-and-white, iridescent, futuristic gown with a few different hoops underneath.

Sunday, March 22: I spent my last day at Lunacon listening to (11) A Tribute to Forest J Ackerman. It would take a thick book to list the accomplishments that Forrie Ackerman achieved! He did so many firsts in SF fandom. In fact, he did many things in both fandom and professionally. He filled his "Ackermansion" in Hollywood, CA, from floor to ceiling with books and items related to SF, fantasy, and horror, and he used to offer Saturday tours of his mansion to the public. (A good portion of his collection is in the SF Museum in Seattle, Washington.) Congoing was another interest of his, and he attended every World SF Con (Worldcon) except two. (I saw him at the 2001 Worldcon in Philadelphia and listened to a talk he gave about his past SF adventures. My only regret was that his talk was only for an hour.) Before going home, I walked into the (12) Dealers' Room where I noticed that about half of the dealers sold reading materials of books, magazines, semi-pro-zines,

and fanzines. The other half of the dealers sold other merchandise: jewelry, t-shirts, and sculptures as well as toys, DVDs, costumes, etc.

Wednesday, April 1: After arriving in Washington, DC, by train, I had dinner at the ESPN Zone, 11th St. and E St., NW (202-783-3776). This combination restaurant, sports arcade, and store offered good quality food. While the prices were not cheap (Prices for most sandwiches began around \$10.), the portions were big, and the service was prompt. Meanwhile, I ate my burger as I watched several TV screens broadcasting from the different ESPN cable stations. Later, I went downstairs and watched the different sporting arcade games on over 10,000 square feet: many different ball-game simulators, racing simulators, and even simulated fishing. Finally, the ESPN store sold peak caps, t-shirts, and baby clothing with either the ESPN logo or different sports team logos as well as posters, balls, and other sports-related merchandise. I definitely recommend stopping in here, especially after overdosing on history and culture in DC.

Thursday, April 2: This was a first for me. Although, I've visited the Washington National Cathedral, 3101 Wisconsin Ave., NW (202-537-6200) before, this was the first time I ever rode the Metro bus in DC. (I took a taxi to the cathedral the last time.) Back in 1907, workers started constructing the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, the official name of the cathedral. In 1990, the builders placed the "final finial" that completed the Washington National Cathedral. Officially, this Episcopal Cathedral has been serving as a place of worship for people of many faiths. Nevertheless, even non-believers may feel inspired when they view this "Gothic fantasy." Here, in the sixth-largest cathedral in the world, I looked at over a dozen bays, several chapels on two levels, and the nave as well as the high altar, the crypt, and numerous stained-glass windows. I especially admired the Space Window that held a piece of moon rock brought back by the *Apollo 11* crew. Meanwhile, between the windows, statues, and religious paintings as well as tapestries, a small museum about the history of the construction of the cathedral, and other things, I spent more than a few hours at this place. After this, I went to the National Air & Space Museum (NASM). Because I have been here several times in the past and it was later in the day, I only stopped into the Flights in the Arts gallery. When I was there, I saw images of Saturn and its moons, especially Titan. Then, I touched a moon rock in another part of the NASM.

Friday, April 3: Back in the 1990s, I visited the older Newseum in Rosslyn (Arlington County), Virginia. This mid-sized news museum covered the history of journalism, especially in the USA, via texts, pictures, and some exhibit items as well as a few videos, interactive computers, and a journalist's memorial. In the early 2000s, the Newseum closed, and in 2008, this museum reopened in a new location in a much bigger building: Newseum, 555 Pennsylvania Ave., NW (888-NEWSEUM). Despite having a steep admission fee per adult (\$20 when I was there), it was worth it because I spent over seven hours in this place. On six levels and a concourse, the staff transferred many of the items from the older museum, and they added much more. In addition to adding more texts, pictures, videos, interactive computers, and other exhibit items, this museum also contained about 15 theaters showing newsreels, videos, and films covering almost everything to do with news reporting. Inside those theaters, I learned several topics starting with the orientation of the Newseum, the history of news reporting, and sports reporting as well as war reporting, covering controversial subjects, and so forth. Another nice feature about all these theaters was the chance to sit quite often: I didn't develop the dreaded "museum feet." My favorite theater showed a 3-D film about the history of journalism from Nellie Bly in 1887 to Edward R. Murrow in London during WWII to

the current times. When I was at this museum, one temporary exhibit area presented a multimedia display of how the press reported on the work of the FBI, especially in the 1920s and 30s. The other temporary exhibit area displayed how the press wrote about the capture and execution of President Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth and his conspirators. Exhibited on this same level, I noticed the largest piece of the Berlin Wall outside of Germany, and another level included two TV studios and an interactive area where the public could practice being TV anchorpersons. In addition, inside and outside of this museum, I saw the front pages of daily newspapers from around the world. The Newseum definitely educated the public on how reporting news could change everyday lives.

Saturday, April 4: The Sewall-Belmont House & Museum, 144 Constitution Ave., NE (202-546-1210) has not been a major sightseeing attraction, but more people, especially women, should pay this place a visit. This house dated back to the early 1800s, but the National Woman's Party (NWP) bought the house in 1929. On an hour-long guided tour, my tour guide explained the status of women from the 18th century to the present while she led me into rooms on two levels here. Much of the furnishings dated back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and much of it belonged to women who led the suffrage movement before 1920 or were active in the NWP during the 1920s, 30s, and beyond. (Nowadays, the NWP is mostly an educational organization; the National Organization for Women [NOW] does much of the political activities these days.) Also on display were statue busts and portraits of women who were active in promoting women's rights in the 1800s and 1900s. I also saw copies of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote on the 26 of August 1920 and the still un-ratified Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Alice Paul (1885-1977) wrote this document in 1923, and it was defeated once in 1982--and re-introduced every year since!

In DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS: CLOSER TO HOME, I list my favorite places in New York City, especially in Manhattan; Philadelphia, especially in Central Philly; Washington, DC; and Atlantic City, NJ.

The latest MY CAPITAL TIME includes visits to the US Supreme Court, the Hirshhorn Museum, the Naval Heritage Center, and the Decatur House.

For the most recent THE STATE I'M IN column, I visited 12 places in New Jersey from Atlantic City to the NJ Naval Museum in Hackensack.

Finally, if you click on Photo Album on page one of my web site, you can see pictures and reports on three places that I've visited in Pennsylvania: New Hope, Peddler's Village, and the Pearl S. Buck House. Farewell for now!