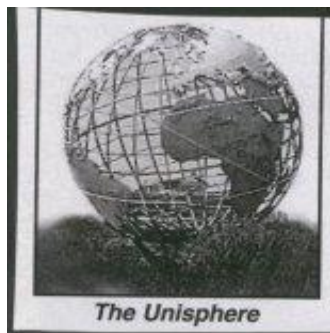


# DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS

by Dorothy M. Kurtz

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Hello. Welcome to the first issue of what, I hope, are events and some interesting things going on in my travels.

While it is my wish to pass on some tips to you, I would like to think that my travel logs are supplements, not substitutes, to standard travel guides.

I will also cover events around science fiction (SF), space exploration, and other things of interest to me in this quarterly perzine. If you would like to know more about me (in other words--what qualifications do I have to write a zine?), I would suggest that you order DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS: THE PREFACE, for \$3 North America, and \$5 overseas in USA funds. Send to the address in the title box. (Please write cheques out to DIMENSIONAL PRESS.) Unlike this zine, DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS: THE PREFACE has 18 pages with a color front cover. (You will also learn what perzine and other fannish terms mean.)

For this first issue, I will have to call it "A New York State of Mind" because for the first quarter of this year, I celebrated the new Millennium by visiting New York City a few times. I also attended a regional New York City area SF convention (con). (OK, I refuse to get into a debate about whether the new Millennium starts in 2000, 2001, earlier than 2000, or whatever year; I'm only glad that the world didn't fall apart because of Y2K.)

There are many guide books to New York, but there are three that I recommend the most: (1) *Dorling Kindersley Travel Guides, New York*

2000, ISBN 1-56458-184-5, published by Dorling Kindersley, Inc.; (2) *Frommer's 2000, New York From \$80 A Day*, ISBN 0-02-863036-X, published by Macmillan Travel; and (3) *Let's Go New York City*, ISBN 0-312-16898-5, published by St. Martin's Press.

For more up-to-date information about New York's theater, films, nightlife, and other events, the best sources are *Time Out New York* and the "Cue" section of *New York* magazine. Both publications are weekly; a third source is the *New York Times* (especially the Sunday edition).

If you are curious to learn more about SF cons and SF fandom in general, these two publications can't be beat: (1) *Con-Temporal* (\$36 a year USA or \$54 a year outside of the USA), c/o Pegasus Publishing, PO Box 1845, Sherman, Texas 95091-1845. This is a monthly listing of SF and other related cons around the world; and (2) *Fandom Directory*, c/o FANDATA Publications, 7614 Cervantes Court, Springfield, Virginia 22152-3133 (\$19.95 + \$4 shipping in the USA, \$24.95 + shipping in Canada, and overseas rates may be higher). This yearly publication is the size of a thick paperback; it has listings for fan clubs, cons, publications, and other fandom categories worldwide.

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy reading this publication. If not, to quote Harry S. Truman: "No matter what you do, there is always going to be someone who doesn't like it!" So there.

**SEEING NEW YORK CITY IN THE MILLENNIUM...**

I broke this trip into several different trips because I live about two hours away, and I could only spare so much time away from my regular job.

Therefore, for January 6, 7, and 8, I booked three overnight stays at the Vanderbilt YMCA, 224 E. 47th St. (between 2nd and 3rd Aves.) (212-756-9600). You don't have to be young, male, or Christian to stay here. The rooms are basic and small with bunk beds, TV, and heating/air conditioning; they are clean, in a good neighborhood, and cheap for this part of town. (They also take major credit cards.)

Thursday, January 6, after taking two separate commuter trains (R7 SEPTA [South Eastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority] to Trenton, NJ, then the New Jersey Transit train to New York), I arrived at the Y in time to relax for a few hours.

That night, I arrived at the Virginia Theater to see the Broadway show *Smokey Joe's Café*. Here, I saw musical tune reviews by the songwriting team of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. Back in the 1950s and 60s, they wrote such songs as "Hound Dog," "Dance with Me," "Smokey Joe's Café," and many other popular rhythm & blues and rock & roll songs. Although the show had no binding plot, the music, dancing, and some of the comedy routines acted out within some of the songs made for a very entertaining show.

Friday, January 7, I took a cross-town bus to the U.S.S. *Intrepid*, Pier 86 at W. 46th St. and 12th Ave. (212-245-2533). The *Intrepid*, a World War II aircraft carrier that also saw some action in the Vietnam War, took part in

two rescue missions during the early days of the space race in the 1960s: May 1962 Mercury Mission and March 1965 Gemini Mission. In 1974, the navy retired this vessel, and in 1982, they turned it into a sea, air, and space museum. Because the space section was my favorite, I made a beeline toward that area. The *Intrepid's* section on space covered the early days of the space race by showing videos, photos, space suits, space capsules, and other items. Another section on early aircraft interested me as well. I viewed full-sized and model-sized early aircraft, and constantly playing videos displayed old newsreels. Each reel covered a separate story telling who succeeded or failed in their quest to achieve flight. In addition to this, I saw military aircraft located within the interior and on the top deck of the *Intrepid*. I especially noticed the A-12 *Blackbird Spy Plane*, the fastest plane in the world. The rest of the museum mostly consisted of exhibits and videos about the history of the navy and the day-to-day life on board an aircraft carrier.

After a few hours of rest in my room, I had to take another cross-town bus. This time, my destination became the IBIS Theater to see the Off-Broadway show *Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know*. Although this show, too, didn't have a binding plot, each song (out of a total of 20 songs) had a different travel scenario or mishap. It made for a very funny two-hour trip around the world on board Flight #911. It doesn't matter if you in the jet set or an armchair traveler; this show will keep you in stitches.

Saturday, January 8, I spent most of the day at the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian, 1 Bowling Green, in the old Customs House (212-668-6624). This is the Smithsonian's main museum about Native Americans (from the Arctic Regions to Cape Horn, South America) until 2002, when the new museum opens in Washington, DC. Nevertheless, they still plan to keep a New York branch. In the meantime, the museum showcased the lifestyles, history, and customs of those first Americans through exhibits of artwork, artifacts, video, and audio presentations. This museum dispelled many old stereotypes about the Native Americans. Even the building itself proved worth seeing. In the center rotunda, I noticed murals of the old New York Harbor. The marble interior, winding staircases, and sculpturing made this building worth a visit--with or without the museum.

In the evening, I saw an Off-Off-Broadway show called *Scott & Zelda* at the Wings Theater in the Village. Unlike the last two shows, this musical presented a binding plot. It covered the lives of the writer, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and his wife, Zelda. Starting with their first meeting in 1918, through the 1920s and 30s, and to their deaths (Scott in 1940 and Zelda in 1948), parts of the show were funny and other parts were sad. Particularly as the actors portraying the older Scott and Zelda thought back on their past lives, the audience got a sneak peek into the past by seeing other actors portray the younger Fitzgeralds.

Sunday, January 9, I paid a visit to the

Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), 82nd St. and 5th Ave. (212-535-7710). This museum is the second largest art museum in the world (after the Louvre, in Paris). Trust me when I say that even if you arrive at opening time and leave at closing time (even on a day with extended hours), you will not see it all! You will have to make several visits to see most of this museum if this is your goal. I suggest that you study the floor plan, and pick your favorite sections to see first. On this particular day, I chose to visit two sections. I first visited the Costume Institute where the special exhibit for the time I was there displayed costumes and clothes worn by rock stars from the 1950s through the 90s. The costumes and outfits looked, for the most part, colorful or glittery. (This is usually necessary because the performers have to be visible for the back row audience.) For effects, rock music, disco lights, and videos added to the amusement. Next, I headed to my favorite section: the American Wing. Three floors dedicated to American art held preserved paintings, sculptures, furniture, objects, and period rooms spanning time frames from the 17th century into the 20th century.

After a month, I took another mini-trip to New York City.

Thursday, February 3, I rode those two commuter trains to New York again and then the subway toward the Vanderbilt Y.

That night, I boarded an uptown bus and then a cross-town bus to the Paris Cinema, 4 W. 58th St., to see *Topsy Turvy*. This is a film about how W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan went about writing, rehearsing, and premiering their operetta *The Mikado*. Some of the scenes included meetings with Richard D'Oyly Carte, home life, costume fittings, concerns that the actors had in this production, and musical excerpts from *The Mikado*. It made for a very colorful film with an interesting story.

Friday, February 4, I visited the New York Transit Museum, Boerum Pl. & Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn Heights (718-243-8601). I started my visit on the lowest level first. (The museum is located in a discontinued subway station.) Here, I toured different subway trains permanently on display from the wooden subway cars of 1904 to the metal cars of the 80s. On the upper level I saw old turnstiles, ticket machines, pictures, and videos covering the history of New York City's transit: subways, busses, trains, and so forth. The museum also provided some hands-on exhibits. I definitely found this place worth a visit to learn the history of the transit system that brought me here from Manhattan.

That evening, I went to the Clearview Cinema at W. 23rd St. (near 8th Ave.) to see the film *Galaxy Quest*. The story presented a group of actors who once played in *Galaxy Quest* (a fictional SF TV show telecasted about 18 years back). Typecasted in those roles, the actors ended up working the in-person con circuit. One day, a group of aliens in an attempt to save their race from certain doom caused by another group of enemy aliens thought that the TV show *Galaxy Quest* was a historical

document and desperately recruited the cast for Garden Theater where *Cats* is playing.) Located help. If this seemed like a thinly-veiled version of *Star Trek* (ST), you are right. This film even had the personalities of some media-SF fans accurate to a tee. (Anybody even remotely familiar with the original ST series will get a lot of entertainment and laughs from this film.)

Saturday, February 5, I took the subway to Bowling Green and walked to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. Once in Staten Island, I walked along Richmond Terrace for a few blocks, then left onto Wall St., and one block right onto Stuyvesant Pl. My destination became the Staten Island Institute of Arts & Sciences (SIIAS), 75 Stuyvesant Pl. (718-727-1135). This small museum contained two floors of exhibits. The upstairs floor showed a room with hands-on exhibits where children became encouraged to get actively involved in learning about the natural and human history of Staten Island. Another room displayed black & white photos of old landmarks in Staten Island. The exhibits on the lower floor celebrated 120 years of the museum's natural history collection: mummified animals, dried plants, rocks, Indian arrowheads, and meteorites. If nothing else, I learned that Staten Island offered more than a ferry ride.

In the early evening, I arrived at the SONY Lincoln Square Cinema Complex, W. 68th St. & Broadway. This is the complex that has the famous IMAX screen, and some of the films are shown in 3-D. (In the past, I saw two of those 3-D IMAX films.) For now, I bought tickets to see a regular film, *My Dog Skip*, a coming-of-age story about an introverted boy growing up in 1940s Yazoo, Mississippi; he received a dog to help him break out of his shell. The late author and *Harper's Magazine* editor, Willie Morris, based this on a true story. I found the film funny, sad, and sweet.

Sunday, February 6, I spent the day at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, 200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000). In my opinion, this is the best place to visit outside of Manhattan. Like the MMA, this large museum took a few visits to see almost everything. Again, I chose to go to my favorite sections: the fifth floor with American painting & sculpture, especially the Hudson River school of 19th-century-landscape painters; and the fourth floor of decorative arts with furniture, objects, and period rooms from different houses in the Northeastern USA. These period rooms dated from the 17th century to the 1920s and covered regions extending from New England to South Carolina. I sometimes felt as though I stepped into a time warp on this floor.

I referred to my March visit to New York City as going from SF to science fact. This time around, I only stayed in the city for a single night at the Vanderbilt YMCA.

Saturday, March 4, upon arriving in the city, I took the subway to my first destination: Mars 2112. No, I haven't lost my mind; Mars 2112, W. 51st St. and Broadway (212-582-2112), is the name of a very popular theme bar and restaurant. (This restaurant is located across the street from the Winter

below the ground level, the first sight I saw of this place was a silver spaceship rising above the lower-courtyard entrance. Once inside, as I waited in line, an employee entered my name into the computer. (The line can last from a few minutes to a few hours depending on how crowded it is.) Anyway, I soon had the option of taking a simulated ride to Mars (similar to the Star Tours ride at Disneyland) or going directly into the restaurant. (I chose the latter.) Enhancing the Martian atmosphere, the dining room displayed a reddish cave-style appearance. Videos showed Mars in SF and science fact, and people circulated around the dining room dressed as "Martians." I also saw a bar, video-game room, and gift shop. The gift shop sold alien stuffed toys, NASA space food, space-travel and solar-system books, and merchandise tagged with the restaurant's logo. (You don't have to go to the restaurant to enter the gift shop or bar.) As for taking in the overall effect of this restaurant, it was well worth a visit. On the other hand, the food was another matter. I found the quality and quantity mediocre, and the prices seemed high (with an average entree at \$20). If you are on a budget, I suggest doing what I did; I had an appetizer and a soft drink. Later, I had the rest of my meal at another (cheaper) restaurant. Their menu offered different sections: First Contact (appetizers), Primary Orbits (entrees), Soyless Greens (salads), Boosters (side dishes), Soft Landings (pasta), Cosmic Combos (sandwiches), Flying Saucers (pizza), and Sweet Planets (desserts). They take major credit cards, and parties of 20 or more can make reservations. Again, it's worth a visit, but just watch what you spend.

Sunday, March 5, became strictly science fact because I rode the subway out to Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Queens, to visit the New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. (718-699-0005). This museum originally functioned as the Hall of Space for the 1964 World's Fair. On the day I arrived, I saw some rockets on the museum's grounds and a building shaped like a concrete-and-glass curtain. Once inside, on the main level, I tried out different hands-on exhibits covering the laws of physics concerning light and sound. The lower level consisted of more hands-on exhibits that covered biology and chemistry. A video area exhibited careers in science including satellite design. In the upper level, I noticed some hands-on computers in the technology gallery and more computers in the astronomy lab. An auditorium showing films often and the Great Hall displaying different special exhibits completed this level.

After this, I walked around the park as I tried to remember the 1964 World's Fair. (I was eight when my parents took my brothers and I there.) After circling the Unisphere (a stainless steel globe sponsored by US Steel that became the trademark for the '64 Fair), I had to go home.

#### LUNACON 2000

The final event I'm covering for this

issue is about this year's New York City area regional SF con held at the Rye Town Hilton, Rye Brook, NY. The Lunarians, a local SF organization, run this con--hence the name Lunacon. They've been running Lunacon since the late-1950s. I attended two past Lunacons: 1995 and '99. The '95 con had a somewhat impressive program. Last year's con seemed very impressive with a multi-track program covering SF in literature, media, art, and fandom. Other program tracks included horror, fantasy, music, costuming, and science (especially the science of space exploration). Thus, with memories of last year's con in mind, I spent the weekend of March 24, 25, and 26, attending this year's Lunacon. I soon learned, however, what a difference a year made. First off, after I registered, I learned that the pocket-program books had not arrived yet. I later found out that the person on the con committee in charge of sending the order for the pocket-program books to the printer didn't send in the order until two days before the con instead of the usual two weeks in advance.

Friday, March 24, without a pocket-program book, I felt as though I was groping in the dark. (1) The Dealers' Room was the first place I entered. Here I noticed that about 50% of the dealers sold reading material and the other dealers sold other merchandise: posters, jewelry, costumes, and other items. (2) In a panel that I did happen to find, Mysteries & SF, I learned one main thing from this panel: Hard-core mystery fans can't tolerate SF in mysteries, but SF fans have no problem mixing a mystery in a SF story. (3) Not knowing where else to go, I sat in the cinema and saw a Japanese animated film called *Child's Toy* in Japanese with English subtitles. I thought that this kind of animation showed characters getting extremely emotional or violent as well as very bizarre. (4) Finally, I attended something I understood better: a panel about Fanzine Art. The artists drew humorous cartoons around events in fandom, and later, they planned to publish them in zines.

Saturday, March 25, the pocket-program books finally arrived. The other members of the con and I grabbed them quickly. Again, my disappointment in this con didn't end because other than just one panel talk, this year's con didn't include any space science. I did notice panels covering different subjects usually found at cons. For the most part, however, they seemed scattered and not in tracks of their own (except the costuming track). (1) I attended a panel about the World Science Fiction Conventions (Worldcons) for 2000 and 2001. The chairmen of both cons talked about what they hoped to achieve when they hold their future events. (2) The next panel presented the *Analog* MAFIA (Making Appearances Frequently In *Analog*). (*Analog* is a hard-SF magazine. A hard-SF story is a story where science is the main feature and the story gets lost without it.) The panel members talked about their past stories in *Analog* and future writing plans. (3) Before lunch, I looked at the Art Room. Paintings comprised about 90% of the art medium, and the remaining art showed sculpture, jewelry, and other items. About 75% of the

artwork exhibited fantasy themes, but the rest of the art displayed SF and space-related art. After lunch, I spent the afternoon listening in on panels: (4) the pros & cons of running a small-press publishing company, (5) different kinds of fandom on the Internet, and (6) how to publish on the web.

(7) After I changed for the evening, I attended the only panel that covered space exploration: Space Settlements. Some of the subjects mentioned during this hour talked about moon & Mars settlements, private space ventures making money by advertising (posting ads on their spacecraft), and sex in weightlessness. (Someone will need to be in a bondage position; otherwise, couples will bounce off of each other!) Finally, the panel talked about how to live off the resources found on the moon and Mars. (8) The next panel, "Will Magazines Survive?" became a debate between web publishing vs. paper publishing. (9) For the next hour before the Masquerade began, I looked for the entrance line to see this event. I asked three different committee members where the line was--but nobody seemed to know. Finally, I found the line in a narrow hallway. (Isn't this a fire hazard?) Soon the doors to the ballroom opened. I saw 15 entries in the Masquerade contest, and only two of them wore SF costumes; the rest wore fantasy costumes. By about 9:00 PM, I decided to call it a night.

Sunday, March 26, I attended three panels before going home. (1) The first became a tribute to the late SF author A. E. Van Vogt. Van Vogt, an early SF writer, wrote such SF classics as the *Slan* series, *Voyage of the Space Beagle*, and many other stories. (2) The second panel, Fanzines of the 21st Century, turned into another talk about the pros & cons of web publishing vs. paper publishing. (3) Finally, at the third panel, "Are Books Getting Too Long?", the best opinion I heard stated: "If it helps to move along the plot, the extra details are OK. If not, the book is too long."

To summarize this con, I think some of the bad organization of this con was just a coincidence. I hope it will improve.

So ends this first issue. In the next issue (Summer 2000), I plan to write about some short trips: a few more weekends in New York City; some weekends in Philadelphia; a mini-trip to Ottawa, Canada; and a SF con in Baltimore, Maryland. Good-bye for now!

P.S.--No, I am not related to fantasy author Katherine Kurtz.