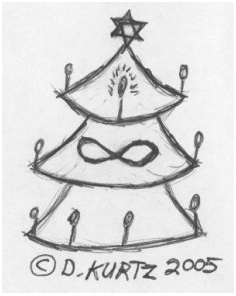
DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS

by Dorothy M. Kurtz

Volume: 6 Issue: 4
Date: Winter 2006



Price per issue: .25 in person, .50 North American postage, $1.00 overseas, and the usual to a select few.
Yearly subscription rates: $2.00 North American postage, $5.00 overseas, and the usual.
DIMENSIONAL PRESS
230 Kings Highway East,#188
Haddonfield, NJ 08033
Copyright © 2006 by Dorothy M. Kurtz

Welcome to the last quarterly issue of this publication. As of March 2006, Dimensional Press will go back to becoming an amateur publishing company. In other words, if you wish to order any past or current issues of DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS, please write cheques or money orders out to Dorothy M. Kurtz, not Dimensional Press (regardless of what any of the back issues read). I'll be closing the Dimensional Press bank account. Dimensional Press will still be around, and I still plan to put out a newsletter but only twice a year. The new name will be DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS CONTINUES. If you have any questions, you can write to me at the address above, e-mail me at mailto:dottymk@yahoo.com or <dottymk@yahoo.com> or post a message on my blog.

Did you notice the Christmas-tree illustration? Although the Germans included trees during the holiday season for centuries, it wasn't until the 19th century that this custom spread to other countries.

Speaking of holidays, I spent this past Halloween (2005), as I did in 2004, at a party that a local media-science fiction (SF) club played host to. Once again, I helped judge the costume contest. I wore the same white gown that I wore in 2004 as a "Moon Base Bride." For 2005, however, I called it "Moon Base Gala." In place of the headpiece and veil, I wore a pink rose in my hair, and I added a pink waist sash and other pink accessories.

In January 2006, my spouse and I plan to reconfirm our commitment to each other in a quiet ceremony in the presence of family members and a few friends. I plan to wear a simple ivory gown with a waist sash and floral headpiece. A month later (February), I plan to wear this same outfit but without the headpiece, and I will replace the ivory waist sash with a light-blue waist sash and other blue accessories. For this occasion, a few friends and I will be celebrating Mardi Gras.

As I try to simplify my life even more, I plan to keep on subscribing to *National Geographic* and *Friends Journal*. (Although, I will subscribe to other publications from time to time, off and on, as well.) In addition, I hope to get more involved with both my local space interest organization and the local Friends Monthly Meeting. (Again, I'll attend meetings and events with other local groups, occasionally.)

Meanwhile, in this issue, I wrote about weekends that I've spent in Philadelphia; Washington, DC; New Jersey; and Pennsylvania. I also have two SF convention (con) reports: Capclave 2005 and Philcon 2005.

By the way, Philcon has a new address: Philcon, PO Box 8303, 30th Street Station, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101-8303.

Finally, would you like an informative budget guide from Britain about the USA? I recommend this guide: *The Rough Guide to the USA*, ISBN 184353262X, Penguin Putnam, Inc. Additionally, if you want more information about future Big Apple Comic-Cons (similar to the one I attended in September 2005), please telephone 201-865-3288. You can also check out their web site at bigapplecon.com.

PHILLY IN OCTOBER

Saturday, October 1, thus, I finally got around to ordering advanced tickets for the *Lights of Liberty* show, 6th St. and Chestnut St. (877-GO-2-1776). Starting at the ticket office, the group I was with followed our tour guides to different historical buildings. Along the way, we put on head phones to experience the full effects of this sound-and-light show. Then we stopped at the following places: Franklin Court, Carpenters' Hall, Second Bank of the United States, and Independence Hall. At each stop, we heard surround sound and saw images projected on the above-mentioned buildings. This show presented different events leading to the birth of the USA from the 1765 Stamp Act to Independence Day, 1776. Although the show and tour were interesting enough to experience once, I also felt that they could have done the complete sound-and-light production in a theater (projected on a screen), without the tour, for a similar effect.

Sunday, October 2, for this day, I decided to indulge and have dinner at City Tavern, 138 2nd St. and Walnut St. (215-413-1443). Built in 1773, torn down in 1854, and rebuilt in 1975, the original 18th-century restaurant was where many of the members of the Continental Congress of 1776 dined. Although this place was expensive, the 18th-century Georgian interior, the staff dressed in 18th-century-style

clothing, and the food made it worth the splurge. City Tavern offered several menu items copied from 18th-century recipes. (They even sell their own cookbook.) If you wish to experience the atmosphere on a tight budget, you can go to the tavern area and order a drink. (This place accepts major credit cards, and they suggest reservations for dinner.)

Saturday, October 8, on this day, I visited the Academy of Natural Sciences, 1900 Ben Franklin Parkway (215-299-1000). Even though this sizable natural-history museum wasn't as large as its counterparts in New York City and Washington, DC, it has been the oldest such museum in the USA. Here, I spent three hours looking at the different exhibit areas on four floors. The largest display areas showed dioramas of animals from North America, Africa, and Asia. Another large area was Dinosaur Hall with its displays of dinosaur bones, dinosaur models, hands-on computers, and so forth. Other exhibit areas covered different subjects: birds, fish, and reptiles as well as amphibians, insects, plants, minerals, rocks, some live animals, the environment, and so on. In the auditorium, the staff showed a few live animals and explained how these animals defended themselves. Later, I saw a half-hour film about volcanoes and earthquakes and the life-giving results of their aftermath. When I was there, the special exhibit area displayed seashells. Until that day, I never realized how many sizes, shapes, and colors seashells came in. Part of the exhibit area showed seashell artwork that impressed me very much. Most of this artwork deserved to be in better art museums. Of course, this museum went a long way toward entertaining and educating children with many hands-on exhibits. Therefore, children (and adults) could touch animal fur and teeth as well as bones and other stuff, even some live animals (under the supervision of the staff).

Sunday, October 9, I walked along South Street from Front St. to 10th St. During lunch, I ate a steak sandwich at Jim's Steaks, 400 South St. (215-928-1911). Outside, this place displayed a façade of black and silver Art-Deco design. Inside, after I waited in line for a short while, I went to the upstairs dining room and watched the passing scene on South Street as I enjoyed my steak sandwich. If Pat's steak sandwiches have been #1 and Geno's #2 or the other way around, then Jim's steak sandwiches came to a close third. For dessert, I stopped into the Famous Deli, 4th St. and Bainbridge St. (215-922-3274). Since 1923, there has been a deli here. In addition to oversized desserts, this deli served other oversized foods: sandwiches, soups, and other menu items at moderate prices. (Most of the sandwiches cost from $10 to $15.) The staff was friendly, and I received free pickles as I read the menu. (Because this place has been just as popular as Jim's Steaks, be prepared to wait in line for a table--but the wait will be worth it.) Besides eating, I also browsed at the many shops along South Street with its diverse merchandise and colorful, avant-garde storefronts. Among the different shops on this street, I saw art galleries and boutiques as well as antique stores, natural-food stores, and many other kinds of shops, both independently owned and chain stores. This street was definitely a treat for the eyes!

CAPCLAVE 2005

I started the weekend of October 14-16 by taking a long drive to the Hilton Washington Hotel, Silver Spring, Maryland, to attend the DC-area SF con, Capclave.

Friday, October 14, after I registered (I wouldn't receive my program book until the next day; thank goodness, I had a pocket-program guide from Capclave's web site.), I entered (1) the Con Suite. This mid-sized conference room had tables, tropical decorations, games to play as well as people to talk to and soft drinks. At the first panel, (2) Continuing Universes, the panelists debated the pros and cons of writing continuing characters in a SF series. The panel also talked about the challenges of keeping track of what these characters did in past stories and how they could grow and evolve. For the next panel, (3) Graphic-Novels as Short Fiction, these panelists wondered if graphic-novels were a legitimate form of short fiction. Additionally, they mentioned that different rules applied for graphic-novels versus stories for text. Then, during (4) What's New in Fantasy and SF?, the panel informed the audience about the latest news in the SF publishing business. In addition, they enlightened the audience on who the new writers were. Later, at (5) Where Do Young Adult (YA) Short Stories Come From?, this panel discussed how fantasy sales dominated SF in the YA market. Next, they told the audience what they could and couldn't get away with in a YA story. Finally, for that night, (6) Broad Universe included a panel from the organization of the same name. This group explained how Broad Universe promoted women SF, fantasy, and horror writers, and they described what the organization offered to its members.

Saturday, October 15, (7) God in Fiction was the first panel I attended. After these panelists mentioned what past stories included the Almighty as a main character, they discussed the different ideas other religions have about a Supreme Being. During (8) New Markets for Short Fiction, the panel talked about what publications have been looking for new writers. They also informed the audience about the latest trends in SF. Next, for (9) Internet, Sminternet, this panel debated on whether or not a writer needed the Internet, blog, web page, or e-mail. The answer was no, but computer technology has been making life easier for writers. Before going to dinner, I sat in on one more panel: (10) Blogging. Thus, a group of writers and editors told the audience how they used the blog; however, I guess this has been replacing the chat rooms.

That night, I listened to a question and answer session called (11) Ask the Scientists. Here, scientists/writers answered the audience's questions about artificial intelligence, astronomy, and other scientific subjects.

Sunday, October 16, on this day, I visited (12) the Dealers' Room. Although, this room looked small compared to dealers' rooms at other regional-SF cons, the percentage of dealers selling reading material of SF and fantasy books and magazines was the same: about 50%. The other dealers sold jewelry, t-shirts, costumes, and so forth.

Thus, to summarize this con--the last three Capclaves have become more like relaxacons than regional-SF cons. At least this year's con had two panel rooms (but no Art Show). I was also disappointed in the program books being late (shades of Lunacon!). Although I wouldn't travel a distance to this con again, for somebody in the DC area, it is worth the trip.

A LITERARY WEEKEND IN WASHINGTON, DC

On October 21, I rode the train from Philadelphia to Washington, DC, and stayed for two nights in the city (the first night at the Red Roof Inn and the second night at the Hotel Harrington). The next day, Saturday, October 22, I visited the Library of Congress (LOC), 1st St. and Independence Ave., SE (202-707-5000). Upon entering the Thomas Jefferson Building of this library, the interior looked so beautiful that I didn't know whether to first glance up, down, or sideways! In addition, the LOC has been the largest library in the world. I started my visit by taking a free guided tour. Here, the tour guide showed our group the different rooms on and off the Great Hall in this 1897 building. Just observing those rooms took up much time. Most of the interior included mosaic and painted murals on the walls and ceilings, stained-glass windows and ceilings, marble columns and walls as well as polished floors of marble or mosaics, several statues, and other fascinating details. Permanently displayed on the first floor has been the Giant Bible of Maintz and the Guttenberg Bible. Up on the second floor, I toured the American Treasures Gallery. Here's where the LOC showcased around 300 historical items that represented its collection in text, pictures, videos, and other objects. Another gallery displayed a temporary exhibit theme. When I was there, they presented Bound for Glory: America in Color 1939-43. Thus, I noticed color photos that photographers took of different parts of the USA to record the effects of the Great Depression on the population. Finally, on the ground floor, the LOC devoted a special gallery to the late performer Bob Hope. By way of exhibit items, personal mementos, and pictures as well as text, audio recordings, and videos, I learned about Bob Hope's years in show business. This gallery covered Hope's early years in vaudeville up to his later TV appearances.

Sunday, October 23, for this day, I entered another literary institute: the US National Archives (NA), Constitution Ave., between 7th St. and 9th St., NW (202-501-5000). From the outside, the NA looked like a Roman temple displaying Corinthian columns. Inside, once past the security check, I went to the lower level and saw an 11-minute documentary film presenting the NA's role in preserving the records of the nation. On the main level, I first toured the Public Vaults. Here, via pictures, text, and maps as well as videos, computers, and other exhibit items, I looked at the basic materials that made history. The earliest material went back to the 18th century, and other materials dated up through the years into the 21st century. Next, I entered the rotunda where I had to wait in line for a while. During that time, I observed the two murals on the back walls. One mural depicted the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and the other showed the signers of the US Constitution. As the line moved on, I noticed several cases displaying documents that lead to the creation of the Declaration of Independence. Then, I viewed the three most important documents: the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. The next several cases after this displayed documents that people wrote from the 18th century to the late-20th century that may or may not have lead to added amendments in the US Constitution. Finally, I glanced at a 1297 CE copy of the Magna Carta and a temporary exhibit of two hand-sewn samplers from the 18th century. In its own way, this 1935 building was handsome. Although it wasn't as colorful as the LOC, I did admire the marble floors, walls, and stairs as well as the brass handrails, doors, and water fountains.

A CAPITOL VISIT IN NEW JERSEY'S CAPITAL

Saturday, October 29, I traveled to Trenton, NJ, and saw the legislative building in my own state. The NJ State House, 125 W. State St. (609-633-2709) has been the second oldest state capitol in continuous use. Once inside, I took a free guided tour. While explaining how NJ's government worked, our tour guide showed us the different rooms in this building. First, I saw the main hallway with its portraits of past NJ governors. Then I noticed the elaborate Victorian details: carved wood trim on the walls and stained-glass windows as well as marble floors and chandeliers. During this tour, I especially remembered observing a porcelain sculpture displaying different state symbols of NJ. They included the state bird (American goldfinch) and state insect (honeybee) as well as the state flower (violet) and the state tree (red oak). Next, the guide led me upstairs to the Governor's Reception Room, the 1890s General Assembly Room, and 1903 Senate Chamber. In these rooms as well as in the adjoining hallways, I looked at more marble on the floors (and walls), more stained-glass windows (and ceilings), and more wood trim on the walls. The guide also informed me that some of the "marble" and "wood trim" was really made of plaster; however, I couldn't tell the difference. This was a fabulous building from the marble floors to the gold dome on top!

AUTUMN IN GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

I spent Saturday, November 5, at the Budget Host Three Crowns Motor Lodge, 205 Steinwehr Ave. (717-334-6116). This inexpensive, one-story motel with free parking and free continental breakfast, accepted major

credit cards. Unlike other countless visitors to this town, I didn't come here to look at anything to do directly with the American Civil War. Instead, on Sunday, November 6, I went to the National Park Service Visitor Center to buy tickets for a shuttle bus to take me to the Eisenhower National Historic Site (717-338-9114). President Dwight D. Eisenhower ("Ike") and his wife, Mamie, lived here from 1950 until his death in 1969. (Mamie stayed here until her death in 1979). Ike first saw this area in 1918 when he spent World War I at Camp Colt in Gettysburg, PA. At that time, he was in charge of training soldiers for the army's tank corps. After Ike purchased his Gettysburg farm in 1950, he hired architects to restore and reconstruct parts of the 18th-century farmhouse between 1950-55. During his presidency (1953-61), he and Mamie used this place as a weekend retreat and entertained many famous guests from world leaders to show business celebrities. After his two terms as president were over, he retired here where he spent much of his time with business and political associates, writing his memoirs, and pursuing his hobbies. On this tour of his home and farm, I saw the guest house and the main house with its 1950s- to '60s-style furniture and interior. Then, I observed his barns, the Black-Angus cattle, displays of farm vehicles and equipment as well as cars and other vehicles dating from the 1950s and '60s. Other parts of the grounds showed his greenhouses, putting green, and reception center. At the reception center, I noticed a gift shop; videos about Eisenhower's life; and a small museum exhibiting pictures, text, and mementos from Ike and Mamie. Because I visited during the autumn, the fall foliage added to the beauty of this rolling countryside!

PHILCON 2005

For the weekend of December 9-11, I attended Philcon at the Philadelphia Marriott, 12th St. and Market St. in Center City.

Friday, December 9, after I registered for this con, the first place I visited was (1) the Con Suite. Similar to past Philcons, the con committee offered the usual snack foods, soft drinks, and chances to listen to and talk to other SF fans. The first panel I attended was (2) Orientation: Philcon 101. Aside from about four people in the room, everybody else has been to past Philcons. (I attended my first Philcon in 1980; somebody else in the room has been attending Philcon since 1965!) This panel gave the history of Philcon and mentioned what Philcon had to offer for SF fans. At (3) The Tinkerer in the Basement, or Big Science vs. Garage Science panel, the panelists wondered if there were still places for amateur scientists, despite the big government agencies and contractors. For the next panel, (4) In the Footsteps of Apollo: Return to the Moon, these panelists talked about how people should return to the moon and why they should return. As for the final panel I attended that night, (5) What We Don't Know, those panelists speculated about what we might know in science in about 100 years that we don't know in 2005.

Saturday, December 10, this day started by my sitting in on the following panel, (6) Doves Among the Hawks. Here, the panelists mentioned some examples of anti-militaristic SF, including the *Star Trek* (ST) episode, "A Taste of Armageddon." During the next panel, (7) Why We Got Up So Early on Saturday Mornings: Fantastic Filmation, many SF fans in the room talked about their favorite SF and fantasy cartoons. (My favorite was the ST cartoon series.) At the next panel, (8) Here Lies ST, almost everybody wondered if there was room for another ST series, or was ST dead? Once more, having to do (loosely) with ST, (9) The Shatner Conundrum, covered the career of actor William Shatner. Because he has become a major figure in media-SF, this panel asked if Shatner's influence in SF was good or bad. Before going to dinner, I visited (10) the Art Show. For 2005, Philcon's Art Show didn't have as many artists displaying their artwork as in past years because a sizable number of display cubicles were empty. I noticed that about two-thirds of the artists presented paintings and drawings, and the rest showed other media: sculptures and jewelry as well as woodwork, needlepoint, and so on. Around 75% of the artwork displayed fantasy themes, and the rest exhibited SF and space themes.

That night I watched (11) the Masquerade. Unlike other masquerades where the emcee usually dressed in a fantasy, horror, or SF costume, this emcee dressed as Santa Clause. Nevertheless, as in the past few years, there were few entries in the Masquerade--only 11. Six costumers wore fantasy costumes, and the others wore SF costumes.

Sunday, December 11, during this last day, I entered (12) the Dealers' Room. Unlike the Art Show, the usual number of dealers showed up. Here, around half of the dealers sold reading material in books, magazines, and fanzines. The rest sold other merchandise: jewelry, costumes, and sculptures as well as t-shirts, buttons, bumper stickers, games, and so forth.

Therefore, to sum this con up, I enjoyed the multi-track programming, especially any programming having to do with space exploration. I plan to attend Philcon 2006 at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza, 17th and Race Sts., (Center City) Philadelphia on November 17-19.

DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS CONTINUES will come out twice a year, and the first issues of the year will most likely have reports about my weekends in New York City and reports about Balticon. The second issues for the year will have reports about other weekends in NYC, weekends in Philadelphia, and reports about Philcon.

I usually mention the previous year's recommendations in the first issue of the following year. Because I'm still working on the new newsletter format, I've decided to put it in this issue. Therefore, this past year (Volume #6) in Issue #1, I listed a discount USA travel guide and the address for a Washington, DC, area anime con. For Issue #2, I mentioned an Australian-published discount USA travel guide and two of my favorite SF magazines. Issue #3 had a recommendation to

join a USA/Canadian auto club and a phone number and web site for a comic-book con in Philadelphia. Finally, in this issue, on page one, I included a British-published discount USA guide and a phone number and web site for a comic-book con in New York City.

Meanwhile, I plan to write two yearly columns. The first column will be about a twice-yearly weekend in Washington, DC, called MY CAPITAL TIME; a few fanzines plan to publish it. For the second column, THE STATE I'M IN, I will be visiting a different place in New Jersey once a month; some professional publications plan to publish it. I will also be writing other stuff as well.

Finally, before I sign off, you can check out my web site at http://lp_web4us.tripod.com/index.htm, <lp_web4us.tripod.com>, or search for the keyword "Dotty's Dimensions" with Google. In addition to the headings for my publications, I also have links to other web sites, including certain celebrity web sites such as George Takei and John Inman. Until I get in touch again, happy 2006!