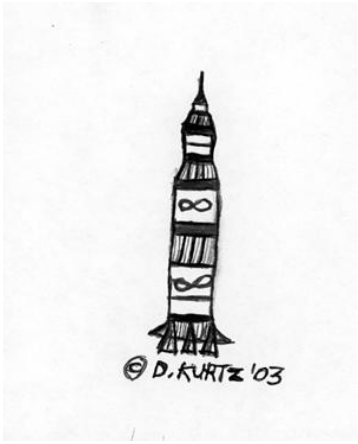
# DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS

by Dorothy M. Kurtz

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Greetings. As I am rewriting this opening paragraph, it is Saturday, February 1, 2003; at the same time, I'm watching the news on TV and hearing about the tragedy of the Space Shuttle *Columbia*. I offer my condolences to the families and friends of the seven astronauts who lost their lives on this day. Although NASA will look into the causes of today's disaster, I also hope that human space exploration continues. Please keep in mind that since the space shuttle missions began in 1981, altogether, there have been only two shuttle tragedies and 111 successful shuttle missions. From time to time, in aviation and spaceflight, there will be accidents, and some people will lose their lives. Therefore, it would be an even worse tragedy if these seven astronauts died in vain because the USA turned its back on human spaceflight!

To those of you who've noticed my illustration in the last issue, I drew that holly because of the holiday season. For this issue, I drew an abstract rocket ship.

Back in Volume #2, Issue #1, I recommended a visit to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), 11 W. 53rd St., NY. But for now until sometime in 2005, the MoMA is in Queens while awaiting the renovation of its Manhattan building. Its location at this moment is MoMA/Qns., 33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400).

One of my favorite actors from the original *Star Trek* (ST) series, George Takei (Lt. Sulu), has a good web site with timely updates at <http://www.georgetakei.com/>. Check it out.

I wish I could say the same for John Inman's web site at <http://www.johninman.co.uk/>, especially because his fan club is semi-retired. Mr. Inman's web site has mostly remained a billboard. Anyway, I do know that John plans to perform near Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, in a show called *Bedside Manners* at the Twelfth Night Theatre, Bowen Hills, from about mid-April to late-June. He also plans to do another pantomime show during the 2003-'04 Christmas season. Again, I wish him the best of luck in his semi-retirement; I only wish that more people could be informed about his plans.

As is usual for this time of year, I do a recap of the recommended sources for checking on more information about certain articles that I wrote last year. Thus (all in Volume #3), in Issue #1, I listed a guide to New York City put out by Knopf and the address for Farpoint convention (con). In Issue #2, I printed the address for JerseyDevilCon and mentioned *Frommer's Guide to Philadelphia*. For Issue #3, I included a listing for *Let's Go: Washington, DC* guide and the address for Shore Leave con. And finally, for Issue #4, I provided a listing for *Ulysses Canada* guide and the address for Philcon. Check out my web site at <http://lp_web4us.tripod.com/> <lp_web4us.tripod.com> or send for the paper copies of DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS for more details.

For this issue, I've included a report about my 2003 trip to New York City and two science fiction (SF) con reports: Farpoint in Maryland and Lunacon in New York.

As to what I recommend in this issue, the following sources can give more details in relation to what I wrote: *Blue Guide: New York*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., ISBN 0-393-319-857 and Lunacon, PO Box 3566, New York, NY 10008.

**IF IT'S JANUARY, IT MUST BE NEW YORK CITY**

Wednesday, January 8, I took the Greyhound bus from Philadelphia to NYC and checked into the Vanderbilt YMCA for the first two nights. (I spent two more nights in the Pickwick Arms Hotel.)

That night, I took the bus down to the East Village and saw an Off-Off Broadway show called *Art, Life, and Showbiz: A Non-Fiction Play* at Performance Space 122 (in an old school building). The writer and director of this show, Ain Gordon, interviewed three actresses: (1) Helen Gallagher (best known for her role as Maeve Ryan, the matriarch in *Ryan's Hope*, a TV soap opera telecasted from 1975 to '89), (2) Lois Pashalinski, and (3) Valda Setterfield (who is also Mr. Gordon's mother). Whether by interview or by talking on her own account (and quite often reenacting), each actress presented her own biography in bits & pieces. At the same time, a view screen on the stage showed

pictures and slides of the actresses in different phases of their careers. In the end, all three actresses agreed: Despite what happened to them in the past, both good and bad, they wouldn't trade a life in show business for any other life.

Thursday, January 9, became my day for staying in Midtown Manhattan as I walked to the main branch of the New York Public Library, 5th Ave. & W. 42nd St. (212-661-7220). The best thing about taking the free guided tour of that impressive Beaux-Arts building was seeing the lovely interiors of some of those rooms. Many of the interiors displayed marble floors as well as carved wood and plaster designs on the walls and ceilings. I also viewed colorful murals on the walls and ceilings in many of these same rooms and hallways. A permanent exhibit area showed pictures, texts, and items that informed the public about the history and function of the NY Public Library. Meanwhile, a few other rooms also provided some temporary exhibit areas to round out the day.

Afterward, I walked over to the Theater District and had dinner at Planet Hollywood, 1540 Broadway & W. 45th St. (212-333-7827). In an upstairs dining room filled with video screens (showing music videos, scenes from films, and trailers from films), I had an interesting dinner. Suspended from the ceiling above me, I saw models of spacecraft, aircraft, and other items. Surrounding the dining room, I noticed showcases containing costumes and props from several films. The food was moderate in price (most entrees were between $10 to $20), and the quality and quantity were good. I definitely received a feast for both my taste buds and eyes in this place.

Friday, January 10, I traveled downtown to Soho and visited the NYC Fire Museum, 278 Spring St., between Varick and Hudson Sts. (212-691-1303). This museum comprised two floors worth of items and artwork having to do with most anything and everything in fire fighting. In this former firehouse (built in 1904), I looked at fire engines (both horse-drawn and motorized) and other fire-fighting items: fire-fighting equipment, badges, awards, fire-insurance markers, uniforms, toy fire engines, pictures, news clippings, and other mementos. Two special rooms on the ground floor were in memory of September 11, 2001. The first room contained touch-screen computer-kiosks that displayed images from the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001: before, during, and after the catastrophe. Nearby, I read a poem called "If They Could Speak." The second room showed a memorial presenting the pictures, names, and badge numbers of over 300 fallen firefighters. Along the walls in this room were photos in chronological order that covered the attack on the World Trade Center. I also saw display cases of some of the dust-covered items recovered from Ground Zero.

Later, I walked over to the next block to have dinner in what looked to me as a cozy-neighborhood bar & restaurant, The Emerald, 308 Spring St., between Hudson & Greenwich Sts. (212-226-8512). Inside, the Victorian interior displayed plenty of carved-wood paneling and etched-glass mirrors that reminded me of some of the pubs I've seen in London. A jukebox played songs from the 1970s through the 21st century, and the menu offered a good choice of American, British, and Irish pub-grub at reasonable prices. (Most entrees are under $10.) The portion sizes and the taste of the food made this an even better bargain.

Saturday, January 11, I headed toward the Upper West Side to the New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St. & Central Park West (212-873-3400). Because the American Museum of Natural History stood next door, many tourists often overlooked this museum. Nevertheless, this place was also worth a trip in itself. Upon entering, I went up to the fourth floor and saw the Henry Luce III Center for the Study of American Culture. That floor alone could take up most of the day because it contained around 40,000 objects. (Not all of these items, however, were on display at the same time.) I felt as though I were in an antique dealer's private warehouse: I saw several pictures (including some of John James Audubon's *Birds of America* prints), sculptures, furniture (including George Washington's inaugural chair), and other items (including the largest collection of Tiffany lamps). The second floor displayed American paintings (especially several painted by the Hudson River School of landscape painters), and other rooms on this floor showed temporary exhibits with different themes that tied into the day-to-day life of the past four centuries. More temporary exhibit rooms on the first floor showcased exhibits connecting them to the history of NYC, NY, or the USA.

Next, I had dinner at the Conservatory Café in the Mayflower Hotel, 15 Central Park West & W. 61st St. (212-641-1173). Before going to a performance or tour of Lincoln Center, a lunch or dinner here could be a good start to the afternoon or evening. Again, the restaurant charged moderate prices for entrees here (between $10 to $20), but the size of the servings, and the attention to detail in the look and flavoring of the food were well worth it. I had an interesting window-side table where I looked at the views of Central Park. Immediately after dinner, I walked over to the plaza at Lincoln Center. Then, as I stood in front of the New York State Theater, I looked up toward the northeast and saw the other *Statue of Liberty*. (Many people don't realize that there are three *Statues of Liberty* made from Frederic Auguste Bartholdi's original molds: (1) The most famous is the statue on Liberty Island in New York Harbor; (2) the second most famous is a smaller statue on an island in the Seine River in Paris, France; and (3) the other New York statue is a 55-ft. statue on top of the Liberty Warehouse on 43 W. 64th St., between Central Park West & Broadway. Even though this statue is not open to the public, and its green coloring is the result of green paint and not verdigris, there is no doubt that this statue is definitely in New York. I'm sure by now that many of you are aware of the debate going on between some residents of New York and some other residents

in New Jersey as to which state Liberty Island is really located in. The reason for this debate is that Liberty Island and Ellis Island are located closer to the New Jersey shoreline.)

Sunday, January 12, I made my out-of-borough trip this year to Staten Island. As I rode the S74 Bus from the ferry terminal in St. George to Richmond Town, in the center of the island, the scenery changed from urban to suburban to almost looking rural by the time I reached my destination: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. (718-351-1611). I expected to see quaint country towns, for example, in sections of Pennsylvania or Virginia, but not in this place, which has been legally part of NYC. Anyhow, this village comprised more than two-dozen buildings on 100 acres. (Some of those building are original to Richmond Town, and the restoration committee had the other buildings moved from other parts of Staten Island.) Meanwhile, on a guided tour, about half of these buildings have been opened to the public. In addition to showing me the buildings' interiors that dated from the late-17th century through the 19th century, the guide also explained what the day-to-day life would have been for the people who once occupied those places. Back in the historical-museum building (dating from 1848), I saw pictures, objects, and a video that covered more of Staten Island's history and the history of preserving Historical Richmond Town.

After this, I went home, and I've since learned that the NYC Transit Authority plans to phase out using tokens by the summertime in favor of using MetroCards. I'm not crazy about this idea, but I have no choice! I'll have to use the MetroCard in the future.

**FARPOINT 2003**

Friday, February 14, I arrived at the Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, Hunt Valley, Maryland. Little did I realize that my stay would be longer than I anticipated, but I'll get into that part later. Unlike the past cons that I've covered in these publications, I didn't see as much of the programming because I volunteered to help out (and see what goes on behind the scenes). So, I won't be writing about this con in a play-by-play style: (1), (2), (3), and so on.

After I registered for the con, I reported to the head-of-logistics who told me that I would be on duty the next day for three hours at "Check Point Charlie." ("Check Point Charlie" is an entrance to a hallway outside of the main ballrooms. My duty there included making sure that people had their con badges visible to me. If they didn't have a badge visible, I was to ask them politely if I could see their badge. Then, if they still didn't have a badge, I suggested to them to check with registration; in the very rare event that somebody became difficult, I would go to registration and they would notify both the hotel and con security.) Meanwhile, I looked at the Dealers' Room and saw the usual merchandise that I've seen at last year's Farpoint. Next, in the Art Show, I noticed that about 90% of the art showed fantasy themes and the remainder displayed SF themes. Most artists (around 95%) exhibited paintings and drawings, and the rest of the artists preferred showing jewelry. I finally caught two panels before retiring for the night: Creating a Web Page and a panel about the Sci-Fi Channel. I've heard similar panels at past cons with similar information; thus, after this, I called it a night.

Saturday, February 15, I listened in on one presentation, News From the Universe, that covered different facts about the *Hubble Space Telescope* (HST) and the discoveries made by the HST. Nevertheless, I've "been there, done that" before at other cons. (This event, however, is interesting for other SF fans who are seeing this presentation for the first time.) Later, from noon to 3:00 pm, I did the badge check at "Check Point Charlie." Those next few hours proved very interesting because the con came to me as I saw several people walk by in costume as well as in normal clothing. I noticed several Star Fleet uniforms from the different ST series and several Klingons. In fact, I sat between a Klingon jail and a table where a fellow sold Klingon language guides. (In the makeshift Klingon jail, a SF fan gets himself or herself "arrested"; then, someone else posts "bail" for the imprisoned fan. Afterward, the bail money goes to charity.) Across from me, I saw a recruitment table from a ST club; nearby, I glanced at a closed-circuit TV that showed the activities going on in the adjoining ballroom. When the crowds were slack, I had a chance to watch this TV monitor myself. Anyhow, almost everybody seemed very polite to me, and I didn't encounter any trouble whatsoever. (I even accidentally asked some of the guests-of-honor if they had their badges; I didn't recognize them without their makeup, and some of them did age a bit since they were on a regular TV series. Anyway, they were very good-natured when I asked them to show their badges.) I also met someone from my hometown.

After my duty was up, I went to dinner and later volunteered to help out with the Masquerade. This time, for about an hour, I held the door open for the costumers to enter a service hallway leading to the stage. In the meantime, I noticed that about half of the costumers (out of about 20 entries) wore fantasy costumes and the other half wore SF costumes. I especially noticed several ST Star Fleet uniforms and Klingons.

Sunday, February 16, I took one look outside of my hotel window and knew that I would be staying for two more extra nights. The snow that wasn't supposed to come until Sunday afternoon arrived at 4:00 am Sunday morning. By the time I woke up around 8:00 am, the snow was quite deep. Thus, I went to the hotel registration and booked for two more nights. The hotel offered a "special snow rate" of close to 50% off the usual con rate. Later, I went to one of the ballrooms and saw a presentation of film trailers while the hosts and fans in the audience said funny comments. ("Go to Farpoint and get plowed!") Next, I saw slides and listened to one of the guests-of-honor, Susan Sackett, talk about the years that she worked with Gene Roddenberry. (She was Roddenberry's secretary from the

early-1970s; also, she wrote a few non-fiction ST books.) Finally, I attended a few panels: Copyright and Fandom, Search for Extra Solar Planets, and Building SF Models--all of which I've covered at past cons.

For the rest of my stay, I spent most of Monday shoveling snow. (The snow in the Baltimore area stopped on mid-Monday morning; it accumulated at about 26 inches deep. During Sunday and Monday, the Governor of Maryland ordered everybody to stay off the roads, unless they absolutely had to be on the roads.) Then, on Tuesday, the highways were cleared enough to travel back to New Jersey. As much as I enjoyed the con, if there is going to be a threat of significant snow next year, I won't be attending Farpoint 2004.

**LUNACON 2003**

Friday, March 21, I headed north toward the Rye Town Hilton, Rye Brook, New York, to attend Lunacon, the New York City area regional-SF con, for three days.

After registering with the con, I checked out the Dealers' Rooms, and I noticed that even with an extra dealers' room (making a total of three dealers' rooms this year), the merchandise stayed pretty much the same as last year's con. Thus, I went to the Volunteer Table and offered to help out at the con. The person behind the table gave me a volunteer ribbon to attach to my con badge and suggested that I should ask around the different rooms to see if anybody needed help. Therefore, I walked into the room that held the Art Show; the Art-Show staff assigned me to work by helping the artists check in. (When the artists arrived at the Art Show with their artwork, the Art-Show staff gave them each an official-art list. The artists list the different facts about their art: titles, code numbers, lowest-bid prices, and asking prices for sale [or in some cases, a not-for-sale artwork--display only]. Later, after they set up their art displays, they returned to the staff table saying that they were ready to check in. This was where I came in: I took the artist's list, went to his or her display area, and then, I made sure that the facts on the official-art list matched up with the art he or she had displayed. If all was well, I signed my name to the list and handed the artist a copy of the list plus the artist ribbon to attach to his or her con badge.) Most of the artists proved to be very cooperative and helpful as I checked their displayed art with the items they wrote in their official-art list. In-between checking in artists, I also took time to notice the artworks themselves: About 75% of the art covered fantasy themes, and the rest showed SF and space art. The favorite displayed art mediums were paintings and drawings by about 75%, and the rest of the art exhibited other mediums: sculpture, tapestry, dolls, jewelry, and so on. After being on duty for three hours, I called it a night.

Saturday, March 22, I sat in on these three panels before supper: Science and Fiction in Comics, what works in comic book SF and what doesn't; Internet Fandom, how the Internet helps and hinders SF fandom; and Magazine Publishing, distribution and marketing magazines and the effects the Internet has had on paper publications. (I have heard similar panels at past cons.)

For Saturday night, I offered to help out at the Masquerade. This time, I received a Masquerade-staff ribbon to add to the other ribbon on my con badge and reported to the Green Room. At first, I helped the Masquerade Staff set up the chairs, signs, and a table for the room; later, a staff member asked me if I would like to be "den-mother" for the children's section. After being assured that most of these children would have their parents in the Green Room supervising them, I agreed to help out. (A "den-mother" made sure that the Masquerade contestants did certain things: had something to eat and drink [we didn't want them passing out on stage], were not too nervous about being on stage, were directed to the repair table if something went wrong with their costumes, saw to it that they had their pictures taken by the official photographer, suggested that they get their costumes pre-judged, and more.) When the time came to bring my group on stage, I had to lead them through a very long service corridor to an elevator (lift) to the floor above; then, we went through the kitchen and to the door leading to backstage right. At that point, the staff in the ballroom took over temporarily while I walked through the side corridor toward the assembly area and into another door that led to backstage left. When my group finished their stage presentations, I tried to lead them through the assembly area, down some stairs, and into the Green Room again where the fan photographers wanted to take pictures of my group. In my case, however, only one child followed me that far; the rest of the children wanted to go back in the ballroom and watch the rest of the Masquerade. (This time around, it was up to their parents to lead them to the Green Room.) During my stay in the Green Room, I noticed that this year's Masquerade had only 13 entries; and except for two SF costumes, the rest of the costumers wore fantasy costumes. (I also noticed how much the Green Room changed since the days I entered the Masquerade in the late-1970s and early-80s. Back then, the Green Room was strictly a place for some last-minute touchups to a costume. Nowadays, the Green Room has a repair table with needles, threads in many colors, duct tapes in a few different colors, hot-glue guns, fabric glue, staplers, hammers, blow dryers, a make-up mirror, and even a hacksaw. Another table had snack foods, soft drinks, and water--in case the costumer forgot to eat and drink for several hours; that's what I call service.)

Sunday, March 23, I attended two panels before going home: Freelance Writing and Small Press Publishing. Because I've heard similar talks at other cons, I won't go into the details here. (Check the con reports in some of my back issues for more panel details.)

To sum up this con--Lunacon has improved their programming, especially for Friday night, and they even added some talks having to do with space exploration! (Maybe they read my e-mail from last year suggesting some space

exploration in their programming.) I am looking forward to attending next year.

When you hear from me again in July, I hope to have some SF-con reports about JerseyDevilCon and Balticon. I also plan to write about some weekends spent in Philadelphia.

Until the next issue comes around, keep in touch. Goodbye for now!