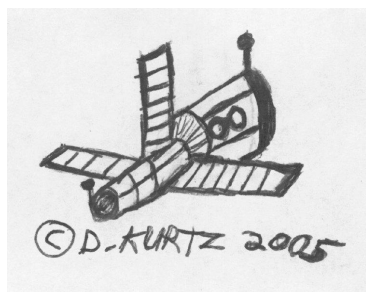


DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS

by Dorothy M. Kurtz

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Hello. A lot can happen in three months, especially in a city I have enjoyed visiting: London. The bombings of London's Underground and busses definitely bothered me because I've used the Russell Square Underground Station frequently. In addition, two of the hotels that I used to stay in often during my London trips are located near Tavistock Square. My condolences go out to anybody affected by this horrible event. Nevertheless, we can't let the terrorists win; life must go on! **STOP PRESS:** Unfortunately, it's going to take a much longer time for the victims of Hurricane Katrina to go back to normal--if that's possible. Again, my condolences go out to anybody affected by this disaster.

Back in the Summer 2005 issue of DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS, I said I planned to stop publishing this newsletter on a quarterly basis after 2006. Thus, next year, I'll publish the newsletter twice a year using a slightly different format. I will have more details in the next issue.

For this issue's illustration, I drew a space station loosely based on the old-Russian-Salyut space stations. It also ties in to the good news about the recent successful launch and landing of the Space Shuttle *Discovery*. The bad news, however, is NASA's grounding of the space shuttle fleet until they can resolve the foam-shielding problem.

This past September, the day after I attended the Big Apple Comic-Con (con), I revisited the USS Intrepid Sea-Air-Space

Museum. Here, I saw the British Airways Concord. Unlike the Air France Concord in the Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Center, the public can enter the BA Concord and view the passenger cabin and cockpit.

In this issue, I'll be reporting on my mini trip to New York City and my main vacation to Canada (in Toronto, Ontario, and Montreal, Quebec). I also have reports on events and places having to do with science fiction (SF) and space: Shore Leave 2005, Virginia Air and Space Center, Philadelphia Comic-Con as well as the Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Center and the Big Apple Comic-Con.

Meanwhile, if you join your local American Automobile Association (AAA) or Canadian Automobile Association (CAA), you will find both organizations have reciprocal agreements on roadside assistance and AAA/CAA discounts. Even if you don't drive, the free guidebooks are worth it. (Check your phone book for the nearest AAA/CAA office.) Also, if you would like more information about the Philadelphia Comic-Con, telephone 856-782-0817 or check their web site at

www.philadelphiacomic-con.com.

SUMMER IN NEW YORK CITY

Friday, July 1, as soon as I arrived in NYC, I headed toward the Upper East Side, especially the east 60s, and browsed in the neighborhood shops. During dinnertime, I ate at a restaurant called "Eat Here Now" Diner, 839 Lexington Ave., near 64th St. (212-432-6240). This local diner displayed an interior of wood panel, many large mirrors on the walls, and a pressed-tin ceiling. As for the food, in addition to the usual American-diner favorites of hamburgers, meatloaf, chicken, and so forth, this place offered some Greek entrees at very low prices. (Many of the dinner entrees cost less than \$10.) The restaurant proved to be a welcome low-cost oasis in the expensive Upper East Side.

Saturday, July 2, after almost being stuck in an elevator/lift at Grand Central Terminal, I took the subway uptown and walked to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Ave. (10th Ave.), at 112th St. (212-316-7540). Although the cathedral has been two-thirds finished, there was still plenty to see. Officially, the Episcopal (Anglican) Diocese of New York operates this place of worship. Unofficially, however, people of many faiths have been welcome to worship here. In addition, this cathedral served the local community in many ways from outreach for the needy to a wide range in the performing and visual arts. When I was there, I admired the elaborate Gothic stone carving around the outside of the building and the great bronze doors that depicted scenes of the Old and New Testaments from the Bible. Inside, I looked at the lovely stained-glass windows that presented both religious and secular images. Then, along either side of the nave, the cathedral displayed 14 theme bays honoring different professions or Human endeavors, including a Poets' Corner. Other bays and chapels honored victims of past disasters, including September 11, 2001. On December 18, 2001, fire destroyed

the North Transept; in 2003, the cathedral staff and volunteers started to do post-fire repairs and cleaning that continues into the present.

That night, I attended the Richard Rodgers Theater and saw a Broadway show, *Movin' Out*. The story synopsis said that this play was about six friends as they go through Vietnam in the 1960s and the 1970s drug scene. On the other hand, the actors/dancers gave no dialog. Instead, they danced their scenes in a ballet-meets-jitterbug style to the tune of Billy Joel's songs. Nevertheless, I still enjoyed what I saw and realized that ballet doesn't require classical music.

Sunday, July 3, for this year's out-of-borough trip, I took the subway to Brooklyn Heights and visited the Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St., southwest corner, and Clinton St. (718-222-4111). Housed in a building erected in 1878-'81, this museum has been informing the public about Brooklyn's history and life. When I was there, the museum presented two special exhibits: Brooklyn Works, 400 years of making a living in Brooklyn; and Dodgers Do It!, celebrating the Brooklyn Dodgers winning the 1955 World Series in baseball against the New York Yankees. At the first exhibit area, I learned about the day-to-day lives of different people and their jobs from the past four centuries. By way of pictures, mementos, videos as well as audio presentations, texts, tableaux, hands-on areas, and other items, workers from Brooklyn's past and present explain about their jobs and their daily lives. The second exhibit area covered the details about the times and feelings of the Dodgers' fans during the 1955 World Series. Via pictures, texts, and audio presentations, I observed the game-to-game progress that led to the Dodgers finally winning the World Series.

SHORE LEAVE 2005

For the weekend of July 8-10, I headed down to Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn, Hunt Valley, Maryland, and attended my favorite media-SF con, Shore Leave.

Friday, July 8, after I registered, I decided that I would mainly attend the space-science-track programming. Thus, I listened to a talk and slide show about (1) Visions of the Cosmos. Science writer and editor Carolyn Collins showed slides of the planetarium where she worked, different kinds of telescopes, and of the cosmos from planets in our solar system to the galaxy and beyond. (2) At Space Access and Utilization, Dr. Yoji Kondo talked about many subjects dealing with getting into space: the costs, robot versus Human missions, different propulsion systems, and so forth. (3) For Introduction to Amateur Astronomy, Lucy Albert presented slides on how to get started in astronomy for a hobby. Here, I saw slides of recommended binoculars and telescopes as well as slides of the cosmos. Before calling it a night, I went to one more talk and slide show: (4) *Infinite Worlds: An Illustrated Voyage to Planets Beyond our Sun*. The author of this book, Ray Villard, projected slides of illustrations from his book mentioned above.

Saturday, July 9, Carolyn Collins Petersen presented (5) Four Years of Gemini Science via slides and a talk. Here, I saw pictures of the Gemini Observatory and what this observatory saw in the cosmos. Next, (6) 15 Years of the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) became a discussion and slide show of both the HST and how it works as well as what the HST has seen lately in the cosmos. At (7) SIM/TPF: Finding Earth-Like Planets, I learned what the above letters meant (SIM: *Space Interferometry Mission* and TPF: *Terrestrial Planet Finder*) and how NASA hopes to use both methods to find Earth-like planets. As for the next presentation, (8) the Challenges of Sending People to Another Star, David Batchelor explained the ABCs of interstellar travel, including the different propulsion systems and what our laws of physics presently allow. Then, I visited (9) the Art Show. When I was there, I noticed that about two-thirds of the artwork presented fantasy themes, and the rest showed SF and space themes. Around 75% of the art displayed drawings and paintings, and the rest exhibited other mediums: sculptures, woodwork, glasswork, knit & crochet work, and so forth.

That night, I watched (10) the Masquerade. Out of 30 entries, about two-thirds of the costumers wore SF costumes, and the others wore fantasy costumes.

Sunday, July 10, before heading home, I listened to the following talk: (11) A Brief History of Astronomy Leading Up to the HST. Here, with the help of slides, Kirk Borne covered the subject above. Finally, I entered (12) the Dealers' Room. Thus, I observed that about 25% of the dealers sold reading material of mostly media-related SF books, magazines, and fanzines. The rest of the dealers sold other kinds of merchandise: buttons, pins, toys as well as t-shirts, DVDs, costumes, and other things.

Therefore, on the way home, I summed up the con. The space-science program proved to be better than many of the regional-SF cons. If you are a fan of media-SF, interested in space travel, or both, I highly recommend attending Shore Leave!

VIRGINIA AIR AND SPACE CENTER

Saturday, July 23, after taking a very long drive down most of the length of the Delmarva Peninsula the day before, I spent two nights at the Econo Lodge, Route 13, Virginia Beach. I was in the Hampton-Roads Area because I visited the Virginia Air and Space Center, 600 Settlers Landing Road, Hampton (707-727-0900 or 800-296-0800). Therefore, I started my visit by seeing (1) the top floor gallery. Here, I had a birds-eye view of several full-sized aircraft and spacecraft as well as an overview of the museum. Next, I spent most of my time on the two main exhibit floors. Each floor displayed an almost equal amount of air and space exhibit areas, and several flight simulators. Thus, I spent some time, via a flight simulator, flying and crash-landing (2) a space shuttle, (3) a jet, and (4) a small prop plane. (Somehow, I don't

see a bright future for myself as a pilot!) (5) For the rest of the museum, I looked at many exhibit areas dealing with the history of air and space flight as well as some exhibits on astronomy. Besides full-sized aircraft and spacecraft, the museum displayed model-sized aircraft and spacecraft, pictures, texts as well as videos, hands-on areas, and several mementos. At an extra cost, the public could take a simulated flight and see an IMAX film. I easily spent four interesting hours here!

PHILADELPHIA COMIC-CON

Sunday, July 31, Ramada Philadelphia Airport Hotel, Essington, Pennsylvania: This con was in one room or one Dealers' Room of vendors selling mostly comic books. The most famous brands of comic books for sale were DC and Marvel. In addition to comic books, some dealers sold toys, non-sports trading cards, manga books as well as artwork, books, and magazines. Sitting at a few of those tables, I saw comic-book artists displaying their artwork. Although I wouldn't travel a distance to go to one of these events, because I was in the area, I found it worth attending.

OUT AND ABOUT IN CANADA'S TWO LARGEST CITIES: THE SEQUEL

Friday, August 12, in the last issue, I said I was planning to visit St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada; however, certain circumstances changed my plans, and I decided to revisit Toronto, Ontario, and Montreal, Quebec. Therefore, I started my vacation by taking the usual commuter trains (Patco High-Speed Line, New Jersey Transit's River Line, and a NJT train) to New York City's Pennsylvania Station. Then, I spent the night at the same hotel as at the start of last year's trip to Canada: the Hotel Pennsylvania.

Saturday, August 13, very early in the day (7:15 am), I boarded the Amtrak Maple Leaf train and rode it for over 12 hours to my final destination: Toronto. Along the way, I slept for the first few hours, and by the time I woke up, the train was in Albany, New York. After Albany, I stayed awake long enough to look at the passing scenery of Western NY. Here, I noticed several towns and small cities as well as many wooded areas. Some cities contained a mix of 19th- and 20th-century buildings. Once in Ontario, I glanced at more towns with a mix of 19th- and 20th-century buildings, and I saw even more wooded areas as well as cornfields, dairy farms, and Lake Ontario until I arrived in Toronto. Afterward, I took a taxi to the Bond Place Hotel, the same hotel I stayed in during my 2002 trip to Toronto.

Sunday, August 14, on my first real sightseeing day, I rode the subway and later, the bus to the Ontario Science Centre (OSC), 770 Don Mills Road (416-696-3127). With over 800 (mostly hands-on) exhibits, I spent at least five hours in this large and active museum. (Of course, this museum has been very popular with children.) During my time here, I learned a bit about different subjects in science: space (especially astronomy), physics, biology as well as communications, the environment, and the science of sports. Other

Monday, August 15, for my second sightseeing day, I visited the Romanesque-Revival-styled Ontario Parliament Building, Queen's Park (416-325-7500). Built in 1893, this pink-sandstone structure with its towers, arches, and elaborate relief carvings looked very impressive. The inside, however, looked even more splendid as I took a free-guided tour and saw the lavish interiors. In the central section of the building and the east wing, I saw some lovely wood-carved wall paneling, chandeliers, and large stained-glass ceilings. Up the main staircase with its gilded classical columns, I toured different rooms, especially the Lieutenant Governor's apartment and the Parliamentary Chambre. Here, I noticed many Victorian and Edwardian interiors containing more fancy wall carvings and furniture while the guide explained to me how Ontario's government worked. Then, I spent the rest of the day walking around Toronto's Chinatown where I also enjoyed a dim-sum lunch.

Tuesday, August 16, via VIA Rail Canada, I traveled from Toronto to Montreal in about five hours. The sights I saw on this train were similar to what I had seen when I took that same route back in 2002. Once in Montreal, I took a taxi to my hotel: the Hotel Viger, the same hotel I stayed in last year for the night and during my 2002 visit to Montreal.

Wednesday, August 17, thus, I spent most of my first sightseeing day in Montreal at the McCord Museum of Canadian History, 690 Sherbrooke Street West (514-398-7100). Despite the museum's name, when I was there, most of the exhibit areas showed life in Montreal. Therefore, I watched a 20-minute film about Montreal's history and its different neighborhoods before I entered the first exhibit area: Growing Up in Montreal or Montreal through the Eyes of a Child. Here via videos, exhibit items, dioramas as well as pictures and text, I learned about the day-to-day life for Montreal's children according to their class and era, both the good and bad parts. One of the few exhibit areas that didn't cover Montreal was Cross Currents: 500 Generations of Aboriginal Fishing in Atlantic Canada. By way of pictures and videos, I looked at the lives of Canada's First Nations People who fished the waters off the coasts of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. Another non-Montreal exhibit-area displayed how artists drew their own political satires of a picture that has become an icon in Canadian history: *The Last Spike*. This was a photograph of Donald Smith (Lord Strathcona) as he drove the last spike to

complete the Canadian Railroad from coast-to-coast on November 7, 1885. Finally, the permanent exhibit area presented Simply Montreal: Glimpses of a Modern City. Again, via pictures and text as well as videos and many mementos, I observed the history of Montreal from the time of the First Nations People to the present. Other areas exhibited pictures of Montreal's citizens at work and leisure as well as how they coped with the harsh winters.

Thursday, August 18, here on my last sightseeing day, I visited the Centre d'Historie de Montreal, 335 Place d'Youngville (514-872-3207). Located in an old firehouse, I looked at the permanent exhibit area on the ground floor where the museum presented five eras in Montreal's history. Via pictures and videos as well as mementos and text, those five eras covered (1) Contact, 1535-1759; (2) Tensions, 1760-1849; (3) Organization, 1850-1899; (4) Unions, 1900-1949; and (5) Explosions, 1950-2003. The floor above included one permanent exhibit, a mock trolley car/tram that I "rode." (This trolley car/tram gave the illusion of moving through different sections of Montreal; in reality, the scenery in the windows moved by.) On the rest of this floor, the museum showed a temporary exhibition, Jazz in Montreal from the 1930s to the present. Thus, I learned that Montreal, especially in the 1930s, 40s, 50s, and even later, had several venues for jazz: concert halls, nightclubs, bars, and so on. Later, I walked through the nearby Vieux Montreal (or Old Montreal) and explored the narrow streets with its share of 18th- and 19th-century buildings, browsed in the shops, and had dinner in a French-Canadian restaurant.

Friday, August 19, I spent most of the day riding the Via Rail Canada train back to Toronto. After I arrived in Toronto, I walked over to the Strathcona Hotel, 60 York St. (416-363-4679). This three-to-four-star hotel looked like it catered to a mostly business clientele and the location, diagonally across the street from Toronto's Union Station, helped. (A room here costs half of what the Royal York Hotel, located across the street, wanted.)

Saturday, August 20, again, I rode another train: the 13-hour Amtrak Maple Leaf from Toronto to NYC. Once in NYC, I took a taxi to the hotel that I was staying the night in: the Pickwick Arms.

Sunday, August 21, finally, I headed home by way of those three commuter trains and completed a successful vacation.

THE NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM'S STEVEN F. UDVAR-HAZY CENTER

I booked an Amtrak train to Washington, DC, and spent two nights in the Hotel Harrington to visit the Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Center, Museum Parkway, Chantilly, Virginia (202-633-1000). Therefore, on Sunday, September 4, at about 9:00 am, a shuttle bus (202-633-4629) drove me from the main National Air and Space Museum (NASM) in Washington, DC, to the Udvar-Hazy Center. The outside of this museum looked like a large airplane hanger with an air-traffic-control tower. Inside, I made a

beeline to (1) the James S. McDonnell Space Hanger. This hanger displayed the Space Shuttle *Enterprise*, other full-sized spacecraft, and model-sized spacecraft as well as mementos, videos, pictures, and text. Four of the main space-related subjects included Human space flight, space science, application satellites, and rockets and missiles. After lunch, I viewed (2) the Donald D. Engen Observation Tower. On the top floor of this mock control tower, I watched jets land at the nearby Dulles International Airport. Below this level, I looked at a replica of an air-traffic-control center. Back in the main hanger, I observed several full-sized and model-sized displays of (3) civilian aircraft in half of the hanger. This museum covered many eras in the history of flight from ballooning in the 18th century to jets of the late-20th century. My favorite aircraft included the Air France Concord and a prototype jet for the Boeing 707. Finally, in the second half of the hanger, I glanced at (4) military aircraft, both full-sized and model-sized, from World War I to the 1990s. Although the museum was huge in square footage, it didn't have as many exhibit areas as the main NASM. Nevertheless, I do recommend seeing this museum because all the aircraft and spacecraft that didn't fit in the main NASM will be on display here.

BIG APPLE COMIC-CON

Saturday, September 10, I rode those three commuter trains up to NYC again. This time, I went to NYC to attend the Big Apple Comic-Con in the Hotel Pennsylvania. Upon entering this (1) Dealers' Room, I noticed that the room was huge! There were over 300 dealers compared to around 30 at the Philadelphia Comic-Con. More than half of the dealers sold comic books. The rest of the dealers sold books, magazines, and toys as well as costumes, t-shirts, and other merchandise. One section of the room included rows of tables where artists sold and displayed their artwork, and another area had more rows of tables where actors from TV shows and films sold autograph pictures of themselves. I bought a commemorative magazine about actor James Doohan. This magazine came out last year when Mr. Doohan announced his retirement from show business at about the same time he earned a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. (Canadian-born Jimmy Doohan [1920-2005] was best known to his many fans as Lieutenant-Commander Scott, chief engineer on board the *USS Enterprise* from the original *Star Trek* [ST] series. ["Beam me up, Scotty!"] I first met him in 1977 at a ST con; since then, I've seen him at other media-SF cons. Jimmy seemed like a warm and friendly person who often took the time to talk to his fans or give a quick interview to those fans of his that were also journalists--like me. His death on July 20, 2005, was a loss to many people.) In addition to the Dealers' Room, this con also had (2) a Seminar Room. Here, I saw the Costume Contest or Masquerade. Unlike other masquerades, the applause of the audience decided which contestants won the contest. Only three girls entered the contest: 3rd prize, a fantasy wench; 2nd prize, "Wonder Woman"; and

1st prize, a female anime warrior. My feelings about this con were similar to the Philadelphia Comic-Con: I wouldn't travel a distance to this kind of con, but locally, it was worth it.

In the next issue, I plan to write about some weekends I've spent in Philadelphia; Washington, DC; New Jersey; and Pennsylvania. I'll also have two regional SF-con reports: Capclave and Philcon.

Before I finish this issue, I want to mention a good friend of mine who passed away on July 30, 2005: Valerie Kelly-Evans (1944-2005). Val and I first corresponded with each other in the 1990s. We both had an interest in SF and traveling, and I first met her during my trip to England in 1999. Since then, we have met a few more times in both the USA and the UK. Every time I've seen her, she has always been friendly, caring, and generous, especially when I visited her at her home in Romford, Essex, England. I am proud to have been her friend! Goodbye.