



Frequent Flyer

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We have had a major change in our life since the last mailing. In late March, Anita's mother took ill and had to check into a hospital. We now believe she had a mini-stroke. After ten days there, she entered a nursing home. For a time, she was on Skilled Care, which is the highest level of care that a nursing home can provide. However, when she stopped responding to therapy, they changed her to Intermediate Care, which is what most nursing home residents are on. It means that she can leave for short visits if someone else will be responsible for her, but normally someone checks on her every two hours and a doctor sees her regularly.

Anita still visits her 2-3 times weekly and does her laundry. She no longer has to buy her groceries each week, nor does she call her 3-4 times daily to check on her. Anita is cleaning out her house a little each week and looking for legal documents.

DeepSouthCon—

I took that Friday off, but had to run some errands before we finally got on the road at 2 PM. We had another delay because of an accident involving a school bus, empty except for the driver, and a van. According to the newspaper, the van had gone on to the shoulder, overcompensated, and ran into the bus, which was traveling in the same direction. Three people were injured, and traffic was backed up for two miles in both directions.

We had another stop, because Anita has been having cravings for ice cream now that the weather has turned hot. About 4 PM we stopped at a Dairy Queen for an ice cream sundae. We also stopped at the last rest area before Birmingham to call the hotel to get directions. Fortunately, we had no trouble finding

the place. We arrived in time for the opening ceremonies and relied on con suite and party food in lieu of dinner. Entertainment at opening ceremonies consisted of music by the Heritage Pipe and Drums, the oldest bagpipe band in Alabama, and dancing by the Ballet Rio Company, a local group. The Boston in 2004 Worldcon bid was the highlight of the parties, although I had to pass on Naomi Fisher's desserts. (Charlotte in 2004 was conspicuous by its absence.)

The Radisson Hotel is a well-maintained property with good meeting room facilities and a friendly staff. Furthermore, there were no elevator problems during the weekend. This was fortunate, because the con suite was on the 14th floor, which is the highest, and the meeting rooms were on the lowest floor. Another popular gathering place was the patio area by the swimming pool. The weather was lovely, so people sat outside and talked.

I attended two program items on Saturday. The first was a one-shot fanzine session hosted by Toni Weisskopf, and I contributed a few paragraphs. The second was an appreciation of Fan Guest of Honor Ned Brooks. The panelists were kinder than we were expecting. Ned has attended every DSC since the third one. After the appreciation, the members of SFPA retired to Gary Robe's room for a party. Gary mixed drinks based on a liquor he had discovered in Brazil, but when I saw him adding sugar, I chose a Brazilian beer instead.

Steve and Sue Francis, who are from Louisville, hosted a Kentucky Derby party on Saturday afternoon. They held a betting pool and served sandwiches. Anita's horse was Jamaican Rum, which we thought appropriate. A bunch of people crowded into their room to watch the race. Jamaican Rum came in sixth.

Frequent Flyer

Anita wanted to eat off parties and the con suite a second night, but I felt the need for a regular meal so I joined Ned, Richard Den- grove, and George and Jill Wells for dinner at a nearby Johnny Rockets. (Rich and Jill and fellow diabetics.) This restaurant has a Fifties theme. Speaking of diabetes, my doctor had just changed my medication, and I had the best blood sugar readings of any convention since my diagnosis over 2 years ago.

I found Anita sitting in the con suite and joined her until it was time to go down for the masquerade. Unfortunately, they cancelled it because of lack of entries. They then an- nounced the Phoenix (Sharon Green), Rebel (Sam Smith and Robert Neagle), and Rubble (Steve and Sue Francis) Award winners. I thought all the winners deserved their awards.

Robert Neagle deejayed a dance afterward to which Anita and I danced a lot. We also at- tended the Chattanooga in 2003 DSC bid, the UK in 2005 Worldcon, and the Huntsville DSC/Constellation parties.

Since I'm an officer of the SFC, I had to get up in time for the 10 AM business meeting. The highlight occurred when Steve Francis presented Julie Wall with a check for \$1,000 from Rivercon. The DSC site selection came next, which Chattanooga won.

I was the only member of the audience at my final program item. Former employees of Zealot.com recounted their experience running a Birmingham-based professional web site devoted to science fiction and fantasy. The site was the victim of the recent dot.com melt- down, but they felt that top management had also misused their venture capital and advertis- ing income. Since the panelists outnumbered me, I had to speak as well. I described my modest fannish and professional writing achievements, especially my experience with Themestream, also a victim of the current eco- nomic climate.

Anita and I had lunch with Adrian Washburn in the hotel restaurant before getting on the road home.

Tennessee Renaissance Festival—

We got into the mood to attend this festi- val by seeing the movie *A Knight's Tale* the Friday night before. We had a good time with the anachronisms, such as the crowd singing Queen's "We Will Rock You" during the joust- ing tournament and the medieval dance turning into disco. The point, if there was one, is that the current popularity of violent sports and en- tertainments such as professional wrestling is nothing new.

It was Mother's Day so we first drove to Lebanon to visit Anita's mother, Jewel, in the nursing home. She was relatively alert and co- herent, and Anita believes it was because the staff took her outside that week. We gave her two cards and half-dozen roses. Jewel needs help to get out of bed, use the potty-chair, and eat, but she kept asking when she could go home. It was heart rendering. Jewel can't eat solid food, so Anita fed her the lunch of apple- sauce, mashed potatoes, pureed black-eyed peas, and pureed something that we couldn't figure out. Jewel's hearing has gotten worse, so we made signs like "How are you?" before we went.

After Jewel finished lunch, we took State Highway 840 from Lebanon past Murfrees- boro past the site where Mike Freeman has built his castle based on the ones Edward I built in Wales. 840 is a controversial highway that opponents claim is the Tennessee Depart- ment of Transportation's first step to build a freeway that encircles Nashville as they do in Atlanta and Houston. The critics argue that Nashville should not use those cities as models for managing growth.

The highway went right through Free- man's property where the festival used to take place and is literally within a stone's throw from his castle. The festival has relocated across a road from the castle and shuttle buses go between so that people can tour Freeman's effort.

We arrived about 2 PM and had a quick lunch of beer and gyro sandwiches. Then we

Frequent Flyer

attended Jimmy Blaze's fire eating and walking show. He does the standard fire eating tricks such as putting a blazing torch in his mouth, and he tells jokes. He also picked a volunteer from the audience for a mind-reading demonstration in which the volunteer is blindfolded and Blaze gives him obvious clues. For example, he took a pair of eyeglasses and told the volunteer, "If you don't get this one, you will make a spectacle of yourself." The show ended with an impressive trick in which he poured gasoline on an iron beam, set the gasoline ablaze, and walked across it barefoot.

Then we listened to the Minstrels of Mayhem, three male musicians who sing and play violin and guitar. They also use volunteers from the audience to add humor to the already bawdy songs.

Afterwards, we took the shuttle bus over to the castle. Anita had not seen it for about eight years, although she attended a few of Freeman's bricklaying parties in the Eighties. It consists of two towers with a connecting hall. The inside is finished on one of them. The exterior is covered with white stucco, so Freeman calls it Castle Gwynn, which is Welsh for "white castle." Freeman has stopped construction until the highway is finished, and his lawsuit is settled. The state offered \$1,000 less per acre than he paid for the site, and he is contesting the amount.

We returned to the festival in time to hear the Roses, a husband and wife team who play 16th Century instruments. A woman playing the recorder and a male drummer accompanied them. We recognized the man from SCA events, and he waved back at us.

The festival climaxed with jousting. One female and two male knights rode Clydesdale horses, also in armor, and competed in various events. The two males then fought with swords and clubs before the main jousting event. No one was unhorsed, but they did break lances. The horses were excited, so they demonstrated their horsemanship by keeping them under control.

The day finished with the pub sing, where several of the acts came together on the stage. We had already seen the Roses and the Minstrels of Mayhem, but also got to see Axel the Sot, a medieval stand-up comic, and the Naughty Nymphs, who sang a bawdy song about the danger of incest.

The only thing that disappointed me was that we hadn't arrived earlier or gone on a different day.

The speed of light—

The following article appeared in the May 11 electronic edition of Infoworld.

Information transfer in less-than-zero time

By John Read

In consistently repeatable experiments, physicists working in Quantum Optics have made light slow from 186,000 miles a second to human walking speed and come to a complete stop, then brought it back to full speed while retaining at least half of the component frequency information stored in it. And with a twist on Special Relativity, they have broken the speed of light -- once thought the absolute maximum speed in the universe. ...

The physicists who performed the light-breaking experiment, known as Gain Assisted Superluminal Propagation, use more precise terminology than "breaking the speed of light" to describe their work. Lijun Wang, Arthur Dogariu, and Alexander Kuzmich at the NEC Research Institute in Princeton, N.J., put it this way: "... the net effect can be viewed as that the time it takes a light pulse to traverse through the specially prepared atomic medium [used in the experiment] is a negative one." In other words, the experimenters said they actually made a laser pulse leave the transfer medium before it fully entered it.

But Superluminal Propagation cannot send information back in time. Even in theory, the new experiments do not allow classical paradoxes such as killing one's own ancestor, thus preventing one's own existence. The laser pulses do arrive before they fully depart, but not

Frequent Flyer

before they start to depart. Rather, they appear to exist simultaneously in two places.... The new experiments involving laser pulses and laser-excited gaseous phases of metallic elements such as cesium, sodium, and rubidium, extend Special Relativity. In practical effect, new experimenters made light exceed "c" not just a little bit, but by more than 300 times "c." ...

It seems me, however, that I read an article about this experiment a few months ago that argued that the conclusion that they could speed light faster than 186,000 miles per second was more semantics than physics.

Comments on #220

SFPA sightings—

It was a pleasure to see Guy Lillian, Steve Hughes, George Wells, Ned Brooks, Sheila Strickland, Richard Dengrove, Toni Weisskopf, Randy Cleary, and Mike Weber at DSC.

Credit cards—

The Kroger stores here in Nashville are now requiring that you show ID when you pay with a credit card.

Arthur Hlavaty—

Anita and I saw Ron Dayne play in person during our annual trip to Wisconsin in 1999. He only gained 135 yards and scored only 3 touchdowns against Murray State, because the coach decided to rest him in the second half.

Be grateful that Wisconsin coach Barry Alvarez has resisted the temptation to jump to the NFL. His concept of offense is to play only offensive linemen who weigh more than 300 pounds (Aaron Gibson at 360 was the ideal), use only fullbacks who weight at least 250 pounds, and give the ball to the tailback 30 times a game.

As you know, the Tennessee Titans traded this year's first round draft choice to St. Louis for Kevin Carter. However, that wasn't

the only cost. They had to cut four of the players allocated to NFL Europe to get back below the salary cap.

I was relieved when Washington failed miserably last year. If it's possible to buy a Superbowl, as it is the World Series, why should we watch? Actually, the Packers had a higher payroll as a result of contracts negotiated in previous years, according to the table on page six.

Qadry Ismail was with the Packers briefly the year they won the Superbowl, but they considered him expendable and traded him for a draft choice.

Don Markstein—

I posted three articles on Themestream in the month before it went bust. I don't expect to see any money.

Gary Brown—

Actually, the NFL played on the Sunday following the JFK assassination. No games were televised, however. A few years ago, one of the networks broadcasting the NFL ran a feature on that Sunday with interviews with Bart Starr, Mike Ditka, and others who played that day. Starr commented that the game didn't seem real.

George Wells—

I can recommend *Chocolate*, even if I am a man.

Steve Hughes—

Anita and I are conscientious about turning off our cell phones during movies.

Richard Dengrove—

The Anna Kournikova virus got into our corporate e-mail system. I have read that photos of the tennis star are some of the most popular downloads on the Internet. I myself don't even know what color hair she has. Although we were not the only company to fall for it, it was rather embarrassing after we

Frequent Flyer

learned that it was quite similar to the Lovebug virus that hit us last year, but did far more damage. I would have expected either that our Norton Anti-Virus would have stopped it or that our people would have known better than to open it after last year. After all, what business purpose does a photo of a tennis star have?

Battlestar Galactica came after *Star Wars* and was more influenced by that movie than by *Star Trek*. Remember that it had space fighter planes and mother ships, no battle cruisers. Adama corresponded to Kenobi and Starbuck to Solo, but there was no equivalent of Kirk and Spock.

David Schlosser—

re Vice-Presidents who became President through death: The only VP who has even been accused of involvement in a presidential

assassination attempt was Lyndon Johnson and then only by some JFK assassination conspiracy theorists.

From what I have read, Aaron Burr felt no remorse over killing Alexander Hamilton, so I suppose he might have killed Thomas Jefferson if he had had the opportunity and thought he could get away with it.

Jeffrey Copeland—

The table page six is derived from documents entered into evidence at the Oakland Raiders-National Football League trial, and I obtained it from the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel web site. The Raiders are claiming the NFL "forced" them to move from Los Angeles back to Oakland.

The Packers had the second highest player payroll in 1999, but won't be able to stay up there for much longer if they continue to be the

Naming Rights

The April 16 issue of *Forbes* included a short piece about a promoter who is trying to persuade players in the National Basketball Association (NBA) to wear corporate tattoos. The tattoos would not be permanent, but rather stick-on. No dollar figures were discussed, but the NBA is not enthusiastic. The article also pointed out that Dennis Rodman's skin is already occupied.

The April 22 issue of *The Tennessean*, our local newspaper, had an article about companies that paid big bucks for the naming rights to stadiums, but then experienced financial difficulties. The article makes the obvious remarks that these companies may have had better uses for their money and that the teams that depend on this income could be in trouble if it disappears.

Stadium's or arena's home team	Corporate Sponsor	Status
Miami Dolphins	Pro Player	Parent company, Fruit of the Loom, has filed for bankruptcy.
Baltimore Ravens	PSINet	Running out of cash and may have to file for bankruptcy.
St. Louis Blues	Savvis Communications	Biggest customer has filed for bankruptcy.
St. Louis Rams	TWA	Bankrupt and being acquired by American Airlines.

Frequent Flyer

second worst in profitability. That is why they feel they must improve their cash flow.

The \$295 million renovation of Lambeau Field will generate more revenue for the Packers by

1. Adding 6,000 bleacher seats to the upper rim of the stadium.
2. Converting the 198 existing suites to 167 luxury suites, that will, of course, rent for more money.
3. Adding 1,140 indoor and 3,200 outdoor club seats.
4. Adding a 27,000 square-foot, five-story atrium featuring retail space and the Packer Hall of Fame, which they currently house in a separate building. The new Hall of Fame will have 5,000 more square feet than the old one.
5. Replacing the existing souvenir shop with its 1,700 square feet with two stores totaling 12,000 sq ft.

In addition, there will be expanded and improved seating for the disabled and more restrooms. The new design will also double the number of concession areas, but this will not generate more revenue, because they are run by non-profit charities.

Norm Metcalf—

Although there were submarines at the time Jules Verne wrote *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, they were extremely primitive compared to Captain Nemo's *Nautilus*. In fact, submarines could only submerge for 24 hours at a time until after World War II. Only when the U.S. Navy built the first nuclear submarine, also called the *Nautilus*, could real submarines duplicate some of the achievements of Verne's fictional one.

I admit that H.G. Wells uses dubious science in *The Invisible Man*, but I still consider it science fiction, because it involves a scientist inventing a new process and then living with the consequences.

National Football League

1999 Team Rank by Profitability (Millions)

Rank	Team	Profits	Player Payroll
1.	Browns	\$36.5	\$45.4
2.	Redskins	\$32.3	\$73.2
3.	Titans	\$32.1	\$66.6
4.	Jaguars	\$27.6	\$59.9
5.	Cowboys	\$25.8	\$66.2
6.	Buccaneers	\$24.5	\$62.7
7.	Rams	\$20.0	\$61.6
8.	Giants	\$18.3	\$63.7
9.	Steelers	\$12.1	\$63.1
10.	Bills	\$11.5	\$62.4
11.	Eagles	\$10.8	\$64.8
12.	Panthers	\$10.4	\$73.6
13.	Vikings	\$9.8	\$68.9
14.	Jets	\$9.7	\$64.3
15.	Dolphins	\$9.6	\$70.2
16.	Ravens	\$9.3	\$70.2
17.	Chiefs	\$9.0	\$76.8
18.	Bengals	\$8.5	\$61.1
19.	49ers	\$8.2	\$71.0
20.	Bears	\$7.9	\$66.1
21.	Chargers	\$6.9	\$65.8
22.	Lions	\$4.1	\$62.4
23.	Colts	\$4.1	\$66.3
24.	Broncos	\$3.2	\$65.7
25.	Falcons	\$2.8	\$66.5
26.	Raiders	\$1.9	\$64.3
27.	Cardinals	\$1.5	\$62.9
28.	Seahawks	\$544,000	\$59.8
29.	Patriots	\$354,000	\$71.2
30.	Packers	\$288,000	\$75.8
31.	Saints	-\$849,000	\$64.7