

PETER, PAN & MERRY #39

A zine for SFPA # 223

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Come and tarry (as opposed to Tom and Jerry) on SFPA 222

Southerner – Rule #4: So, on the whole, you’d rather be in Philadelphia? // It might have been interesting if you could have engineered things so that the page count would have been 222. And everything beyond that could have been sent out as a post-mailing. // There was no need to dissect the joke, I understood the 2-2-2 reference but just couldn’t bring myself to do something about it. If I’d thought about it at the time, I might have done linos from “Letters from the Earth”. // While I think having a “Priority Mail Membership” is a good idea, as long as the OEsip resides with you, Liz or Janice I think I’ll leave my own account as it is.

Norm Metcalf – Ct Rich: I think the thing to keep in mind about Hugos is that the voting is done by a lot of people who “don’t know art, but know what (we) like.” As such, the dichotomy between “best”, “favorite” or “most popular” gets rather blurry. Given the opportunity, I’d vote for the book/story/etc that I enjoyed the most – that being as valid a criteria for “Best” as any I can think of. I would agree that opening up the voting to non-Worldcon members would be a good idea. Although, I’d say that it would also be reasonable to charge a small fee for that (say \$5-10).
// Ct Irv: Taiwan > Phillipines > Borneo > Madagascar leaves a rather large jump between those last two. True, it could be done just as well as a jump across the Pacific to South America but there is actually a couple of land masses between Borneo and Madagascar so I’d suspect that any commerce between the two would have involved Sumatra and India or Sri Lanka. // Ct Steve (and me): In thinking about it, I believe that this debate of whether or not various books by Verne are science fiction or not is akin to the debates about where a given fossil sits on the evolutionary tree. Whether or not Verne’s works were “true” SF, they were something of a departure from the standard works of the time. Partially for there being some scientific extrapolations going on (and rather critical to the tale) and partially there was extrapolation of other current trends and their possible consequences ((in 20,000 Leagues, Nemo has an issue with the exploitation of the oceans)). At the least it seems to me that his work marks an early (or earliest) branch of the tree of fiction that leads to what is clearly SF. // We certainly do disagree if you say that science fiction has to be literature. I see no reason that a radio, television or motion picture production can’t be SF. / The other thing that bothers me is the “... things which can’t happen now, but may yet.” That implies that something that was science fiction at one time can evolve out of being SF as science advances beyond it. Is that what you intended?

Ned Brooks – Ct Arthur: I expect that explaining that word to Hank might have been a paean the ass? // Ct Dengrove: While they are all somewhat related, the last I checked, shingles is more related to chicken pox than to herpes per se. // Ct Janice: As BSE is generally passed among cattle by feed that includes animal parts, that would pretty well preclude kosher meat from being infected since you can’t give them animal feed that would contain other meat. / Although I haven’t seen any research on the question, I would guess that the prion would occur throughout the animal but is only detectable/detrimental in brain tissue. At the very least that would be the way to bet when dealing with infected animals until one knows for sure. // Ct Steve: Check out Randall Garrett’s Lord Darcy stories for magic using logical manipulation of natural energies/substances using mathematical rules that always work the same.

Ned's News – Ct me: Correction time again. The protesters who had pepper spray used on them here were not “handcuffed prisoners”. They had used chains and metal pipes to “handcuff” themselves in our Congressman’s local office. They were warned that, unless they released themselves and came along, this is what was going to be done. You can debate the appropriateness of the action, but they were not helpless to prevent it. // Ct Sheila: On staff shortages. There have also been studies done on clinical laboratory workers. Given current expectations and rates of attrition (the average age is in the 40s) they expect there to be a massive shortage in the next 10-20 years (as opposed to the just “bad” shortage we have now).

Box Scores – As he sinks slowly into the sunset...

Richard Dengrove – Good for Heidi. Using her experiences to make things easier for others. // // I don’t recall any Tarzan adventures on Barsoom in the novels I read. He did, however, show up in Pellucidar on at least one adventure. Not that that would have prevented it from being done in the pages of the daily/weekly comics. // Ct Ned: I have, maybe, maybe, maybe, gotten across the idea of writing to Random. I tend to terse, but he tends to be positively minimalistic. I had him write a short letter to his grandparents about camp and we went over it a couple of times for comparison to how he’d tell it in person. We’ll see how the year develops. // Ct Rich: Speaking of Bush, it seems that the next few years are going to get very interesting as three very conservative Republican senators are calling it careers. How much the opening of seats held by Helms, Thurmond and Gramm will affect things is hard to say but it should be worth watching. ((My own guess is that those are still safely Republican seats but may not be nearly so conservatively filled.)) // Ct Irv: My understanding is that either wages are not affected by a bankruptcy filing or that they are the first item on the list for payment out of assets.

Ct me: It wasn’t so much that the new Fantasy Island did dark fantasies as that the atmosphere, backstory and way any lessons were taught was darker. // Harry send an email to LASFAPans with regard to possibly rejoining for our 25th anniversary. He said he’d show the issues to his AA sponsor and let her make that decision. Seems odd to me to have your life under that much outside control (~~even if I am married~~) although, I’m not in need of AA so I probably shouldn’t judge. // // There’s nothing that would have prevented the original male migrants from Yemen from having their wives (or all their children) converted officially and thus preserving the Jewish lineage. // I would think that a bard/story-teller recounting a tale would be rather more likely to modify the telling for dramatic effect or audience makeup than would someone who was acting in the role of “official historian” or such. Not that there couldn’t be changes in the retelling of oral histories too, just that there would be more incentive to keep the latter accurate. And I would certainly agree that, if you need to rely on oral traditions, the accuracy of the retellings would go up vs if it was just an adjunct to written material. // True that, even without evil, you could have a choice of various goods but I wonder if that doesn’t limit choices sufficiently to bring into question whether or not it’s truly free will being used. If you give me a choice of meals and they are all just different forms of pasta, is that really a full choice that I have? // That’s basically what our timeshare has turned into. A useful item, although all told, it would have been a better investment to have something local to us as our home resort. // I don’t know about the whole genre, but A&E’s Hornblower series is certainly proving popular enough.

Richard's Tree – While the specific quote in Leviticus does refer “only” to one’s fellow Jews, there are other quotes that make specific rules for the treatment of strangers and those non-Jews who live within their territory. And, as you say, later rabbinic interpretations tended to widen that ruling. It could also be argued that the enjoinder refers to how to treat one’s kinsmen (and that is how it is translated in some versions) which would by definition, include people of those tribes that are offshoots from Lot, Ishmael & Esau and could be easily pushed further afield than that. // Essentially an accurate rendition of the Hillel tale except that the pagan had asked to be taught all of the law while standing on one foot. Hillel pretty much gave the answer you quote with the addenda – “The rest is commentary, now go and study.” // No question that both Democrats and Republicans were forced out of office by California’s term limits. I really don’t know though if either party was hurt more than the other by that effect. All told I think it was more the rural areas that got hurt since we/they tended to reelect people more often, thus generating a seniority to balance the greater number of representatives from more urban areas. // I really have no idea just why Olga rejected Judaism to the point of not even acknowledging her ancestry. But as far as I can tell it sounds like it was more running away from than running to something.

Ct Robe: But all names, not just biblical ones, have a meaning. So in that sense everyone’s name is a nickname (unless you get to some of the more modern, made-up-from-while-cloth, names). Just check out any book on baby naming. // Ct Jeff: The only one I remember Han negotiating with in the first SW film was an alien named Greedo. The one Han blew away when he tried to take him to Jabba. // Speaking of Fred Hoyle, I noticed that he passed away this last month. // Ct George: The British SF film I think you are referring to is “Five Million Years to Earth”. A rather cool flick too. // Ct Mike: By my understanding of relativity, the traveler at the speed of light would not notice any of these changes in mass, time flow, etc with regard to himself. All would seem normal unless he were to try and observe the outside reference frame. // Being brought up like a girl is different than just giving him a girl’s name. They can overlap, but don’t have to.

Rich Lynch – Ct me: Well the current way most states give their electoral votes discourages 3rd parties from running a presidential candidate. They can still run for other offices with varying chances of success. Of course, that’s the states’ choice as to how to do that so there’s nothing to prevent them from going with proportional allocation of electoral votes. As to whether that would push the election into the House, I think it would more likely result in various 3rd party candidates negotiating to release their electors to one major candidate or the other in exchange for (probably) cabinet posts. Of course, in our system, that’s less of a prize than it might be in a true parliamentary system that would end up with a coalition gov’t. // Ct Jeff: The recent blood donation questions have involved spending more than 6 months in Britain in the last 10 years or so.

Sheila Strickland – Our local paper had an article datelined at the Worldcon about women in sf fandom and how there didn’t used to be so. My reaction was basically “Why wasn’t this written about 20 years ago?” Even in my first years in L.A. fandom there wasn’t exactly a dearth of women around. // Ct Janice: Back when I was working for L.A. county, they had a 5 point evaluation system. To get the top rating, the evaluator not only had to give examples of why you deserved it, it had to be approved by 2-3 levels of management --- including the Board of Supervisors. I actually was lucky enough to have a boss that went to that trouble over a couple of years and got me a “5”. // Ct Mike: About Ad Vielle Que Pourra who “to make sure it’s traditional, (they) write it themselves!” That sounds suspiciously like something that the Kingston Trio would have said.

Guy Lillian – “Dang! The critter went and done it.” Congratulations again. // I haven’t seen **Ghost’s of Mars**, but if **JPIII** even makes the ballot for next year I’ll think someone has been spreading money around. // Ct Ned: Why not send the **Chall** masters to your brother up in NY and then he can have the copied there before smuggling them across the boarder to be mailed from inside Canada? // Ct Janice: I missed it in the original comment, but I remember Janice explaining about how it was that she ended up with two rhinoplasties. // I just happened to get a look at the current stats on league leaders in various categories. And Bonds leads the “Walks” category by something like 40 in the National League. And he still has 60 homers. // Ct me: I don’t recall the exact circumstances but I do remember seeing something about allowing the faith-based charities who got gov’t funds to be protected from anti-discrimination lawsuits. // I’ll try again. If Vader was the “other” hope referred to by Yoda, how would he have been turned back to the light? That required Luke’s intervention. Had Luke died or been taken during “Empire”, he wouldn’t have been strong enough to force that choice on Vader. So how could Vader have been the other hope? // Ct Sheila: It’s too early to be sure, but for another trip to Scotland I think the ’05 Worldcon would be an attractive bit of bait for us.

Trinlay khadro - Ct Ned: Supposedly the “faith-based” charities would not be able to “force-feed” their philosophies to those who availed themselves of the services. The question of how that would play out in the real world is, of course, somewhat cloudier. / In any case however I doubt that adoptions would come under the heading of things that a charitable organization would be involved with. // Ct me: The clearest answer I’ve ever gotten about Olga’s hiding her Jewishness has to do with “youthful scars”. In her later years the fear was largely based on worrying that her grandchildren and great-grandchildren would somehow reject her for it. / As to how catastrophic it would be for the grandkids to find out, I really have no idea but can’t see any reason to think it would really matter to them. My best guess is that Olga remembers what Catholics were taught about Jews back in the early days of the last century and worried that the kids would have that sort of reaction to the information.

Westercon-1-shot - *grumble *mumble *mmmp

Self – Ct Jeff: I was just reading in USN&WR about the crisis in blood supply. Aside from a just plain increase in usage (more, and more complicated, surgeries), the increase in reasons for deferring donors has put a real crimp in the supply. And, as I mentioned, it would only take a small increase in the donor population (less than 10% of the population donates) to take care of the supply problem. // Ct Dengrove: Just to clarify. The Biblical prohibition against wine and other intoxicants was specifically with regard their use by the priesthood prior to entering the sanctuary to perform sacrifices. Hardly a general ban on them. // Natter: Well, no 12-hour shifts were used in getting the summer schedule to “work”. Not that it’s getting any better either way however.

Janice Gelb – While the first “Throne” book wasn’t a very happy tale, at no point did I find myself in desperate need of counteracting amusement. Part of that may have involved by reading the book at work so I never had more than 25-30 minutes at a stretch to work on it. // Ct me: I have an uneasy feeling that groups like the Salvation Army will get their exemption from equal hiring practices. Just feels like the way the wind is blowing these days. But maybe I’m being cynical and those who can’t do the Fair Employment thing will graciously bow out.

Gelb pursuits – The LASFAPA OE wasn't the collector of the Chart information. It began with, I think, Alan Winston and Andrea Antonoff sort of becoming central gossip repositories. Somehow I became a secondary collector as well as the collator of the data so information came to me either directly or (usually) via Alan or Andrea. Maybe Alan remembers how he started acquiring the data or, it's possible, that there is some record of this buried deep in the zines of the period. But, overall, all of the data was freely given by the participants. Nothing on the Chart was based on anything worse than second-hand data (ie if I told Lee Ann that I'd slept with Kay, Lee Ann might have passed that data along to the Chart keeper) as far as I know. And primary data was far the preferred source. // That's OK, we can pass. I would guess that "adult bar mitzvah" strikes you as an oxymoron. One becomes bar mitzvah at 13, period, that's it. At this point one is "an adult", so to become bar mitzvah after becoming an adult is nonsensical. Would you be happier if the phrase "adult bar mitzvah ceremony" was used to indicate that it is simply the observance that is occurring during the person's adulthood? // Just remember that if you don't like the way the congregational vote went at the annual meeting, you can only blame yourself for not having been there to influence the debate. // Ct Gary: Well Kay and I did recommend Shrek to any who we talked to about movies. // You spoke way too soon – as did Gary about a lousy baseball season. The American League may not be worth discussing any more, but the National League has almost nothing but barn-burners going down (including the wild card race). // Ct Jeff: Your shorthand formula for converting C to F works decently in the room temperature range and lower but starts to break down as you get into body temperature range and higher.

Trip Reports – Dang, another reason I can with to have been at Westercon – I might have been able to help a bit with your back.

Gary Brown – I don't know how common it is, but the Saturn I got a couple of years ago also has remote locking/unlocking and trunk opening via the keychain. Quite useful – especially if the trunk springs are good and it actually pops the trunk open as opposed to just unlatching it. That is also turns on the interior light is nice at night too. // There was an article in a recent Nation magazine about the feeding frenzy on Condit and what (basically) crappy journalism it is. If I find it I'll run it through. // I keep forgetting that you know Tom Stern. Was Marina with him at the convention or was he batching it? // Ct Guy: Hmmm. Kavalier and Clay seems to be making the rounds through fannish circles as well as the "general literati". // Ct me: I think Rooms to Go was basically saying that "we want you to throw money at our company", not "we want your business". // California tries to avoid earthquakes during tourist season. They're bad for business. As for the power situation, all the "gloom and doom" in the spring produced a robust savings in power usage in the summer and thus no blackouts.

Eve Ackerman – Congratulations to Raphi on his achievement. What sort of campaigning did he do? This will probably be a good training ground for when he joins the temple board and then runs for the presidency in a few years. // I suppose I ought to rent The Big Lebowski. There are few enough movies with interesting Jewish content. (Sort of speaking of which, be it noted that another Dodger player (Shawn Green) has "announced" that he will be sitting out the game on Yom Kippur.) (Sandy Koufax it the same thing back about 35 years ago.) // I must have read some excerpts from (or an article about) the Eller book since the premise sounds familiar.

Steve Hughes – Ct Dengrove: I like to think that it's not the actions of the governments that are varyingly condemned (in "bad guys") or tolerated ("in good guys") but the provocations that incite the actions. There is something of a difference in using military force against armed terrorists vs using it against protest marchers. // Ct me: While hardly a world-class attraction, the Crescent City aquarium is nice and well worth a drop by if you're in the town. // I have to admit that finding "magic fingers" in our motel bed was something of a surprise. I've known it was something that was around some while ago but had never before stayed anyplace that had it (as far as I can recall).

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 It's Sept 11th. 'Nuff said.

I would say that certainly the Market and the Economy are interlinked items, but that doesn't make them the same thing. Many factors are linked in the modern economy. For example, it wasn't too many years ago that there was a national and worldwide drop in the stock markets but (as I recall) it really didn't have a big effect on the national economy as a whole. I think that, certainly, in any long term drop in stocks will affect the corporations and ripple down to the smaller businesses. But the fact is that you can have the Market being unhappy at the same time that the Economy is perking along just fine.

Don Markstein – Ct Gary: Well, first off, military personnel in uniform are not technically considered "spies" simply because they aren't acting covertly. One of those international conventions. Secondly, considering that they were on a military plane (supposedly) out in international airspace prior to the collision, it would be tough to make a good claim for the sort of spying that – in times of war – would lead to execution. And third, as I just mentioned, the summary shooting of spies is a wartime activity, not one that happens in times of peace. // Ct Toni: The last time the U.S. used it's military might in defense? WWII. Maybe not in direct defense of our soil, but after being militarily attacked you can't call our response anything other than defense.

Jeff Copeland – I'm trying to think of the 3 states that would not have been states when Bill was born about 80 years ago. Obviously Alaska and Hawaii, but I would have thought that the last one before that was Arizona in (again, I thought) 1912. Time to hit the reference – yes, Arizona and New Mexico in 1912. // Speaking of the Alaska quake, I was reading about concerns based on geologic surveys of the Canary Islands. There, apparently, have been a few times when those mountains have had cliff collapses of the type that would send off large tsunamis across the Atlantic. // Ct Lynch: I'd rather risk the consequences of having the Democrats take back Congress than of having the additional two years of near Republican control. For one thing I would, generally, prefer a split of party control. I keep hoping that that would produce some sort of compromise centrist governing rather than deadlock. // Good question. A cholesterol of 100 is hardly midrange (unless you use a rather old system whereby <200 was the "normal" range and thus 100 would be the midpoint between 0 and 200). 100 is more to the lower limit of what is considered the normal range these days. // Ct me: You would really have to ask Marty about the advantage of the new mimeo vs photocopying. It's all the same to me. Maybe the ability to change the colors being used?

Jumping Jeff zine - Yeah, a month of my parents would be more than I could deal with and probably more than Random would want to. We make our trips of about a week's duration and certainly don't make that the only thing we do while there. // Well yes, in some circumstances there may be benefit to knowing you can drive on private land but I think most people for whom that would mean anything probably know it. // I'm not sure if "amusement" is the term I would use for the Supreme Court setting some national standards for state elections. An appreciation of the irony, yes. Or is that "an appreciation of the hypocrisy"? // I suppose that the electoral college as is (winner take all in most states) is sort of a reflection of how most of our legislative bodies work – simple majority rules.

Ct Dengrove: Seems odd to say that this last election was the continuation of a Republican era with them losing seats in Congress. Only in the sense of them still having had a majority in both houses was that true. Seems to me that this would show that the Republican tide is ebbing again. // Arguably, you could call Cheney a "stealth" President if he's the one making most of the policy decisions without being President. (That has happened before, but only via succession.) // Well, the double-sided booklets of peel-off stamps would be fairly easy to fit into a wallet. What it did find interesting is that, in the last year or so, the USPS has been issuing great stamps in the self-stick format as opposed to the lick'n'stick format. // I don't know if it was from Caltech, but I recall a techie cheer that starts: "Tan-gent, Se-cant, Co-sine, Sine. Three – point – one – four - one - five - nine. " And after that I don't know. / I still amuse/amaze/frighten people when I occasionally pull out a slide rule to do some math.

Toni Weisskopf – Ct Irv: Especially now demonizing all of Islam for the acts (or suspected attacks) of crazies is not productive. I happened to particularly note that the coalition of American Jewish organizations mentioned that as part of their statement on the tragedy. In fact, they specifically quoted the condemnation of the attack by various Islamic organizations. // Ct Lynch: I think both the original *The Mummy* and *The Mummy Returns* were Saturday morning serial fare. As they were well done, I see nothing wrong with that. // Ct Don: I've heard "liberal Democrat", "moderate Republican (and Democrat)", "centrist", and "conservative Republican". There are a lot of descriptors out there. // How interesting that you complain how the reporters did not "present evidence that the accusations were false" regarding Clinton. I didn't think that was their job – in fact, had they done more than report Clinton's responses wouldn't you have seen that as proof of their liberal bias? // No matter how the questions were worded so he "could not possibly misunderstand the question", every lawyer will tell you to answer the question that was asked, NOT what they obviously meant by it. // Sorry no. When the Colorado Senator Ben Campbell switched parties (Dem to Rep) he did not resign and then run for reelection. Also, as Jeffords was a returning senator on his (2nd? 3rd?) term, it can hardly be said that he was being deceitful about his party. You seem to be presuming that that was a planned move on his part rather than a principled stand on where his party was moving.

Ct me: It's too soon to predict whether we will be at Westercon next year. L.A. in the summer is not Kay's favorite vacation idea plan. / But if I'm there we could commit all sorts of things. // Which tax rate are you referring to as grossly high? Income? Capital Gains? Business? As the tax rate hasn't (to my knowledge) gone up recently it seems odd to blame it's being too high for a slow recovery. Truth be told I don't think that that really carries much weight in the question of how the Market fares.

Having thought a bit about over the last couple of days, I know how I would like the current situation to play out: 1) To the extent needed to capture all those responsible, use whatever force is needed. Period. 2) To the extent possible, capture, don't kill them. 3) Try them and let them rot in prison. 4) Finish the job to the best we can determine (ie not just those organizations that were involved in the recent atrocity). I want trial and prison for those involved for two reasons:

- a) A statement that we won't compromise our principles and ideals for them and
- b) Assuming we're dealing with Islamic fanatics, heaven is a reward, don't give it to them.

Liz Copeland – Not to be picky but I think that, after you got home from visiting Jeff's folks, you went to Westercon, not DSC. (Even if there were a lot of SFPans there.) // Ct Ned: I suspect that part of the problem with the Nat'l Guard troops at Kent was their own inexperience, which would tend to make them more nervous and prone to bad decisions/reflexes. // If you like slugs, we could always export you some of our Upstate California Banana Slugs. // Ct me: I think my point remains that those who have sufficient private land to allow driving on are aware that no license would be needed. It's not a secret, it's just not relevant for most people. // If I remember correctly, Harry Potter is due to open just before Thanksgiving. That being the case, we may try to catch an early matinee while we're in L.A. Of course the rest of the city may have the same plan. And the one time I saw a trailer for the film, it looked pretty cool. / Speaking of films, I saw a blurb for the upcoming releases that mentioned LotR. It mentioned that the plot involved Frodo trying to destroy the ring before the evil Gandalf could get it. I think that qualifies as an OOOOOPS! // Aside from reading it in the nude, being an alternate history buff doesn't (for me) entail much more than keeping an eye out for the stuff.

Trip Report – Kay and I have occasionally discussed cruises. I'd prefer Alaska while she's prefer the Caribbean. Odd, seeing as I'm the warm weather fan and she likes it cooler.

mike weber – Ct Janice: In the "traditional" LASFAPA chart, ex-members continue to count as a part of the structure. // Ct me: Interesting point about Serling's work not (generally) requiring the visual element. I don't think that nullifies the general point about his tales crossing a lot of territories. Whether the visuals are required for the tale or not, the fact remains that that was the medium that he worked in. Arguably it could be said that Shakespeare's works would do just as well in a radio as in a visual format too. The best tales (for the most part) should be able to transcend the medium in which they are presented and be equally powerful in others. // I can see Simpson's point from that Man from U*N*C*L*E. It does take a certain genius / inspiration to see what could be done if you combine available things in a new way. And if it didn't exist in the real world, than it still seems Sfish to me too. // Ct Robe: I'm sure I'll kick myself, but what medical fellow? (Re a show with a single primary star killing him/her off.) // Condolences on your Grandmother's passing.

APAC = NC² (Natter x Comments)

August has come and (almost) gone. My back/leg is much better although standing a lot is not a good idea and there's still a bit of numbness along the outside of my left foot (mostly down by the toes). That I can walk without any noticeable limp (unless I go quickly) is certainly a pleasant development too. Overall the hardest part is when I end up standing a lot while I'm at work. But, no new visits to either the chiropractor or physical therapy so the news on the back front is all positive.

I may have mentioned playing in the county amateur golf tournament. This year, while I never really got untracked ((something I've been having trouble with all summer – when I could play)), I also didn't have the continuing series of crappy holes that I did last year and managed to wind up with a decent score. Equally important it was a lot of fun and (schedule permitting) I plan on doing it again next year. Maybe I'll even enter a few more.

Random had his 9 days at UAHC's Camp Newman down in Santa Rosa. Kay wasn't able to get the day off, so it was just the two of us driving down. He commented a few times about how warm it was "It must be 75 degrees" and I just kept my mouth shut. Somehow telling him that it was well into the 80s didn't seem the best tactic. We found the camp without much difficulty, dropped off his gear and proceeded to check him in. It was actually pretty efficient and we were done in less than half an hour. Funny thing was that, just after him in line, was the son (and the wife) of one of the people from Fresno that I'd met at the UAHC Biennial back in February. We'd talked in passing about connecting up during drop off, but hadn't really expected it to happen with all the people around. Random and Max were in the same cabin so we left them with their counselor and to their own devices.

The summary is that he had a great time (or so he tells us) and wants to go back again next year (maybe for longer). So I guess I'll see what can be done along those lines. The other aspect is that I'd like to try and dovetail his time at camp with our vacation again so Kay and I have some time for ourselves too. I worked out well this time.

The first few days of Random's absence we were both working so it was pretty much business as usual. But the following Monday we started our vacation (we were staying at a resort in Napa courtesy of a timeshare swap). The first thing I did that morning, however, was run the car over to get a leaky tire fixed (it had been screwed (literally) on the way back from Santa Rosa). Then we took Corky over to the boarding facility and headed out (but not without stopping for gas at a station about 30 miles south of town for gas that was almost \$.20 per gallon cheaper than in Eureka).

As usual we stopped in Willits for lunch. This time we tried a small bakery that a friend of ours had recommended ((we'd actually eaten there before in a previous incarnation)). It was OK, but hardly anything to really brag on. Still it was kind of a funky place and the atmosphere helped, even if the service was just so-so. Oh well, I guess they really were Baked to Differ.

As the tie-dye place in Laytonville had been closed, we stopped at a similar place in Hopland that I had seen the previous week. Kay found an (untie-dyed) dress that she liked enough to buy and was given the week to try it out just in case there was a problem.

After much discussion, we had decided that the thing to do to get to Napa was to take the shortest route and do some exploring along the way. So, when we reached the exit for Geyserville and 128 East, that was the way we went. As we finished with the "town" and turned onto 128, there was a sign warning of construction delays and recommending alternated routes be used. For a change, with a choice, we still opted to press on. It really was a very nice drive, through a lot of trees and vineyard and with nearby hills. And with very little traffic we moved along quite well. The construction in question was maybe a quarter mile long at a crossroad and delayed us for no more than 15 minutes.

We had more delays further along going through Calistoga and St Helena. (The route through the latter town reminded by of us (somewhat) of driving through Santa Barbara or South Pasadena.) I realize that St Helena is something of a ritzy area but until you really see it for yourself it doesn't really settle in.

Onward to Napa. While driving through town, we saw a sign advertising a "Colon Care Center" which, for some reason, kept making me picture a bathroom. Riverpointe is more of a base of operations than a true resort (although they do have a pool, spas, BBQs, exercise room, a hiking trail and games you can check out). Essentially it's a high class trailer park that sits on the side of the Napa river. Despite being mobile units that reminded me (and Kay) of the trains in Thomas the Tank Engine episodes, they really were quite roomy and comfortable. Some smart person had even aligned the majority of them to allow for maximum usage of the prevailing breeze to ventilate and cool them off.

Not wanting to run around much after the day's drive, we opted to eat at the restaurant across the street (that resort guests got a discount didn't hurt). River City was an odd place. A limited menu (most of which had pork), no amenities included with the meal (aside from bread), and just something of a strange feel in general. I wish I could explain it a bit more but I can't put my finger on it.

Tuesday was my planned round of golf at the Chardonnay course a few miles south of us. For never having seen the course before, I did OK. A couple of bad shots cost me a better round but overall I did decently and had a good time. After returning home, we spent some time lounging by the pool and, when the hordes of kids left, went and played in the water ourselves. It was about this point that we realized we had shed all kid and work responsibilities and were acting more like our "normal" selves – identities that had been rarely seen in the last 10 years or so. It was good to be back.

After flaking for a bit watching a baseball game, we headed out for dinner. When the Thai place we had seen proved closed, we went to a nearby Baker's Square and followed that up with a stroll over to a Baskin Robbins ((we have none in Eureka so it's one of the place I try to indulge with when we are staying somewhere that does have them)) and a drive through the downtown part of Napa ((1st St)) to see what shops they had. Once back home, Kay took me for a hike along the trail. While it is an official city hiking trail, it only runs along the river for about a mile or so between Lincoln and Trancas streets. Also, as it does run near the river, it has a lot of brush and shrubbery so there are some places where you can find little camps set up (particularly if you cross under the bridges at either street). A nice hike, but not after dark (when it's closed anyway).

Wednesday I again abandoned my wife for a round of golf. This time a bit closer in at the Napa city course (next to the college). There was a tournament going on, but I was lucky and they let me start off on the back nine holes. This time I was paired with a Jr player (about 8th grade) who was able to give me some information about the course as we walked. Again, a couple too many mistakes, but I was still overall OK with most of my shots and I had a good time.

After lunch it was back to the pool for another lazy afternoon, followed by another baseball game prior to dinner. This time the Thai place was open and the food, while not great, was good. We'd debated movies earlier and opted to catch the late (and only) showing of Jurassic Park III as it was one that neither of us had seen. Well, aside from the fact that they screwed up and started 15 minutes late, I'd just as soon have gone to see Planet of the Apes again. Nice dinos. And plot holes you could drive them through.

Thursday was pickup day at camp. So, for a bit of variety, we chose to take 12 from Napa to Sonoma and up to Santa Rosa. Again a nice drive. In fact, all the driving we did in the valleys there reminded me a lot of the San Fernando Valley area in L.A. Similar trees, climate, landscaping, agriculture, surrounding semi-arid hills, etc.

We'd started early to allow for some errands in Santa Rosa. First, on the way down, Kay and moved her visor, and one of the holders for it had fallen out of the ceiling. So we stopped at the Saturn dealership to have that taken care of (I'd remembered finding a screw on the floor sometime earlier, but not what I did with it). I'd thought it would take 15-20 minutes before someone could get to it, but all of 5 minute after we'd explained the problem it was fixed. (And then I found the screw.) A stop at Trader Joe's took a bit less time than usual as they were in the middle of renovations. And a planned visit to dance caller and friend Barbara Coole found her not at home (although I did impress Kay by finding the place by instinct alone).

So we ended up getting there about 30 minute early to pick up Random. Fortunately they were ready for that and had everyone packed and ready to go. Random gave us a tour of the place and a rundown on what he'd done – including not brushing his teeth and rarely changing his clothes. Amazingly enough, he didn't lose anything while he was there. A couple of the counselors did ask us about his name and we pointed them at Zelazney's Amber books.

For the trip back to Napa, we continued on the same road the camp is on and made a lunch and touring stop at the Petrified Forest. A site with a lot of trees that had been blown over by Mt St Helena erupting about 3 ½ million years ago and subsequently petrified. The walk was nice but not worth a special trip (camp was only 2-3 miles from the place). Actually, the gift shop was the nicest part as it had a lot of nice fossils and other rocks to look at. After our picnic lunch (they have tables there) it was on to Calistoga again and then back down to Napa. I made some remark about Random being tired of swimming and not wanting to use the pool at the resort. He disagreed. So we let him join us for some more pool time that afternoon.

That evening the resort was hosting a pizza and bingo party. Before doing that, Random wanted to learn to play ping-pong, so we checked out the equipment and practiced for a while (we had a couple of decent rallies, but he has got to stop trying to hit everything from straight in front of him). I won the first bingo game and chose the cinammon breakfast bread. But that was the only win for any of us that night.

Friday I hit the links one last time a few miles up the road in Yountville. Same story, different setting. I just figure that the first time on any course you're feeling your way along and as long as you're mostly hitting decently the score isn't quite as critical. And, as I said, a good time was had.

After some flake time while Kay and Random hit the hiking trail, we had lunch and checked a croquet set out from the office. That proved to be one of the best choices of things we did that week and we ended up checking the set out 2 other times for an hour or more. After a first game where Kay won while I was figuring out how to hit the ball well, I proceeded to go through the rest of the trip undefeated – even in the last game when I gave them a 2 wicket lead in maneuvering the course. Oh Yeah! I'm Good!

That evening was the Chef's Market on 1st Street. A combination street fair, farmers' market, music party, etc. We walked around a few times, had a bit to eat, bought a few things, listened to some music and headed back. (Actually, we were there for 2-3 hours.) It's pretty cool. Some of the restaurants have booths to sell items, there were bakers that had pastries and breads for sale, a couple of band stands and it was clear that a good time was being had by all.

Saturday we went over to Sonoma to check out Train Town. A "theme park" that is "one fifth the size of Disneyland". Well, the total park acreage may be, but very little of that has anything other than landscaping (and scenery) for the miniature train ride (which is rather nice). The rides were interesting. For one thing, they didn't have an attendant for each one so you had to wait until someone came over to let you on a given ride. Also the choices were limited – a carousel, a ferris wheel, a kids-only plane ride, another spin and fly thing and a roller coaster that wasn't working. All told not the most amusing of places, but it was OK for an hour or so. Oh, and if you're tempted, bring cash.

After lunch at Carrow's, it was back for more pool time, flaking and croquet.

Sunday was home again. We chose the Sonoma-Santa Rosa start as that had proven to be both pleasant and quick. In Hopland we stopped in hopes of attending some of the Sol-Fest being held at Real Goods. However, after parking and hiking over to the entrance, we found that a) Kay's membership card was for Real Goods and not the Solar Institute (so no freebie) and b) that it was a cash only arrangement (end of trip, low on \$\$) so we punted. ((This upset Random since he's never been to the SolFest – not that that would have really interested him anyway.)) So we compensated with a stop at the tie-dye place and lunch at the Bluebird Café before heading north and home.

At home *surprise* someone had stolen our pool! (Actually, we'd arranged for the contractor to start the job (since that would be the noisiest part) while we were away. As I type this, we have a lot of (but not yet enough) dirt in the back yard. Mostly smoothed and not too much in the way of hole. With a bit of luck it will be only a memory by Labor Day. Then we get to toss down lots of grass seed to let the backyard recover a bit so the winter and spring rains don't turn the place into one big mudpit.

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