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PETER, PAN & MERRY #36

A zine for SFPA #220

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Come and tarry on SFPA 219 (Done in some mixed up order with no relationship to the ToC)

Eve Ackerman - I haven't checked in a couple of days as I write this, but as of mid-February there is still no sign that your virtual book has any virtual reality. You talked about some of the expected calls that you go while on the air but only mentioned the existence of the unusual calls. I'd have been more intrigued to find out what the unusual calls were about. And that can be considered to be a request. // C'mon Eve, the old joke aspect isn't about getting a fountain pen on one's Bar Mitzvah. The line relates to the kid's speech where, "Today I am a man" comes out as "Today I am a fountain pen". // Why couldn't the school production have engaged in some creativity? Our local rep theatre often resets it's Shakespearean stuff in different frames (Romeo and Juliet was done in Celtic England) so why not have a rabbi involved?

Ct me: I hadn't realized that Jewish SF fandom was a particularly small and insular world. Now if you're talking about Jewish that involves any level of observance, then I would agree that it is a fairly small crowd. Had Erin even been aware of the fannish involvement in your household? // At this point I haven't actually met Erin, but maybe (next) month at the New Members get together. // As I said in my email (and am repeating for the benefit of our viewing audience), the solution to the question of Random's Hebrew name accidentally came from my mom. She had delicately suggested that it would nice if he were named for my dad's father. Well, with a first and middle name already picked out I had the flash of inspiration to simply use that - Yoseph - for his Hebrew name. // Oh, was that you snickering? I thought it was the sound of distant thunder. / In any event, I think the consensus of the congregation (if that isn't an oxymoron) is in the general direction that we can have more liberal rabbis during the year but want a more "traditional" style for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Happy Birthday!

Guy Lillian - So tell me the truth. Is Brennan's really worth it? I just can't imagine spending that much on breakfast. My doctor friend was talking about arranging a 2-3 day golf trip to Pebble Beach and the like for about 8 of us (not paying for it all, mind you) but when he looked into it more, things have changed since he went there. The cost of one room and the golf, just for him, would have been over \$2500. The consensus of everyone was that, even for a rare treat, that was just way out of line. We can play a large number of good (if not famous) courses for that kind of money. Heck, we could just about manage to do a trip to Scotland and playing at St Andrews for that outlay. // Ct Lynch: Tracing a disease outbreak to its source is a medical specialty - Epidemiology. Mind you, tracing the source of a single case is a different proposition. Remember though that CJD can occur naturally. // Ct Liz: You will notice that

Spirited Guy - Tough luck, Guy. // An email to Marty is has been sent to contact you about sending a spec. Or he may just sent it directly. But it isn't quite the same these days. Based on the membership retention situation, I suspect that SFPA is more of a lifestyle choice for its members while LASFAPA is seen as more of a hobby (with a notable exception or two). Part of that may be related to the original functions - LASFAPA was a way to connect LA fen with those in other areas, while SFPA was more of a way of solidifying the connections made via cons and such. That leaves SFPA still fulfilling its primary purpose while LASFAPA, as the ooties drifted off into other interests, is a bit more adrift. // Retirement funds are monies that are no longer actively doing anything for you. // You'll have to ask Gary about how the news agency recounts of the Florida ballots went. But I will agree that moving the decision out of the state and into federal court was a major violation of states' rights. // It's almost funny that the pundits tend to take having the vice presidency as an advantage (given good times) but it seems to be based on very little supportive data. Just in the last half century, Nixon, Humphrey and Gore all lost from that position.

If Elian had been a refugee from Nazi Germany in 1939? Boy are the differences striking. 1) U.S. immigration policy 2) The (probable) reason for fleeing 3) The way any such escape would have been done (back then you had a visa and sponsor or forget it). 4) The likelihood of the family being split over the issue. So I'm not sure the situation would translate very well. Given that the family was "pure blood Aryan" so no safety issues were involved I think that returning the kid to his father would still be the issue, not my feelings toward the gov't. But, I would also say that just about the only refugees from Germany at the time would have involved whole families trying to escape rather than one trying to leave and the wanting to stay. // Ct Janice: In saying that injustice should never be accepted (re the election), what are you suggesting at this point? Agree or not, the highest court in the land has ended the election. The questions may remain, but there is the business of gov't to attend to and I can't see any advantage to the Democrats in trying to shut down the gov't in protest. /// So what's wrong with getting married at 51? My sister did it (although she is ahead of you in numbers).

Gary Brown - So, any particular reason for the Gary Brown commemorative issue of Oblio? // Oh, and with regard to the basketball picture, it must have been awfully tough to jump (or run) if you were playing in the Hialeah gum. // Ct Gary R: And then there's the next step from not getting customer input on what to improve - not getting customer input on what you should leave alone since it works fine. Both local hospitals have the same computer base, but with different version. Most of the MDs find the medical record program to be much better in the old version than the new. Sometimes (only sometimes?) you have to wonder if a lot of the drive for updated versions is a goal in itself rather than specifically a matter of trying to improve the product. Find improvements and incorporate them, but don't change just to add bells and whistles. // Ct Liz: Snow isn't generally a problem in Seattle. // Ct Ned: So what did they change the team name to? I can see one or two ways to slide around the edges of The Afros -- The 'fros and cons, 'Fro zen yoghurt, The tos and 'fros.

I have a question about all this discussion regarding the heritage issues surrounding the Stars and Bars. When was that design first introduced? Was it as the CSA flag? Before that? To my mind, most of the heritage associated with the South would refer to the antebellum days and if the flag design didn't predate that then arguing for heritage becomes a very weak issue. There are certainly issues even if it is that old, but pre- vs post- Civil War strikes me as relevant.

Much Obiloged -. // Ct Janice: I've been to just one ComicCon and that was way back in 1975. I had little idea what to make of the con itself, but the opportunity to spend some time with my then-girlfriend and the one or two special memories from that were well worth the trip. // Ct me: Seems more likely to me that we could convince states to go with a proportional split of electoral votes than that we could get things changed to a pure popular vote. For one thing, the former would just require changes by individual states while the latter would take a constitutional amendment to enact. // I was watching that FSU joke very carefully since I didn't want it to get lost. // For the most part the basic schedule is fairly easy (although having people quit or change their class schedule does tend to screw it up), it's just trying to make all the rearrangements required to cover for overlapping vacations that's a hassle. Most people are fairly good about trimming a day here or there if the total amount of time off in a given period is too much. / As for time off requests right after probation, prorate it. 90 days work gives you 1/4 of your annual time off. Or, as with some places I've worked, no vacation kicks in until the end of year one. Or, if people need time off that early in a new job, it should be mentioned up front and thus be, at least tacitly, a part of the hiring agreement. // Ct Gary R: We now have a Papa John's in Eureka and I ordered one at work the other night. It was good, but I still prefer the semi-local Papa Murphy's chain which does take-and-bake pizza. No delivery however. // Ct Toni: I also have to wonder just what would happen if all the current gun owners were suddenly called up to provide the manpower for their state's militia.

Janice Gelb - Gee, all that cover needs is a cactus and it would be a Road Thingie. // Gaack. The most that could be said of Katherine Harris (assuming 100% benefit of any doubt) is that she was doing the best job she could. But it was still just doing her job, and to compare it with any of those other women is absurd. // Yeah, this may be the time to look into the benefits of a refinance. As we have a 7.25% fixed rate I'm not screamingly concerned, but a bit off the monthly payment would be nice. // Why the blackouts during lunch? That timing is entirely dependent on what the overall power consumption is at any given time. You can't really bank the power per se, so if too much is needed at lunch hour, that's when the rolling blackouts will happen. // Ct Guy: I've read 2 and am reading a third book by Diana Wynne Jones. I can't say as I'd call them deeper than the Harry Potter books altho they are good. They are also rather more stand-alone as opposed to building directly on the previous ones. Overall I think that the Potter books are more fun to read but am glad that the press on them also generated new interest in other authors in that vein. // Ct Arthur: I think the question is semi reversed. "Jew" isn't pejorative as a stark noun, but the fact that it is a stark noun makes it more possible to use it as a pejorative if that is the desire.

Ct Tom: You're still using punch cards? Heck, even up here in the boonies we have optical scan ballots. Gives some real world meaning to all that time in school using scantron answer sheets. // Ct me: The problem with apas that aren't cliquey is that it can be harder to click with them. // I'll buy that. If people catch that they're confused or think they screwed up, the precinct workers should be there to help clear things up or destroy and replace the ballot. Just no after-the-fact complaints about things that should have been dealt with at the time. // My point is that the reasoning for having work breaks holds just as well for kids in school as for employees, a chance to relax for a few minutes, stretch, work off some energy, etc (that latter being especially important for kids) to refresh the brain. Heck, even if you don't get an official break at work, you can hit the bathroom, etc without hassles. Oh and in elementary school the teachers have to be at work just exactly as much as the kids since there are no periods involved.

Gelb Trivia - Yeah. Interesting that VPs have a much better chance of getting to the top job via death than via election. Makes one wonder if any of the assassination attempts have been by ambitious #2 men. // I can see how competition or cross-fertilization between fan groups and cons could stir the use of the more fun/popular schemes. But what do you see as the cause of many southern and midwestern cons being better? Maybe the sheer availability of more cons takes some of the pressure of the Big Events and allows for a more relaxed situation? // I wouldn't go so far as to blame you for the Giants and the Dolphins, but I suppose that you would know better than I if you bear some responsibility. // "If it's ___ day, it must be ___" has a little more life than just in SFPA. Maybe not much, but The Reference is Out There. Or maybe it's just a fannish thang. // Oddly enough, I knew that Elisheva was the rabbi in Cotati. In talking with a dance caller friend of ours a year or so ago, she mentioned a "problem" (not really a big deal) related to her daughter and the rabbi at the synagogue her daughter attends from time to time. When she mentioned that the rabbi's name was Elisheva, I asked and found out that it was indeed her. // I'm sorry you weren't available the weekend I was down for the biennial too. Still, in some ways I almost regretted the couple of hours with David and Berni as I was having a rather better time (enjoyment wise) than I'd thought I would. I'm looking forward to the next one. // Ct Sheila: I've been told that, with well-used coffee makers, there is a certain amount of ingrained coffee flavor that comes through even without having an old filter in it.

Happy Birthday!!!!

Liz Copeland - Ct Toni: Have you considered that the borrow-read-find sequence for books may only work at Liz and Philip's home? // Ct Guy: When it's time to teach Random to drive, I think that we'll (as John Wayne put it in El Dorado) "hire it done." // Ct Gary B: Another advantage of allowing part-time volunteers during voting would be to provide more staffing and make it easier to be able to assist people who were confused or had some question. Plus just generally making life easier for everyone. // Ct Gary R: While not a rigorous academic program, the Eureka schools do have enrichment programs at all grade schools for those who pass the test (I have no idea how tough it may be). Works for me. // Ct me: To my knowledge nobody has yet complained about odors, allergies, etc from the new carpet. Of course those who feel the most sensitive have made a point of staying away since the carpeting was put down so the lack of complaints probably means rather little. // Yeah, that's a thought I had too. I can only suggest that, since any privatizing of SocSec would be optional, that those on the cusp would be able to choose to let it ride rather than shifting gears with that particular portion of one's retirement money. // I guess the tongue studs would make for some sort of combination of cunnilingus and benwa balls. Now I'm wondering if you can get specialty studs.

TKF Weisskopf - I don't think that girl's date is weird, I think he's out of this world. // While some of the undercounted ballots may not have had a vote for President, the only way to be sure of that would be to check manually. After all, a variety of conditions could confuse the machines that could punch ballots. // To say that "Apparently xxxxxxxx happened.....That doesn't seem fair to me." Hardly seems a lie. There is a qualifier there. And it also seems that this was an answer to a question so he left some leeway. Lie or best data at the time?

Gary Robe - If you were in a hot tub watching snow fall through the windows, I would recommend closing the windows. // I'm a bit curious about how the PMR manages to have a 27/7 restaurant anywhere nearby unless they have a direct teleport link to some other planet. // Ct Ned: Random's also read the first volume of The Seventh Tower (courtesy of yours truly) but we haven't seen #2 yet. But...we went through the family bookshelves and his current read is Heinlein's Tunnel in the Sky. It took a little while to grab him, but he's about halfway through and now thinks it's a really good book. As I have only one other Heinlein juvenile at hand, I may have to do some shopping. I wonder how he's do with the John Carter books. // Ct Guy: I rather doubt that you grew much in the way of anaerobic bacteria in High School. Or did you have some sort of anaerobe jar to keep the petri dishes in? // Ct Lynch: People do get CJD by routes other than contaminated beef.

Ct me: That was a picture of (damn, I can't find it) a nebula of some sort. I've hung onto it for use as a cover because it's always reminded me of The Eye of Sauron. So its looking creepy is the proper reaction. // Yeah, Random has tried sushi (nothing raw or extreme), and some Indian and Korean dishes (not that he had much choice considering the restaurants but Indian food, at least, really struck his fancy). As I've said, he's not screamingly adventurous, but is willing to take our recommendations when we try a new style on him.

Tom Feller - Ct Norm: As I haven't seen a Wonder Woman episode in years (does SciFi run them?) I pretty much remember only a couple of things about the show. // Ct me: Yeah, as it turns out the rule requiring the Pres and VP to be "from" different states did indeed come into play this time around. // In thinking about it, not all that many sitting VPs have even run for President. Several in the last 40 years (Nixon, Humphrey, Bush and Gore) but before that, again, you have to go back some time. Clearly not the best position to be launching one's campaign from.

Irv Koch - Ct Lynch: Raw meat is irrelevant to BSE since the causative agent doesn't get killed off by cooking.

Ned Brooks - Ct me: And even worse use of Biblical citation for a Prohibitionist would be the bit about "Drink you not wine or other strong drink lest you die" since it specifically is referring to just before going into the Holy of Holies to do sacrifices.

Toni Weisskopf - What legal implications of changing the rules? Gore was allowed to request a manual recount by Florida law. How is completing it changing the rules? It apparently wouldn't have made a difference, but that's not really the point. Seems to me that, once the count was requested, it wasn't up to the election officials to do a partial recount and decide that it wouldn't make a difference, but to just do the counts. In any event, it's time to move on. If someone finds evidence of something criminal, fine. Otherwise it's time to get on with business. (I do however, wonder, what would have happened if Clinton's victory in '92 had been this close.) // I still see the Court involvement differently. The Supreme Court is there to rule on whether a given law/ruling violates the US constitution, not to determine if a state court decision is in keeping with state law. In other words by, in any way interpreting state law (outside the realm of it's constitutionality), the Court was infringing on states' rights. At least that's how I read it. / In any case, life goes on and we ain't rioting in the streets.

Randy Cleary - Ct Arthur: Pants normally can't stop a bullet, but the can after being ironed.

Don Markstein - I just want to say that I enjoyed your Comparative Religion section.

Richard Dengrove - Ct Norm: While radiation (or X-rays) were certainly known in the 1910s (not sure about the 1890s), the concept of it being harmful or causing some sort of illness certainly wasn't there. People who experimented with the stuff did so quite casually and with no particular protection. I think the concept of Radiation Sickness is a post-WWII idea. // Ct Arthur: While we don't have paper dresses, you can get clothes made out of hemp fiber. And you can get paper made from the same stuff. (Both are rather too expensive for my taste.) // Ct Feller: I think it was Marvel comics that hit on the notion (at least I saw it there) that the issue with using a religious symbol to combat a vampire has to do with your faith, not the vampire's original one. // Ct me: I'd like the self-stick stamps more if they just did them all that way so I could have a full selection of all the neat choices. // So by putting them both down, the pundits made the last election into a goat race instead of a horse race? // I think the reason for the 12th amendment was to prevent electors from voting purely for their own. // To my knowledge, Andruschak continues to travel. But that's the extent of any knowledge I have. I can ask around L.A. // Ct Gary R: Macaroni and cheese using cottage cheese? Are you daft?

Norm Metcalf - Ct me: While I'm not sure it counts as variegating Random's reading material, I have managed to successfully hook him onto the Heinlein juveniles that I have on the shelf. Now I have to get more before he reads me out of house and home. // Thanks. "intuit" to "Inuit" just screamed to me made use of.

George Wells - I hope you had some success in recovering the stolen goods. / I had two break-ins while living in L.A. In neither case did they get a lot, but it was disturbing in any event. / FYI, you can buy premade "booksafes" if you don't want to hollow one out on your own.

Jeff Copeland - Glad to hear that you got through your "Welcome to the Pacific Rim" party with minimal damage. // Love the note you wrote to the school. // Ct Brown: Quite true. Chiropractors have their place but, as with any specialty, you have to know when it's appropriate to use them. // Ct Hughes: I wonder if that's why there are laws against suicide. If you botch the job, it can be very costly from a societal pov. Of course, from that view it seems strange to then spend more money in prosecuting the person too. But basically I agree. The issue isn't personal freedom, it's the cost to society to take care of you if you get injured. It can happen with the right safety equipment too, but why increase the likelihood? It's sort of the question of your right to swing your fist stops at the end of my nose - your right to take certain risks can be limited by how much of a burden that puts on others. // Ct Toni: Speaking of lots of useful quotes. Apparently over the course of his life Bill Rotsler collected quotes from all sorts of sources and kept them in notebooks. Boxes of notebooks. It's a current LASFS project (involving Marty Cantor and a few others) to produce a series of booklets consisting of the best of this collection. // Ct Janet: When I had a colonoscopy a few years ago, I was very tempted to comment to the assisting nurse (whom I knew slightly) that I didn't normally do this on first dates. // Ct me: Well, falsely looking annoyed in a picture is somewhat better than the fate that my mom tends to suffer - looking just plain dopey. An amazing percentage of random shots of her have her mouth hanging open and her eyes staring in some way. / And no, those don't make it to the family album. // You folks can argue North vs South, for now I have Westernmost sewed up. // I'm not quite into the "plop" sort of vacation since I like to do things. I just don't want doing to be predominant over resting.

APAC = NC²

Busy busy in February. I went down to San Jose the weekend of the 9th to attend the biennial convention for our region of UAHC (the umbrella group for Reform synagogues). I wasn't sure what to expect, but it surely was a useful and enjoyable experience. Being only one person, I was only able to sit in on a few of the discussion and seminars, but it was enough to convince me that we have really been missing the boat by not making more use of the resources available to us (Hell, I brought back contacts, ideas and information that I had to pass on to 5-6 different committees just from a couple of days). I also seem to have been something of a hit with the Fresno synagogue delegation that I sat with for dinner on Friday - backrubs around the table and suddenly I'm an honorary member. Even the services were pretty cool, it was nice just to be in a such a large group again. At the last temple Board meeting, I even got a commitment to send at least one delegate to the next biennial (and hopefully onward after that).

The exciting part was the drive to and from, as in both directions I had to deal with several miles of snow. (Southbound it was maybe 20 miles, but returning north it was over 35 miles.) Parts even had chain warnings but luckily it really wasn't that bad and was contentedly being the last car in line so I could use the cleared tracks ahead of me. If nothing else, it kept me from stopping for a bite to eat in Willits since I didn't want to let it get any worse.

Did spend some time with David and Berni (we had dinner and dessert on Saturday) and found out that David is now a full-time, permanent employeee at a local law library. I know it's been a while with various temporary and part time positions, so that's good news. Most of the rest was just general conversation until they dropped me back at the hotel.

The joys of doing the schedule at work. Just before the current schedule goes into effect, we found out that Donna was leaving (6 evenings per pay period). Then comes the official news that Sally (8 evenings) is expecting in the summer ((I knew already by devious routes)) and just today (Feb 29th) I hear that Rusty (our primary night tech) is taking a job in Alaska (closer to family). So, in the space of just over a month, we go from fully flush with staff to walking skeleton thin. "Ah cayn' stayn' it." Putting it another way, we have 10 staffers on the professional side but, based on hours worked, it works out to about 8 full time staff. To cover 40 shifts per week. This does not even qualify as razor thin. It's a monofilament we have here.

Hey, let's get into the fun stuff at the temple. As the foundation for a capital fundraising campaign we're holding a series of "focus groups" with the membership to find out what their vision is for where the congregation should be in 5 years. The first one starts this weekend so I should have a summary by next time. It should be an interesting set of meetings as long as the moderators (various board members) make sure that, if it comes up, it's clear that this meeting isn't about \$\$ but that, yes, depending on what the goals are, that is a possibility, now let's move on.

Enough, I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep.

AUF WIEDERSCHREIBEN