

PETER, PAN & MERRY #50

A zine for SFPA # 234

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Come and Tarry on SFPA 233

Southerner – What an appropriate masthead. After all, being in SFPA puts one on top of the world. Don't it?

Box Scores – Is sending this in early and separately a clever ploy on Gary's part to increase his standing in Cousin Guy statistics? Not that I object to clever ploys. // Hey, I always suspected that I was a “10”.

Ned Brooks - Ct Gary: My worry is that, in order to better the 2/113 disaster ratio, there may be a push to scrap everything until such a radical redesign can be accomplished. Seems to me that the only way to attain the improvements that are needed is to work on that in parallel (and often overlapped) with the current technology. // Ct Richard D: And, having had to go in because there was no time to wait for inspections, we seem curiously casual about securing any WMDs that are actually there. // Ct me: Repressed memories may be un-Darwinian (or, rather, not survival oriented), but in this day and age we can get away with a number of counter evolutionary behaviors because society helps protect them. And, in some cases, may actually foster them. // And, it seems to me, any competent lawyer should be able to get them off (re the glass pipes). They had no internet sales, they sold only to retailers and what about companies that sell regular pipes, or cigarette paper, or insulin syringes? / Hmm John “Torquemada” Ashcroft. It does have a certain ring to it. // Ct Gary B: I would love to see something get through Congress that would require that amendments to specific pieces of legislation pertain to bill. (I understand that some, by definition, deal with a wide variety of topics but even there, amendments should deal with items already there rather than adding new stuff.) / I'm not sure just how much intimidation there is in monitoring “non-compliance” with sentencing guidelines since those federal judgeships are for life, right? Those who have aspirations for higher appointments may feel intimidated although I'd guess that the records are kept anyway and the only real question is why would Congress need to be informed about this on an ongoing basis? // Ct Jeff: Wouldn't Turkey count as an Islamic democracy? And what about Indonesia (which I'm really not sure about)?

Richard Lynch – Ct me: You misread one item regarding that quote on my gas mileage going to L.A. – I was driving our Saturn, not the Prius. So the 38 mpg @ 70 mph was for **not** for the hybrid. The Prius tends to run 5+ mpg better on the highway but it's in city traffic that the mileage starts to edge up and we get close to 50mpg in town.

Arthur Hlavaty – I would think that, for your nutritional purposes, you would want to move all the way to FiberEight. It might do your 6-inch stub good too. // Actually the number of troops we sent was rather more than Rumsfeld actually thought were needed. At least I think that the military convinced him to up the troop count. Whether they got as many as they wanted I don't know. // “this peninsulate desire makes me a prick” Nice.

Richard Dengrove – Condolences on your father’s passing. I agree that at the funeral was not the time to be making points about Jewish practice and the future of the religion. So your dad had arranged for the funeral (and, presumably, the rabbi). I was going to ask why him, but it appears that question may not be answerable. // Ct Harry Warner: I don’t think “Christmas Carol” could be considered an alternate timeline since nothing that occurred changed anything in the past. It only changed what might have been the future. // Ct me: Unfortunately the whys and wherefores of which cogenerational relatives die when is rather beyond my ability to try to explain. // Ideally I would wish for even more surgically directed anti-terrorism (ie that the stuff is even more surgical, not that there is more of it) since the fewer the ancillary victims the less bad the PR is. Arrests would be even better but under the circumstances that exist that option really isn’t open. // As a practical matter no pre-approval study can really deal with long term effects so what has to be done is that there is some ongoing monitoring and analysis to look for effects down the line. But that can’t be an issue for FDA approval.

I was actually thinking that they might get ideas from Tom Clancy (et al) about what sort of things terrorists might attempt so they might be a bit closer to the crest of wave and have a better chance at preventing that acts. // It’s not necessarily “counting 2nd and 3rd place vote toward 1st place”. In those systems that use the instant run-off, people know they are saying “If X can’t win, then shift my vote to Y”. Yes, it’s their second choice, but it’s their 2nd choice for 1st place, not their 1st choice for 2nd place. // And if your culture is threatened by these outside influences (like McD) then I think you need to look at your culture, not the outside influence. // “if all LASFAPA OEs are in one place. I suspect a hole will open up...” And we’d all fall through it? // Ct Tom: Although not in quite the way you may mean, Harry Turtledove has an alternate history series in which Germany and the US win WWI over France, Britain and the CSA. // Ct TKFWR: Sorry, no mention of death for masturbation in the Bible. / A quick check shows a reference that striking or cursing (in the more literal sense) a parent is a capital crime and I do recall something about extreme disrespect/disobedience as being a stoning offense but can’t find a citation for now. But it’s not simply for disobeying.

Sheila Strickland – My recall is that Nightcrawler was pretty religious although perhaps not quite as overtly as in the movie. Still it wasn’t a hidden facet of him. As for other characters, it seems to me that the scene has been set to bring Colossus and Shadow Cat into the action. And, of course, I expect to see Phoenix. // Sorry to read about Silky.

Don Markstein – I agree. “Imposing” Democracy seems to me a contradiction in terms. You can offer it or help nurture it (ie overseeing elections), but you can’t force people to run their government the way you want them to and expect nothing but gratitude. If I were trying to be in charge of setting up a new gov’t in Iraq, I’d work to limit the potential for an Islamist dictatorship by how the constitution and parliament were set up but not by simply prohibiting a particular group from coming into power. And, ultimately, those could still be changed if enough people wanted them to. // Ct Cleary: Agreed. If you’re going to claim to be defending yourself against an imminent attack you had better have damn strong proof before you preempt.

TKFW Reinhardt – Not that you say otherwise, but the Bible also goes pretty clearly into areas of civil laws, rights, etc. The rules ain't just ritual and behavior & dietary restrictions. // Ct Eve: Doing a rough approximation I get somewhere between 25 and 30% of my income going to various taxes, fees, etc that wind up in gov't coffers. // Ct Guy: One problem I could see with regard to removal of someone like Saddam via assassination is that, with no clear line of succession, you have no idea what sort of leadership would take hold. It's a problem that would occur with most dictatorships and a bit less so with totalitarian gov't like the USSR was. It almost comes under the heading of "better the devil you know". And then you get the "genie out of the bottle" problem by making heads of gov't into fair game.

Gary Brown – Well The Hulk was neither as good nor as bad as it might have been. The Banner family background seemed extraneous. Seeing the direction they took I can see why they did it but it still seemed the wrong tack to take. The "Hulk Dogs" were at least developed as part of the whole premise so they fit in decently. I was intrigued by the "introduction" of The Absorbing Man here, even if he wasn't really used much. And it occurred to me after the fact that I didn't catch the name of the lab helper who Banner took the exposure for. By all rights it should have been Rick Jones but I didn't catch it. Gen. Ross was played about right and the large amount of Hulk vs army stuff was on track too. I guess they did need a super-villain though. // At this point the reports seem to be saying that the CIA (and others) said the data was hardly conclusive and often suspect but that didn't "suit the need" and had to be reworked. // Maybe the plan for the tax cut helping the economy is based on the theory that deficit spending will stimulate a recovery. And deficit spending is certainly the only kind we have right now. // Ct Ned: An interesting question is what Cuba would have added to "the social mix" had we not been so paranoid about it for so long. // Ct Steve: And, it seems to me, that the households with those large incomes and bigger benefit from the tax cuts are also the ones least likely to be spending that extra money. At least not in ways that really benefit the economy. // Ct me: Re not finding Greek Wedding all that funny. So you have no sense of humor. No big deal. (-)

Liz Copeland – And why just the NYC cops and firefighters who should forego overtime? But the simple answer to his question is that the soldiers signed up the they job they are doing and the cops/firefighters signed up for theirs. Soldiers don't get overtime when stateside or on peacetime duty either. Some people.

Guy Lillian III – Nice little travelogue. You need to get out and about more. Maybe do stuff like what Rick Foss is doing (traveling and selling the narrations of his trips). // Ct Toni: If I was any sort of listener to Dixie Chicks stuff I'd probably have started buying recordings like mad after she made that statement – particularly in light of the sudden media boycott. That is the liberal media that we're talking about, right? // I agree that they should have, as long as there was a possibility of damage, done what they could to determine if it was there or not. After that, who knows? Still the best possible outcome of the whole thing is, IMO, determining what can be done to prevent it from happening again and getting back out there. // Ct Eve: By the time this zine sees print we ought to have seen LXG and I'll have an opinion on the thing. Kay and I have both read the compiled graphic novel with different reactions so our takes on the film could be interesting. // Ct Jeff: So far the closest thing to a WMD that we've seen in Iraq are the coalition forces. // Ct Randy: I need to recheck Superman 2 since I don't recall any teleportation.

G'Day Lillian – Ct me: I don't mind so much the “kick ass and strut” portion of the program (whether I agree with it or not) but the condemnation (some of it pretty severe) of those who dare to voice disagreement is (and has been) the scary part of times like these. The only thing that might really wake people up to the dangers would be some (more) egregious violation of basic rights in the name of security. What specifically I don't know. // When we were in Scotland a few years ago I (very) briefly considered the notion of renting a car and quickly decided that that really was neither necessary nor a good idea. Besides, let me enjoy the scenery. // But considering how many years of having that summation titled Rear-ender it took to cause your accident, by the time retitling it Great Blowjob took effect you probably wouldn't care. // The reference to John Denver, summer and LASFAPA's 27th year is from Rocky Mountain High: “He was born in the summer of his Twenty-seventh year...” // Why would a Dyson sphere blow up like a balloon? Pressure from the solar wind? // Comparing Iraq to Nazi Germany is giving Saddam way to much credit. Overbearing, tin-plated dictator with delusions of God-hood is closer to it. // I presume the picture on the bacover is ARF.

Janet Larson – Congrats on having a diagnosis and here's to successful treatment.

Janice Gelb – Well the Texas Republicans gave us GWB so I guess there had to be a few more like him around. // Ct me: I'd think that just voting for the stuff you want in a preferential ballot is just as effective as any gaming one might try and surely a lot easier. Heck, it's probably easier to try and game the stock market since at least there you have some data to work with. // An interesting question is whether John Corbett's presence on the Greek Life TV show would have helped it or not. I'd lean towards No since I think the issue was not expanding beyond the humor of the movie. // I think that, at least as important as resources and reputation, is how good a fit there is between what the college/university is/offers and what the student needs. And there are plenty of school that have top notch reputations in certain fields without being a Major University. All things being equal I'd agree about the value of resources and reputation, but I don't think all things are equal. // The laser work does seem to have done a better than expected job of clearing up her vision. It's not perfect, but she's back to being able to read without extra magnifiers so everyone's happy with that outcome. // Ct Gary: I don't have too much problem with winning “moments” being “non-moments”. For example, each record occurred at individual moments even if was reached over a long stretch. But 7/10 being after 1980 seems rather lopsided. Still, all of them are at least events that one would remember if you were there for them so I guess that's as good a criteria as any.

Gary Robe – Excuse me but shouldn't the “Bush Team” have had an endgame strategy in place (with regard to security, basic services, etc) in place before the invasion? Being prepared for a longer war is one thing but surely a shortish one was very much of a possibility before they ever started. / “All the countries that resisted...regain some of their clout by muddying the occupation process.” Meaning they should just shut up and let Bush do what he wants rather than insisting on UN involvement? Isn't that something like appeasement? // At least for the moment it looks like the question of “Where In The World are Iraq's WMDs” is starting to get looked at more and more closely and may prove to be the crack that starts the wall tumbling. // It's fine for GWB to have a moral compass. The problem is you can find moral justification for anything if you want to. I'd want to lean in the direction of allowing people more, rather than less, personal moral freedom and I'm afraid GWB's moral compass invokes “I know what is morally right” rather too much.

On the Robe Again – Ct Dengrove: Any reading of the Bible would show that there clearly are case of “divine magic”. The question is how many of those cases aren’t directly at God’s behest – and all the one’s I can think of offhand are divinely initiated. My problem is that – just as the commandment against graven images doesn’t apply to simple art – the prohibition against sorcery wouldn’t apply to fiction. // I have no problem with the concept of the mind trying to protect itself (or protect the body) by sealing off a memory (rather like the body may seal off an injury). The problem I have is telling the difference between forgotten, repressed and induced memories. // Ct Gary: After shaving off my beard (not the ‘stache), my chin felt chilly for the next couple of weeks. I am now regrowing it at Kay’s behest as I don’t shave frequently enough to prevent beard burn.

APAC = NC² (Natter x Comments)

June has helped get the summer into shape somewhat. We signed Random up for a two-week stretch of tennis lessons as well as a stretch of swimming lessons. Those, along with his jujitsu camp and our overlapped week of vacation + his summer camp should help keep him from being too bored. He does seem to be taking to the tennis lessons (enjoyment-wise, it’s rather too soon to say about skill although he isn’t bad for a first timer). In the time since I first wrote about the tennis lessons, he and I have been out a couple of times to rally a bit and give him some practice. He needs work but is enjoying it.

On a related note, the daughter of one of my semi-regular clients is currently teaching at a tennis camp and we talked a bit about the possibility of them getting together a from time to time during the school year to give him some tips. (We didn’t get into it but I presume we were talking about a paid arrangement here.)

For his birthday he decided that he wanted to have friends over to just have fun with. So that’s what he did. An afternoon of waterfights, followed by dinner (sushi), a movie (The Great Race) and overnighting in the backyard tent and a good time was had by all. He’s even left the tent up since and spent every night sleeping out there – which is fine by us. We followed up that with a small one for family and had another good time on the strength of several rounds of croquet.

Oh. Overlapping the main party we also had a visit from Tom and Marina Stern, passing through on their way to Westercon so we had a little bonus company of our own.

June proved strangely profitably for me as one of the dept heads arranged to have me on site for enough time to give their entire staff massages. Worked out to 10 full hours. This made up for a couple of somewhat slim days with my regular clientele (partially from having to juggle days and partially from too many vacations). With a bit of luck I may also have stumbled on another client base. An acquaintance of mine works for the county Health and Human Services Dept and got me a semi-gig at their office. It’s semi because the first one was done before they got Official Permission and now we’re on hold until someone far enough up the food chain says that it’s OK. I’m keeping my fingers crossed since, even on short notice, I had two full, 2-hour blocks. (Mid-July and their still waiting to hear back from their Risk Manager about doing this. Sheeesh. I did pass back the information that I do carry insurance too.)

On of those customers also asked if I would be willing to loan my massage chair to help her raise money for her Relay for Life ((Cancer walk)) team. I was willing if they made sure the city was OK with that but they never managed to get a booth together for the July 4th celebrations so that fell through. Too bad since I’d even made a sign indicating who the chair was courtesy of. Then she wanted to know if I could loan it during the walk – but with my chedule the two days of the event there was just no way I could get things to them this year.

This was also the month we got tired of various older, more bothersome items.. We now have a new mower and weed-whacker as well as a new VCR/DVD player. And yet somehow we keep managing to have the savings account inch upwards instead of down. That really is a nice feeling after a long stretch where it was essentially stable between the positive and negative monetary transactions. And how well timed. One of our neighbors decided to have a garage sale and it sort of morphed into a full-blown block sale. Even though Kay forgot to take out one pile of stuff, we still managed a nifty \$100+ as well as clearing out some bulkier items, so now when I take the rest over to donate to the synagogue rummage sale it should only take one trip. Better yet was the fact that, later that afternoon, all the families got together and had a post-sale barbeque and potluck. And now a few more of us have names to go with known faces, cars, dogs and houses.

And we finally created Corky's marker. A year ago, my nephew gave us a gift of a couple of "Make your own stepping stone" kits. So we used one to set up the stone, decorated it and wrote his name there. Once it set we placed it in the over him in the garden. Not fancy but it does the job.

Hmmm. Lotta movies in the last few weeks.

The Hulk was OK but deviated more from the origin tale than I'd have liked (particularly with all the genetic tinkering in Doc Banner's family background). Two other parts seemed out of place to varying degrees. The "Hulk Dogs" felt wrong although you do need the actions scenes. And the use of, what can only be described as, The Absorbing Man was too minimal to make good use of the character (even ignoring the genesis used). Almost strangely the best part was the Hulk vs the Army stuff since that fit so well with the character's history. 4th place of the adaptations..

Finding Nemo was certainly a pretty movie with good humor and a far less annoying "silly sidekick" than some Disney's have. And it's nice enough "Hunt for lost kid" tale but at the end of the day there's nothing all that great about it.

Sinbad bothered me simply because (aside from two vignettes that echoed the "actual" tales) every other main character or location was out of Greek history or mythology. Yeah, yeah, I know – it bothers those who know the source material and not those who don't. Again, the animation (a blend of manual and computer animation) was great as were the voices (Guy Lillian will see it just to hear Michelle Pfeiffer as Eris). Take the tale for what it is, forgive them their trespasses and you'll like it – we did. You have to let yourself get caught in the tale and worry about analysis later.

And finally, League of Extraordinary Gentlemen. Put simply, it's an action-adventure movie. Bond, or Tomb Raider, or this you have to sign on for the ride and ignore the Mack trucks driving through.. Overall, while shuffling the game pieces a bit, I think they did a good job of sticking to the overall feel of the book (allowing for some significant PC corrections). Overall I think the thing that bugged me most was the addition of Tom Sawyer (way off age) into the group. But I have to say that if they had to include an "American" literary character it's hard to think of any others. The best I could do (and I'm aware that he really isn't American but...) was Tarzan. Entirely enjoyable.

As for the near future, I'm getting tired of changing my story here. It looks like I Will be teaching Religious School this coming year. Our K-1 teacher's husband applied for a position with the weather service in Monterey. As it was a two-grade jump he really didn't expect to get it but figured the interview would be good experience. Surprise. And it's too good an opportunity to pass up even if they really don't want to leave the area. So they'll be gone by mid-August (the house sold immediately) and we're shuffling our teaching assignments to cover everything so it's back to the original plan with me team-teaching the upper grade level.

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