

PETER, PAN & MERRY #52

A zine for SFPA # 236

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Come and Tarry on SFPA 235

Southerner – For some reason that picture looks like it's of the Winchester Mystery House. Of course the fact that we visited the place this summer may be influencing my perceptions.

Mike weber – Ct Richard D: I've often thought that it would be nice if those people who knew me (most of whom I expect I'll have out-lived) were to hold a Roast and general Pun fest in my honor. // The problem I have with Tunguska having involved anti-matter is that the bit of stuff would have had to make it's way through a lot of the atmosphere in order to have exploded at the height that it did. Not impossible, but a bit of a push. // Ct Ned: I can't speak for anyone else, but I still recognize slide rules. As I'm sure I've mentioned, I even use the things from time to time just to throw people off a bit. // Ct Don: I believe it was Goebbels who made the remark about The Big Lie, but either way the basic source is the same. // Ct Jeff: If I was going to compare the two films, I'd almost have to say that Banger Sisters was Thelma and Louise turned inside out. // Ct Richard D: There is at least one clear reference in Torah to someone who does use magic (if you want to call it that) but only within the limits allowed by God (and the person isn't even a Jew) so clearly there is some precedent for that rabbinical tradition. (I'm referring to Balaam)

Ned Brooks - Ct Richard D: Just to clarify, the prohibition about mixing threads (specifically wool and linen) in a garment wasn't because that was forbidden, it was because that particular mix was to be used only for the priestly garments – ie it was a holy thing and not to be used commonly. A bit different from the Graven Image issue. And, of course, there's the question of what makes something a graven image – any representation or just one used for worship/ritual purposes? // Ct Norm: But couldn't you attach the plate of Cavorite to the back of the space craft and use it as a sort of reverse solar-sail? As long as the plate went up with you the cone of null gravity would continue to rise with you too. // Ct me: I'm unsure how much influence the AG has on promoting judges. (Clearly he can influence who the President nominates for positions though.) He should have not authority on state and municipal judges (although leverage can be applied I guess). In any case that sounds like he's rather overstepping the bounds – similar to J.E. Hoover keeping files on anyone and everyone.

Rich Lynch – But that answer you go was wrong. By “not making hard decisions” Europe IS making decisions in support of the status quo and against intervention. Whether that be right or not, he can't say that they aren't making a decision.

Steve Hughes – Sounds (and looks) like a great trip you had.

Richard Dengrove – Ct Norm: I don't know about the Septuagint being translated to promote orthodoxy (who's, by the by?) but clearly those who did that translation had their own agendas, assumptions, etc that worked into their rendering. And, as ever, idioms are tough to translate. Essentially you have a protracted game of telephone going on despite of best efforts. Of course that's what makes the study interesting since you can use various ways to read (and read into) the text.

Dengrove, Dengrove, Den Dry Grove – Ct Sheila: We've finally broken down and gotten a cell phone. As you say, it's cheaper than hotel phones. On the flip side you really do need to use it to a fair extent if you want to make those prepaid minutes pay for themselves so I've taken to using it for long-distance calls, not to mention when I remember that I need to call someone and I'm out and about. But primarily it's for keeping in the car (either one) to call if there's a delay or such. It'll also come in handy on the trip to L.A. since it'll act as a phone book too. Still, the best thing is that the cover is purple. // Ct Guy: While attacking DC after Bull Run would probably have been the rout you say, what if the Confederates had pursued and captured all the civilians (and probably congressmen) who had come out to watch the Union army smash the upstarts? Still, that wasn't how things were done and I can't see Lee or the other Southern generals playing that card. // Without checking, I think the only way that being drunk would mitigate a crime by Jewish law is that it would define a situation where the person couldn't have done it as a premeditated action and so would become a lesser crime. // Ct Robe: Depp overacting as Jack Sparrow? Seems to me that the character clearly called for an over-the-top performance.

Ct me: OK, that's a perfectly good reason for choosing that Rabbi. It just sounded like there hadn't been any basis for the choice so I was curious. // It's a tough call. With surgical strikes you risk a) creating martyrs, b) not being surgical enough thus getting the worst of both worlds and c) being too surgical and not getting your target by trying to eliminate collateral damage. Ultimately, of course, any solution has to be politically based (ie through negotiations and agreements) rather than by force. But you can't ignore attacks either. On a different note, the recent happenings in Saudi Arabia make me wonder if the mad dog of terrorism is starting to chew it's own leg off just for the sake of having something to attack. // Hitting back is certainly a part of the answer since you can't ignore such attacks but not doing so in such a way as to produce more enemies is the tricky part. They kill or wound whatever number civilians and they rejoice but if any of their civilians are wounded in counter attacks they scream about it being butchery and how those victims were innocent bystanders. Classic hypocrisy. ("They" here being supporters of the terrorist gps.) // Since when has McCalamari been a menu item? // Oh I know the citations that can be used for disobedient children, masturbation and homosexuality. It should be noted that the first one involves not just disobedience but total incorrigibility. And requiring both parents to invoke it. / The second one involves a specific situation re levirate marriage.

As a practical matter what's the difference between recovering repressed memories of a traumatic event (for the purpose of curing the effects) by sodium pentothal or by hypnosis? Whatever gets past the blockage should have the same benefit. // I did put a caveat when I said "well, sort of" in calling Tarzan "American". I'm quite aware of his literary genealogy. For most folk (ie THEM) I think it would have passed muster well enough. On the other hand, he couldn't have killed the villain with a crack shot from the rifle. // Ct Jeff: My medical coverage used to require a referral to cover chiropractic care. They've since changed and cover it directly – but only with member providers. // Ct Toni: Actually the "real name of God" is the letters Yud, Hay, Vav and Hay. (YHVH in English) but since the Torah has no vowels, the Actual pronunciation is unknown.

Arthur Hlavaty – So if the new car is Edmund (West) for The New Adam, does that mean the old car was actually Adam West?

Don Marstein – Without checking the data, I would point out that the counterargument about Republicans increasing the Nat'l Debt more than Democrats is that the Democrats raised taxes while the Republican didn't. Of course that begs the question of, if you're a fiscal conservative and try to hold the line (or lower) taxes, then why wasn't spending lowered as well. But then again, a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.

Guy Lillian III – Ct Southerner: By helping Sheila collate, you not only get your mailing quicker, you also save on that 1st Class postage. // Ct Rich D: Are you saying that the 45-year olds of a quarter century ago had more exhibitionism & less shame than the current 45-year olds or that the current 45-year olds were that way when they were 20? Both could well be accurate statements of course. // Ct me: I'm not sure just what they could coat the main tanks with that would prevent the foam from peeling off – certainly just paint wouldn't do the job. Perhaps the foamed area that is above/in front of the shuttle could get some additional layer to hold the foam in? Maybe better than that, have a protective "wall" or somesuch to guard the leading edges of the tiles and make it removable (maybe even reusable). // Right on. We gotta get them before they get us. We know it worked because they didn't get us. Sounds like a bad old joke: "What's the X for?" "To keep away polar bears." "We're in the tropics there's not a polar bear for 5,000 miles." "See who well it works!"

Sheila Strickland – Hail to the future OE. // Ct me: Exactly my point. You stick unpopular riders onto a good or important bill to get them passed. That's how you get pork and crappy laws. Stealth legislation, keep it under the radar. // Ct Janice: When I got my sample ballot for the recall election, I spent a few minutes looking it over to find my candidate of choice and marking that spot. When the actual election came it didn't take long since I had my sample with me.

Self – Ct Richard D: That bit about "time travel gives me a headache" was stolen from ST: Voyager.

Gary Brown – While the Marlins weren't my first choice by a sight, any team that knocks off the Yankees is OK in my book. // Not to disillusion you, but mike weber's naughty superheroine pictures are better than yours. // Ct Arthur: Sometimes luck really is the only factor in avoiding a bad accident. Take what you get along those lines. // Ct Guy: Even back in the '70s and '80s there were conventions that were about the money. It may be that the "general fannish attitude" about that has changed although it's been long enough since I attended any on a regular basis that I really don't have any way to make that comparison. // Ct me: I'll say that 50 issues was a long time coming. Took over 8 years to get there. And thanks, I hadn't even thought about it being a number worthy of note. // Even in X-Men they introduced a couple of the characters that got more air time in the second film (Shadowcat and Iceman). Even if they don't fully develop them next time around, it's nice that they're at least acknowledging them. // Oh OK, as long as you found Greek Wedding funny – but not hilarious - that's alright. // Ct Jeff: I'll have to give Haunted Mansion a try just to see if it holds up as well as Pirates did. Maybe I'm a bit leery because I'm not a big Eddie Murphy fan (yes he is funny, just not hilarious. OK?). I like my humor a delivered with a slightly smaller 2x4. // I'll be emailing you before you see this but I suspect that our mutual timing is going to be crap for the 7th. We'll see.

T.K.F.W.R. – Not sure what “religious tolerance” has to do with “turning the other cheek”. Acceptance, etc of differences doesn’t mean you have to accept injury and insult. // So trial lawyers made more than Intel, etc. What’s that break out to on a per person (or per company) basis. The sheer number of them (which could be considered another issue) makes the comparison rather iffy. // Sharon Farber’s letter: And those tubes of CSF (spinal fluid) were just sitting open on the table? No one thought to close each as it was filled or to keep them in some sort of rack? // As a point of curiosity, what “actions from the first Gulf War” let us know he had used biological weapons? // Ct Janice: From what I can tell, Dean seems to have the most traction among the Democratic candidates. Partly because (from what I’ve seen) he’s a more forceful speaker than most of them and partly from being more Progressive in his positions. It’s not that he’s the most A or the most B, but that he has a good combination of those traits. Still, it’s early so we’ll just have to see. // Ct Rich L: You’ve twice mentioned that there is a Conservative movement in the Republican Party but I think you fail to distinguish that there are two of them – there’s the Fiscal Conservatives (whom I have no trouble with) and the Social Conservatives (aka the Religious Right)(whom I do have troubles with).

Ct me: As the Bible doesn’t refer to Heaven, it doesn’t use that as a bludgeon. However there are various ritual offenses for which one would be “cut off from among the people” and there are criminal offenses that invoke various penalties. There are also ethical requirements that (to my recollection) don’t come with any specific arm-twisting. And then there is the overall declaration that “If you live by these laws you’ll be blessed and if you don’t you’ll be cursed”. / Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy all have some amount of law-giving. For a few citations: Leviticus 19, Numbers 15 from verse 14, Deuteronomy 19 from verse 14 and Deuteronomy 22. // I have not problem with tax cuts being used to give taxpayers more \$, but that the \$ is being used to be productive and create wealth implies that the \$ should go to business and owners to prompt them to increase their business. Seems to me that the \$ should be going to those who will be buying the goods and services and that would prompt more production and generate more wealth. / Deficit spending (ie borrowing) has its place, ask anyone with a mortgage. But, as you say, there have to be limits on that sort of thing. // I may disagree with the position, if it’s a situation of the listeners saying “Don’t play their music” then I can certainly see the DJs complying with the wishes of their audience (noting that the sampling was not a scientific poll). // Speaking of moral compasses vs moral rationalization, what’s your take on Florida’s legislative override of a husband’s decision on life support? // Don’t ask me to explain why getting a workplace massage had to go through the Risk Manager. As for Gov’t waste, if you have a Risk Manager they need to have something to do – even if it is stupid.

Janet Larson – Ct Richard D: Seems to me that genetics will provide tendencies, limitations, etc but not strictly determine what you become.

Gary Robe – Maybe Isaac packed in anticipation of such warm weather than neither shirts nor socks would be needed? // Sounds like a nice hike in Yosemite. Are you getting any commemorative shirts made? // Well, Crescent City may be the last dot on the map before Oregon border, but it isn’t quite the last community. / By the by, since you drove up from Hwy 20 to Crescent City, you could have waved on the way through Eureka. We don’t get that many fannish visitors passing through. “I’m not angry. Just *terribly, terribly* hurt.” / I know you had a long days drive, but you might have considered a visit to Trees of Mystery. It’s actually a rather cool roadside attraction.

Robe in Hood – Sounds like you took Hwy 96 over to Yreka. I believe that is the road that is also referred to as the Jefferson Highway – after the not-terribly-successful effort to turn parts of NorCal and SoOre into a separate state back in the '40s (I think it was). Yeah, Shasta is a pretty impressive peak. In some ways it brings to mind The Last Lonely Mountain. // Corlis has a Swill Army Credit Card? I know military food is supposed to be bad, but isn't that a bit severe?

Jeff Copeland – Ct Sheila: Over the years, pets do have a tendency to die on you. Somehow doesn't stop most of us from doing it again. // Ct me: There is also no issue of Wurlitzer (LASFAPA's Official Organ) that is errorless. Marty even a designated error in just in case there is no serendipitous one. // So you'd raise the standard deduction to something approximating the Official Poverty Level cutoff or does your idea work out to higher than that? Another issue is do you consider into calculating the food costs, etc, choices that people make? For example, if I eat out 2 meals per day that's a lot more expensive than home-prepped meals. In other words, could the Cost of Living in your calculation be artificially inflated, thus pushing up the rates about that base even more? Over all I like the idea but I'd want to see a breakdown of how that actually affected things (not that I expect you do work that out on your dinner napkin). // Are you being overly cynical about "If Gore had been President"? In some ways yes, but probably not in regard to the freelance commentators, analysts and such. Congress – despite some gloomy assessments – is generally smart enough to know when you need to cheer and support the president (at least in public). // So why is Dean be Bush's preferred opponent? A chance to play the Too Liberal card?

I'm not sure I buy that it's the primaries that eliminate the consensus candidate. After all, if you had the party making the choice then you're still going to have the more extreme rank and file members thinking about bolting because he doesn't stand for their positions. Unless you want to take it back to the party machine days when the rank and file just voted the way the party told them to. I'll concede that in the opening rounds of the primaries, the candidates that are closest to the activist positions may have the strongest initial block of voters but that doesn't mean that's how things will play out. // Not doing three-letter acronyms must be tough with MSN. // Well my parents haven't traveled at all in the last few years. One option was my going down and driving them up here over 3 days (although it might have been longer since total car time per day could be rather limited). Right now even that option looks pretty unlikely given my dad's situation. (See natter). Note that we are talking about a 97 year old and a 90 year old here. // Ct Toni: Seems to me that the 4th Amendments opening clause "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures..." is a pretty blatant statement of a right to privacy. And the 9th Amendments statement that "The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." seems a clear admission that "just cause we didn't list it doesn't mean it ain't there".

Ct Guy: I went to check on just what was opposite of NOLA on the globe and discovered just how easy that is – with it sitting at the crossing of a map line of both latitude and longitude. // Ct Gary: Now you made me go to see when I could find a non-moustache picture of me. I had to go back beyond my college Sr. picture (1977) to so. // I tried shaving off my beard for the reason you cite (too much gray) but Kay didn't like the ongoing battle with stubble. The 'stache is not problem on that front though. // Ct Ned: Actually, the "differences" in the Dead Sea Scrolls are interesting because they match so damn well with the texts of the same books that we still have. // Ct Richard D: Methinks the theory on privatizing is that $\text{Cost} + \text{Profit} < \text{Cost} + \text{Waste}$.

APAC = NC² (Natter x Comments)

So what's been going on since Labor Day. Oddly little actually. Had another good month on the massage front. Good enough that it looks like I'm going to have to extend my hours on the days that I spend the afternoon at the hospital campuses. Out of the five hours that I'm usually there now, 13 of 15 sessions are now (after today) booked regularly and 2 of the 3 I can add with another hour are already spoken for. I may decide to stop having this announced overhead. If there aren't any openings, why bother? And the answer really does remain – to see if a few more people might want to get a massage and maybe require me to find even more hours.

Random's back in school, which is something of a mixed blessing. For all the good stuff about that it also brings on more things that remind him about ("Homework done? Yes. (later) Oh, I forgot I have to do XXX."). There are days I just want to disconnect the TV, say nothing and see if it does a damn thing. Then let him take the consequences. And I think these are the days I'm going to do it. Don't know if it'll do any good but it's time some other folk started expressing their annoyance with him (his orthodontist has already done so about not wearing his headgear enough).

Religious school has started but I don't really have any tales to tell about that yet. I have noted that –how odd - the girls and boys tend to cluster at the tables. This wouldn't be a problem if it didn't then generate clusters of conversation. (A portion of that is that 3 of the 4 girls have gone through public school together for several years.) I've taken to the notion of tossing their notebooks (that stay in school) out haphazardly with the explanation that they sit where their notebook ends up. It worked pretty well the first time and I'll be trying it again next week.

Of course there's also the upcoming *cough* recall election (which will be done by the time this sees print). I'm agin it. It has nothing to do with Davis and everything to do with there being no substantive change from what the situation was last year – which we knew about at election time – and no conduct by him warranting a recall. This week's Sunday Doonesbury included a cut out form to sign and send off to initiate a recall if Arnold should become governor. Much as I think that would be amusing, the fact is it would be hypocritical of me to sign a recall petition. Who would I be to dispute the accepted wisdom of 30% of the 50% of registered voters among the 50% of eligible voters of the state of California ((No, I don't know the turn out yet and I don't offhand know the %age of eligible voters who are actually registered.))

Moving on (doubly so considering the previous topic). In early October I squeeze in a short golfing trip up the Oregon coast. (I'd tried to work a timeshare swap for sometime between May and November so naturally it came up for the week that included Yom Kippur forcing some shortening of the trip. As it was not during summer, it also meant that I'd be on this one alone.) Tuesday morning started out well enough with casting my vote against the recall before starting off north. Nothing much to speak of on the first part of the drive other than to note that it was overcast almost exactly to the Oregon border and then the sun came out. (There were also a few stretches of road that I was pleased to see being upgraded and generally maintained, but that didn't have any effect on how sunny it was.)

I'd been debating which of two possible courses I'd stop at to play on the drive up – one that I'd played before, in Brookings (southern Oregon) or an interesting-sounding one in Florence (central coast). As a practical matter the difference was whether I would play a morning or afternoon round (put another way – after more, or less, time sitting in the car). As the sun was shining and I wasn't sure if that would continue, I opted for playing Salmon Run in Brookings. It's basically a narrow course played along both sides of a creek. A very pretty setting but my complaint has always been that you can't walk it (too many places you have to cut around to cross the water or gullies). In any case, despite the loss of three balls (not too bad considering the course) I had a nice little round of 87 to see me on my way.

Took advantage of being in Oregon and stopped at a Dairy Queen for lunch (yeah, we all have our little guilty pleasures), refueled the car (Nyah, nyah, you thought I was going to say that I got gas) and headed north again. As ever, passing through tourist towns like Gold Beach, Bandon and Newport, ports like Coos Bay and regular old towns like Florence and crossing over the plethora of Depression era (and later) bridges that span the numerous rivers, bays and inlets that dot the coast. The other really neat part of the drive is that so much of it is truly along the coast – it's sort of like driving Highway 1 in California but with the road conditions appropriate to the 101. A bit of the best of both worlds. Finally, 300+ miles later I reached Gleneden Beach and my accommodations.

WorldMark Gleneden Beach is a pretty nice place. For one thing, it sits about a close to the beach as you can build something in Oregon. It has a path down the bluff to the beach if you feel like walking along the shore (I note that every day I was there I saw people flying kites as well as just walking). Particularly nice was that the room I had faced the ocean so you could hear the waves and/or just sit and watch to motion of the ocean. The room as what one would expect (ie large with full kitchen and amenities) and I was pleased to note that many (albeit not all) of the fixtures around the place had compact fluorescent bulbs. There are resorts and resorts, and this one was clearly designed for a) relaxing or b) being a base for doing other things.

Me, I wanted the other things. So when I checked in I asked about making tee-times (the resort's about a half mile from Salishan golf resort and I planned on taking advantage of that). But the name of the course they mentioned was not what I'd expected – seems that Salishan had closed the course for the season (through Spring) to redo all the greens. I detect a theme, as one of the courses I'd wanted to play in the Bay Area this summer has also not yet re-opened and one that I did play had just recently done so. So be it, Lakeside (just north through Lincoln City) it would be.

So Wednesday mid-morning (after grumbling about the election results) I was off again. Grabbed a fast bite in town before wending my way up to the course – an 18-hole executive course (shorter yardage, lots of par 3 holes). As I was waiting to tee off, a bit of a squall passed through. After a moment's hesitation, I went ahead anyway. By the time I was done with the first hole the rain was over. However, as the day progressed, the clouds and sun played a lot of peekaboo, which caused me to keep donning and doffing my sweatshirt --- felt right at home with that arrangement. (I'd been "warned" at the resort that the course was hilly, which was true enough but hardly reason to even consider the cart they wanted to know if I would like.)

On the way back down, I stopped to do some shopping in Lincoln City. A light collection of stuff for breakfasts plus a few snacks and drinks. Also found a Papa Murphy's pizza place (take-and-bake) and procured two nights worth of pizza dinner before returning to base for some time in the spa (which also overlooks the beach) before dinner. Another nice thing about the timing of this trip was that I was able to spend my evenings (aside from apa-hacking) watching the play-offs (and grumbling about the Yankees winning).

Thursday it was off the other direction as early as I could manage. Florence is about 1.5 hours south of where I was so if I planned on spending any time in Newport on the way back, an early start was quite indicated. Ocean Dunes is slightly misnomeric since, while the course is built on and around dunes, the ocean is a bit distant from it (now). The clubhouse/pro shop wasn't much to speak of, but the course itself is quite pretty and nicely laid out. About half-way through the round, a wind came up. When I looked around I noticed a rather serious squall line out over the ocean and south. Some studying of the clouds and the wind provoked me to shout out "More North!" several times. Nice try. About three holes later I was forced to seek shelter under one of the scrubby trees near the tee and wait out the rain. Didn't get soaked but didn't stay dry either. At least it was only about 15 minutes worth. I also decided the place was worth stop on the way home.

Back up to Newport for a visit to the Oregon Coast Aquarium (one of the things we'd never done on our other trips through the area). While it's clearly been around for a while, it's still quite nice. There's an impressive display of seahorses and jellies (no jams or preserves) in cylinders. They also have a walk-through section that includes some see-through floor sections so it's really theatre in the round. Another area includes a lengthy display on undersea exploration – including diving gear of various vintages and a bathyscaphe.

Sort of down the block from the aquarium is a set of shops that, best I can tell, depend on aquarium overflow for survival. The exteriors were all ratha' garish with pirates and sea monster statues, bright colors. The stuff they had to sell, for the most part, wasn't all that interesting but the outside appearances did promote something of a carnival atmosphere. I did take a short drive down through "Historic Bayfront" but most of the stuff they had I'd rather enjoy in company than in a quick run through (Ripley's, Wax Museum, that sort of thing). From there 'twas back to base for some more spa time prior to finishing my pizza and watching some more baseball.

Friday was for early check out and heading home (albeit not before taking in a second round at Ocean Dunes – only slightly better than the previous day – "Ah'll be back"). It's interesting. I enjoy having these occasional chances to go off and golf new places. I also enjoy the occasional time to just be by myself and flake off. But it really is more fun when someone is around to share it with – and to make the non-golf time more fun, interesting, varied and enjoyable. Just an observation as I'll no doubt do something like this again. (Hmm. Funny I should mention that.)

Religious school is going fairly well so far. Due to sundry technical matters we've only had one full-on section of Hebrew that I've been at (review, testing, holiday event, proctoring a late exam, that sort of thing) but we're pushing harder on the reading and giving some sense of vocabulary (what the prefixes mean, which words are masculine/feminine/singular/plural, etc) and they seem to be rising to the challenge (some more so than others of course). Tied into that is our commitment to giving them all a grounding in the basic liturgy they'll need to do the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony (some already have it and we will be letting those kids have "advanced" liturgy lessons with a guest teacher on a regular basis).

Aside from that, I'm bringing in 5 sections on Israeli history, Adina will have several sections on Jewish literature and we'll be filling in gaps with either Israeli dancing or short articles out of BabaGaNewz – a Jewish kids/young adults magazine. In other words, something of a plethora of exposure. We added a couple of new things this year – 1) actual homework every week. Not a lot, but prayer practice and a bit of Hebrew or whatever strikes us from the lessons. 2) I make it a point of sending a post-class email to all the parents to let them know what we covered, what was sent home and what the homework is – that seems to be a fairly appreciated bit of information.

So far the main problem is keeping the side-talk down (three of the girls have been going to school together for years and also play soccer while three of the guy also play soccer so I tend to squash a lot of sports related side talk). One thing that seems to be working moderately well is giving out of Halloween-sized candy for bringing in homework assignments - I do have to remember to get some Israeli candies when I'm in L.A. this month.

It's shaping up as an interesting experience. I don't know if I'll want to do this again (and certainly not alone) but I think it's worthwhile.

We recently got a new, small instrument at work. This one is for diagnosis of Congestive Heart Failure and it's been added to my list of responsibilities. It really is a rather cute little thing and has gone to live on the counter that has become the home of all the items with small footprints - five so far.

We are also getting a new hematology analyzer to replace the one that we've had for 6+ years now. 90+% of the difference is in the software side of the package which should let us reduce unnecessary work by some amount. The fun part is that this means I get another trip to Miami for training. When I first knew this was on the table I was a bit annoyed to discover that they were no longer using the same facility to house us because the place had a golf course on the premises.

When I talked to their travel agent to arrange the flights (they've learned and fly you in over the previous weekend) I found out that I'd be staying at the Intercontinental Hotel on 87th. So what? Out of curiosity I go on line to check the place out and one of their notes mentions a golf course within a mile or so. Interesting. Use their "attraction finder" to check that out further and discover that that "golf course" in question is actually the Doral Resort and Spa - which has 5 golf courses, including one that the PGA tour plays on. It's going to cost me just about as much as the entire trip I took in October, but as I have no other expenses on the trip I'd probably kick myself for years if I didn't take advantage of this opportunity. So, when it's a bit closer to the time I'm going to make myself some reservations.

One side note on golf. I now have another group to play with. Aside from a friend who I introduced to the game, there's an ex-golfer retaking it up and a new arrival who plays so the temple now has a semi-regular foursome (very semi so far but when the seasons come back around it should be less semi and more regular).

I was talking with my mom the other day and she was telling me that, while still alert and basically healthy, dad is definitely slowing down and getting more frail. In talking a bit more with my sister she opined that (after a long talk with dad's doctor) that, while there's nothing in particular wrong, this may well be his last Thanksgiving. That was sort of the general train my mind was going in after talking to mom. Of course stubbornness can take you a long way so we'll just have to see what we see.

Well, he took a fall out of bed about a week ago and the next day was essentially unable to stand on his own (even with the walker). So a visit to the ER (per MDs order) turned into a stay in the hospital to buy some time to resolve things. Suzy and I did some consulting and calling around to find some options for additional at-home support (primarily overnight), including a hospital bed. Then, the day he was supposed to be released he had another collapse (he apparently was rather ashen afterwards but I don't know if that's cause or effect) so the hospital social worker arranged for a stay in a rehab facility near their home. This is the situation as it stands and we're heading down in a few days for our annual visit.