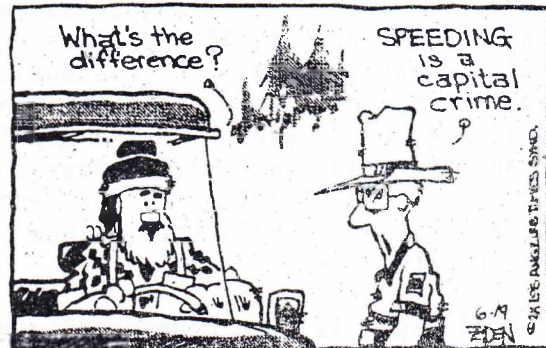


AGAINST THE GRAIN / Glen Foden

PETER, PAN & MERRY #30
A zine for SFPA # 216

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Comments on SFPA 215

Southerner - Damn, no comments for the 00 this time around.

Ned Brooks - Toadying to a toad? // Ct me: I'd agree that, overall, "handicapped" is a somewhat fuzzy term. But as a practical matter, you would have to use a healthy person with full use of limbs and senses as the standard. Anyone not reaching that standard could be considered handicapped although even there you will have gray zones that need to be ruled on since you have the various corrective aids that give near full use. // While I don't know where the carbon monoxide would have come from, it wouldn't have required a sudden massive dose to KO the crew. That gas is odorless and colorless and could, potentially, sneak up on you. Who knows?

I have to wonder if there is a limit on the fuel efficiency that a gas engine can deliver. That could be a partial explanation of the, more or less, flat line on additional mpgs until the hybrids have come around. As you say, it'll be interesting to see what these new types of cars get in standard use. // OK, if there was an added infection then the use of an antibiotic makes sense. / Pharmaceutical makes have to put expiration dates on everything, even when the active ingredient is one that really doesn't deteriorate much. Even when the stuff does lose potency, they will usually list an expiration date well sooner than when the drug actually craps out. The catch with antibiotics is that you don't want to be exposing the bugs to doses that won't kill them, since that's what promotes more resistance on their part.

Our local paper is also running "Classic Peanuts", although I really have now idea what year they are from. // Ct Guy: Did the accused witches ever get wise to the false bodkin trick and just go ahead and scream in anguish when it was used? I suppose that wouldn't have helped much tho, since the accuser could just show that there was no wound where the blade had "gone in" and that would be just as sufficient as proof. // Ct Richard D: I don't know anything about saving the foreskin - although my parents did save the diaper that was used. / However, I can assure you that there's no way that God would have rebuked the Hebrews for proposing a census - the taking of the census was a divine decree. Albeit that that was simply an enumeration of the adult males. // Ct Jeff: An interesting point re the ease of gun use. When the 2nd amendment was written, it would have been virtually impossible for a child to be able to load and fire a gun without help and/or training. Rather a different situation from the current one.

Ned's News - Ct Janet: Seems that Jabberwocky is a popular item to have memorized. I learned it for a recitation in my 8th grade Drama class and can still recite it smoothly. // A TB skin test is a required annual item for health care workers (I would assume for various other professions too) but wouldn't be considered part of an annual physical by one's MD.

Richard Lynch - You win the prize. I've done 11-14 hour days of driving, but 17 would be a push and 23 just plain scare me. I have stayed awake that long (or more) but it always involved either cons or work so there was enough moving around and mental stimulation to keep me alert. That much time behind the wheel... // Ct Jeff: I think the reasons Phantom Menace didn't make the Hugo cut are fairly straightforward. 1) There were a number of cool SF films, 2) Cool as it was, Phantom was derivative of its predecessors and 3) The effects weren't as eyepoppingly beyond all else as was true in the first set. In other words, it was hurt by the stratospheric expectations that people had for it.

It took me some thinking to figure out what seemed missing from the remake of Fail-Safe. It wasn't that it was dated per se - the original would suffer the same fate if viewed. I think that the sheer tension of those years can't be fully carried over unless it done by actors living through the times. Somehow that tension just didn't quite come across and I can't see a particular reason in the acting why that would have been so.

Sheila Strickland - Ah yes. There are cons and there are cons. It's not necessarily the smaller ones, but some are just more comfortable and relaxed and fun to be at. // Glad the treatment went well and you are a succesful remittant. // And welcome to SFPA, although I have to ask why you didn't opt to try LASFAPA.

George Wells - Marcus Aurelius didn't invent the Oreo cookie. That was first made by a transplanted Irishman living in Brazil. Aurelius is the one responsible for Hydrox.

Eve Ackerman - It the memories, not the stuff that's important. The problem is trying to separate the two when the stuff evokes so many memories. // While I tend to run a more-or-less traditional Seder, I don't use the more traditional Haggadot so the length of the service tends to have been "pre-edited". Still, it's the length of your post-meal part that strikes me as unusually long. // Let's clarify this. Do they lose their minds because they move to Tallahassee or move to Tallahassee because they've lost their minds? // Ct me: Thank you (and pass the thanks on to Micah) for the suggestions on kid stuff in NOLA. We try to include Random in most (albeit not all) of our travels. // Congrats on getting that gallonth donation in. And I can understand why you want to avoid doing anymore megadosing of iron.

Liz Copeland - Speaking of liqueurs and drinks, the Italian place that we went to with Philip and Elizabeth served us (complementary) little glasses of some sort of home-made "Italian moonshine". Verrrrrry smooth. Just a little sweet. And no noticeable alcohol taste (to me). Good. Potent. // JJ's a sushi fan. Impressive. Altho, now that I think on it, Random has like the one or two samples of NorCal sushi that I've given him. Not sure how he'd feel about some of the more traditional varieties yet however. // Ct me: On the other hand, Kay is hoping to be able to get either an electric or hybrid car for her next vehicle (ha!). At least there's a place up here that handles conversions. At the moment though, any sort of new car is just not in the cards. I'm actually rather surprised that there hasn't been a push by any of the local governments to get buses or official fleets of non-gas vehicles. Considering how green parts of the community are it would be a natural.

So what is with the studded-tongue wagglings? / True that common knowledge changes but I'm not surprised when someone of a different generation (or half-generation) misses a reference. It's when it's someone who is a real contemporary that I get surprised. // Actually, the interest rate I got isn't bad (although I may be able to get a bit better at the credit union). So if I can't pay down the principal either way, I may as well just let things be. Considering how fast I'm moving I've pretty much conceded the point anyway. // I was talking the other day about kids/friends/etc and I realized that, while my school was a little closer than Random's is, I had only one significant street to cross - with a crossing guard - while Random has 2-3 such to cross before he reaches a crossing guard. One odd item is that kids can't really hang out after school where Random goes unless they are signed up for after school care. I think that is the oddest part to me (even if it does make sense) since I would regularly stay late to play.

Well Random's teachers tend to be happy with his use of language too (even if it was his weakest showing on the STAR testing (like the WASL)). I'm not the best judge on an absolute scale but I suspect the fact that we have always talked to him like a person, not a kid, has a major role in that. I suspect the same for you folks. That it might not be the most common word I can sort of see, but for any honors English teacher to think that it was an unreasonable word is absurd. // Hey, you've got to give those award-winning fjords the all the support they deserve. Quite clearly the proper use for the green. // Except for a few bits and pieces, they didn't really use much in the way of "goop" in patching in our floor. You can tell where the new wood meets the old, but we figured that. In a way I like the refinished old floor better than the new - more character.

"hard to tell what's worth lots more than you think and what's not." Kay and my nephew were watching the Antiques Roadshow and he commented that he liked two things - when someone was told that their item was really valuable and when someone was told that their prized antique was worthless.

Liz's Home - Oh Lord. I just remembered the croquet sequence from Alice, with the hedgehogs as the balls. Would they be any better than 'dillos? At least the 'dillos don't have quills. // We haven't been doing Westercons (I had hopes of Spokane last year) but am saying the heck with it and getting us memberships for next year. Maybe we can get together with you for Mongolian BBQ? How about adding Jenny, Greg and Erin to the crowd? / Make for an interesting birthday trip for Random. // Oh yeah, the Potter books are cool. Kay is rereading the set to get ready for when #4 arrives (a birthday present for Random). // Actually the jelly-filled donut holes is something that Kay has requested occasionally from one of our local donut shops. They seem willing enough to do the work although Kay has also done the filling herself. You'd have better luck with a local shop than a chain I would think.

I could see something like an online apa. The catch (for me) would be the lack of continuity. How do you backtrack comments if the page is updated? Or would there be some sort of archiving going on? // Thanks for the NOLA tips. // In fairness to carpeting, the one in the back was just too well padded for its own good. The stuff we have now will breath more and so not hold moisture as much. While the carpets in the other three rooms may go, that back just offers no other options being on concrete slab. (I know there are options, just not inexpensive ones.) // Ct Guy: Had to wait for the regular version of Fantasia 2000 here, but it was much enjoyed by all three of us. // Ct Jeff: I'm getting the image of treating the Lillian's Ashes World Tour as something akin to the Olympic torch relay with people passing the urn (or whatever) on until reaching the final destination.

Jeff Copeland - Having access to information and actually accessing it are two different things. Thus the reason for the herd mentality in the stock market. Even those who do take the time to access in information do have to react to the actual moves that are happening out there (albeit most likely less so than those who are just going with the flow). // Well, neither margin requirements nor capital gains taxes are under the Fed's control (although they would have influence if they advocated such actions) so they are somewhat limited in what direct action they can take to control the economy.

Ct me: I have heard, from one source or another, that some metal shavings in the transmission fluid are normal (unless you're talking about a Boeing's tail assembly). So I have no idea of someone was trying to screw me into some unneeded work or was just over cautious, but either way the car never had problems with that. // Without going back to check I don't recall if I mentioned it in the context, but Corky (the dog) will often come and check to make sure that I'm not hurting Kay when she gets, er, excited. (Sort of like Alex Karras in Victor/Victoria.) // I can see tying WWII to Versailles, but only if you assume the WWII had to occur in the configuration it did. Absent the affects of Versailles, I could see a similar sequence of events involving Stalin and Eastern Europe. Who knows?

Cross-Jeff at the Office - My facetious remark to Guy about your company being a "poison pill" to Microsoft simply referred to the fact that the judgements started going against them after they bought it. Sort of a suspicious coincidence. // Ct Kay: I think the problem with the "Celebrate Diversity" "crowd" is that they are talking about specific kinds of diversity (ethnicity, culture, religion) rather than all forms - which would have to include opinions and conclusions different from theirs. In fact I think some level of limited diversity is the only kind people can truly celebrate. Hell, I certainly don't celebrate the diversity that says that Creationism should be taught co-equally with Evolution as part of a science curriculum.

I just wish it were possible for Kay to maintain a moderately steady level of income. Seems that her job and hours is in a near constant state of flux since we moved up here. Every time I start getting to count on a certain number of \$\$ from her, the job disappears and it's back to the drawing board. A regular 15 hours per week or so would be really nice. // Ct Guy: Of course, the phrase "terrific tonal texturization of the tumult" is just the sort of language you almost have to hear in Howard Cosell's dulcet tones. // Seems as if you, Kay and I are among a small segment who liked the Dalton Bond for the grit that is much closer to the tone of the books. And the most recent Brosnan Bond also had more of that tone (while giving it the Connery-level of leavening).

My feeling is that the President has no "executive clemency" powers with regard to those convicted in state courts. // Ct Gary: I'll hold myself up as a counter example of chiropractors too. When my back has acted up, a visit or two generally clears things up. On the other hand I know that the root cause will still be there barring other actions on my part. // Ct Brandt: Don't most movies done in flashback mode tell more of the tale than the presumptive narrator would be likely to know?

Guy Lillian - While I didn't reply to your email (did I?), it's clearly a well-earned reward on your part. Nice way to launch the new (or close the old) millenium. // My answer is that his brain had not shut down. For one thing, having died for 15 minute would probably involve that much time of CPR, etc rather than 15 minute of oxygen depravation to the brain - which would have been pretty well unrecoverable from. Even then it would take some time for all brain functions to cease. // Your late landlady sounds a tad like the one portrayed for the last few years in the comic "For Better or Worse". // Here's hoping for a happy ending to the job situation. // Ct Ned: Good point. It's been 30 years since we've been involved in a war - the longest interval in a century. The actions we have been involved in pale in comparison.

Ct me: The problem with blaming an oxygen leak on the Payne Stewart crash is that that would be just the sort of problem that the plane's safety devices and the pilot's knowledge would be most alert to.

Guy's Spirit - Unfortunately, everyone is going to have years that suck from time to time. It's part of the human condition that bad things will happen (directly or indirectly). It's not exactly a comfort but there is some benefit in knowing that one is not unique in that experience. // Sorry, no can find the Schlosser for D.A. material. Just as well, I wouldn't want anyone to think that I was a lawyer or something. // OK, then how about Diet, Caffeine-Free Coke? That any better? (:-] // Pummeled like pizza dough, eh? Sounds like more of a sports massage than the style that I use. Still, all forms have their benefits. And it sounds as if it got you to release some pent up emotions. / What a female masseuse would say given the same situation would depend on how safe/confident she felt.

Ct Feller: "Peace, Love. Crabs" would make a great theme for an event at the local ballpark. // There was a 91st AeroSquadron restaurant in L.A. that served basic steak, fish, booze, etc. Quite good too. Don't know if it's still there or not. // Ct Jeff: We saw Fantasia 2000 the week it opened up here. A very impressive job and one that we all quite thoroughly enjoyed. Of the new stuff, my favorite has to be the Gershwin piece although the others were not slouches. Just hard to avoid some of the direct comparisons similar replaced pieces. // Ct Hughes: Actually, the LASFS has a working mimeo (newer version) that Marty says works quite well. Drop him a note: Martyhoohah@netzero.net // Ct Don: Alan and I, while proud of our stings in LASFAPA, aren't up to 30 years yet. This Fall will bring us to 24 years. // Sympathy on your grandmother's passing. At least, as you say, it was quiet, peaceful, quick and serene. It's never good for the survivors, but minimal pain for the passing is best.

Janice Gelb - Your comment to Mr. Lynch about the cricketeer reminds me of David Niven's response when the streaker hit the Oscar ceremonies: "It's a shame that the only (laugh) that poor man will get in his life comes from stripping down and displaying his shortcomings." // Ct Ned: I must be going crazy here. I grew up playing sports in gym class - softball, soccer, football, etc - in competitive format (albeit not at the level of school teams) and nobody ever got out of hand with a drive to win at all costs or the like. We played, tried to win and had a good time. The issue, to me, isn't competitive sports. It's a "winning is everything" attitude that seems to be permeating everything. Deal with the problem, don't throw out the baby with the bath water.

Ct me: Proof that a given event (or something that matches it) from a religious text occurred still leaves a lot of questions about the interpretations. For example, what if there were documentation of events that could be matched to the 10 plagues and the exodus - but the data indicated a spread of 10 or 20 years rather than the few days found in the Torah? Does that strengthen or weaken the case for the way these story is interpreted? Or they find proof of two or three people who each match up with some aspect of Abraham? Proof of data is very iffy as support for a given interpretation.

Janice's Trivia - As Harry never got presents from the Dursley's, he also never gave them any so it seems not unreasonable that it wouldn't be a reflex on his part to do so. Maybe he'll learn. / I believe there was some reason stated why the Weasleys couldn't board Harry for the summer. If nothing else I would think the Dursley's dislike of anything having to do with wizardry would incline them away from letting Harry spend even more time in that environment. / Harry's owl can find Sirius Black. Sounds like Sirius gave the owl some sort of homing signal. / How does owl mail work? Magic. // Specifically, one function of the Board is to speak for the organization, not the membership per se. I'm trying to get a policy established should this come up again, but we've been busy (read: lots of (IMO) extraneous discussion) and haven't been able to get to that particular agenda item. Tomorrow's meeting looks full, but maybe we can move through the business.

The cartoon on this page reminds me of the casino sequence from The 10th Kingdom, with Go Fish and SlapJack for high stakes. // Ct Feller: A class in "Americanism(?) vs Communism"? How bizarre. I have to wonder how much of that being offered was related to the Cuban population of the area. I won't even get into that it sounds more like an indoctrination session than a class. // Ct Gary: To go one removal further, they could nickname PacBellPark "Teflon". // Ct Irv: For some reason, there is a point when the PO will stop forwarding mail - but will return it with address correction labels. Don't ask me to explain. // All this investment stuff makes me think that there ought to be a Bill of REITS. // Ct Jeff: Well, are you going to pass on this story about the Seder they held in Guam during WWII? Or do we have to wait for the Reader's Digest version?

Early Birds - And then there's also travel time involved. For example, I'd have to mail my zine at least a day ahead of Janice for it to be there at the same time.

Richard Dengrove - Usually they put on special leggings to promote better circulation and minimize clotting after surgery. Vibrating them is a new twist that I haven't heard of. // As per usual in primary elections, the pundits were right. It's easy to be mistaken about a given election, but with the parties supporting particular candidates it's hard to imagine them being wrong in the long run. // Again, that's one of the reasons people are supposed to have their own lawyer - to filter out threats from valid offers in a plea bargain situation. // Ct Guy: And since 1964, all 1st time Presidents have come from VP or governorship backgrounds.

Just got back from a trip and this needs to be printed ASAP if it's going to get to Toni. Sorry to anyone I've been forced to shortchange.

A = NC² (Apac = Natter x Comments²)

Let's see. We have a few interwoven items, so why not start with the central item. We took a short vacation in mid-June, spending a few days in the Bay Area and a few down at Pebble Beach. When I first sent off for tickets for the practice rounds at the US Open I had every reason to expect that school would be over by then - just like it was last year. Come to find out that school started 2 weeks later last fall. Well we were going either way.

So that Wednesday morning we took Corky to the kennel (his first time ever) and headed south through the drizzle and intermittent rain. That puzzled me too, especially since it was like that most of the way down to Oakland. Verra odd. As usual, we made a picnic stop at a park in Willits (the last major town south of the Redwood Curtain). This year they've upgraded the playground equipment and Random had good (energy-burning) time climbing and playing. I even discovered that (with a bit of maneuvering on the moment arm) it's still possible for us to do the see-saw bit.

A bit further south we made the other obligatory stop at the Hopland headquarters of Real Goods. It's always fun to stop and admire the design of the place and discover something new. The store is very alternative energy and ecology conscious and that shows in the whole place. For example, the building itself is of straw-bale construction and there are a variety of solar panels and wind-energy collectors that supply most of the on-site power. And I may have mentioned before that they used 3-4 old cars as planters for some trees along the highway there. As usual, we found numerous things we'd like to get. This time, however, we knew we had to wait until the return trip and we were lucky to discover that the sale they had going would last until the day we would be passing through again. Maybe a little too convenient?

By now I'm getting good at finding my way the Elizabeth and Philip's home so we arrived right on our 6:30 target just as she was getting home. Philip, on the other hand, arrived, left and returned later as he had a rehearsal for the choir he's in. Random, as usual, had the loft room (which he has grown to like a lot after being a bit reluctant the first time).

Thursday was fairly fully planned out. Just before we would have been ticketed for parking on the side of the street due for cleaning, we hit the road across the Bay into (foreshadowing music please) The City. To Golden Gate Park. Our first tentative stop (the greenhouse) was closed for repair, so we proceeded to the Academy of Science. First room was the exhibit on venomous creatures of all sorts. And that's where we still were an hour or so later when I abandoned Kay and Random to go get my massage.

(My customer and golf partner, Dr. Strachan, had been singing the praises of his SF massage therapist and had asked me if I'd be able to arrange time to get one from him. When I said I could, Alex called the man on his cell phone and, in the midst of the introductions, mentioned that he was going to cover it. Well now, that was a surprise. In character, but still unexpected.) Thus the reason we did this part of the park - the guy's home/office is just a 10 minute walk from where we were. He was different and he was good. I could detect at least 3-4 different techniques that he was using, which reminds me of what I've been doing - incorporating various things I learn into my normal flow. I did get some ideas for ancillary items to make me and the client more comfortable but I wouldn't try to imitate a massage technique just from having it done on me once. A very worthwhile experience.

I returned to the academy and rendezvoused with Kay & Random at the in-house cafeteria for a bit of lunch (not too hideously overpriced) before going (at Random's behest) to check out the exhibit on earthquakes (which includes a movie complete with some shaking) and (at our behest) the Far Side Gallery they have (all involving science-based cartoons) on display. Even with their being there almost five hours, we had a lot of unexplored parts left for the next time as I decreed that we were leaving at 3pm. Good call. We had a bit of traffic getting onto the multi-merging freeway, but after that point it was relatively smooth sailing back to home base.

That evening after dinner, Random, Philip and I got involved in a game of Solar Quest (interplanetary Monopoly) (Philip, an avid gamer, gets no help there from Elizabeth, who playeth not). 1½ hours later I sent Random (a very upset Random) to bed with the promise that we would continue to play his turn. Almost two hours later than that Philip and I called it a draw as neither of us was going to win in any reasonably foreseeable time frame.

Friday was Kay's Berkeley morning. BART to hear campus and a walk over to the north side where her favorite little breakfast place (Three Cs) was. And this time it really was "was". The little court was still there with the various restaurants, but her place was under new ownership (even if the menu was suspiciously similar and the food much the same). Afterwards I helped them across campus to Telegraph Rd for wandering and shopping before I abandoned them in order to get back in time to drive out for my obligatory round of golf. (Poppy Ridge course in Livermore. With Dr Strachan, a sales rep I know and a spare.) I made some mistakes, but most were errors of adjusting to the conditions vs errors of technique and we all had a good time.

On returning (again with minimal traffic) I learned that Kay and Random had also zipped across the Bay and walked around the Embarcadero before going "home". Dinner this time involved a drive over to Alameda and a Mexican restaurant that "only we know about". At first it appeared that we had a long wait ahead, but those 20 people were one group and we got seated within ten minutes. Dinner went well, even though Random worked hard at falling asleep and we got a chance to look at a few Alameda neighborhoods on the way back.

Some background before Saturday. When I first made arrangement for this trip, we had plans to try to catch a Giants' game, but all were sold out before I could even start looking. So, on Saturday morning Philip said that he thought the Giants held back about 500 seats per game for day-of-game sales. In checking the web this was the case. 4 hours before game time they would hand out numbered wrist bands (up to 500 or for 1 hour), then they draw the number that will be first in line to buy tickets (max 4 per person). The tickets are then sold until gone. Let's see, 4 hours before game time. Game is at 1pm, it now **8:45!** So I'm out the door inside of 5 minutes, drive to BART, ride to SF, walk the mile or so to PacBell Park, get a band, wait for the number, determine that we're a shoe-in, call Philip to give him the go ahead to come out with Random in a couple of hours and then wait a lot.

Much as I dislike the Giants, I have to admit that they have a nice new park. And it really does protect you from the wind. Whenever I was inside or walking around the back or sides it was sunny and warm. On the street side the wind was up and it was chilly. Another gneat feature is a set of link fences along the right field wall where - for \$3 - you can stand and watch just as if you were using the knotholes at some of the really old stadiums. The game was good, the view from dead center was fine and the visitors won. Who could ask for more?

Afterwards we took the shuttle back to BART, determined where we were to meet Kay and Elizabeth and walked the some-odd number of blocks to the designated restaurant in Little Italy. After a delicious (albeit rather expensive) meal (topped by a smoooooooooth little glass of "Italian moonshine") we three trooped back while E&P sampled the wares at a nearby pub. They did get home early enough for Random to get his StarQuest fix - winning rather quickly using that incredible luck of his.

Sunday we packed up. While loading the car, one of the people from across the street came out to ask if we had seen the note they left on my car. Seems that, whilst maneuvering the rental truck into the driveway **early** that morning, they took some paint off of my left rear bumper. They were nice enough about the whole thing that, after getting their info, I offered to let them pay out of pocket (if they chose) rather than deal with insurance. That is in progress as we speak since it needed an estimate or two to be able to make that choice. (\$350 for - what looks to me - like \$50 worth of work.)

Anyway, after a lovely brunch prepared by our hostess, it was off to the Monterrey peninsula by way of Santa Cruz. As usual, we were staying at a Motel 6 (one which just happened to be within a couple of miles of Fort Ord - the official parking lot for the US Open. This one, unluckily, did not have a pool (although it did have a rather nice interior garden court) to let Random work off some energy in but so be it. One nice thing. I had made my reservations back in, oh, December. As I was checking in I noted that their rates for the week were about double the usual but they informed me that, as I had made my reservations before that rate increase was posted, we were in at the normal rate. ((I had expected the regular rate, but seeing the rates for that week I was a bit worried.)) Dinner was the usual close-and-we're-tired Denny's. But at least the place was interesting with a '50s diner motif (including music) and purple being prominent in their color scheme.

Monday after breakfast it was down the road to Ft Ord to park and take the 25 minute school bus shuttle to the drop off point near Pebble Beach Links. It was a bit of a stroll to get to the entrance (let alone the course itself) and something of an experience. One of the first things we noted was that the food prices were worse by far than at the ball park (\$8 for a burger?). We opted to spend some time following groups and some time just sitting at a given hole until another interesting group came along to follow.

That worked well and let us see a fair number of players during the course of the practice rounds ((Practice M-W, Tournament Th-Su)). Missed seeing Tiger that day, but did catch Jack Nicklaus as well as other people whom I'm sure most of you haven't heard of. My impression is that that is one scary course that I'm almost not sure I'd want to tangle with. Beautiful place though with the views of the shore, the beaches and the ocean. Spectacular. Anyway, after 6 hours or so, we headed back to the hotel.

Tuesday we were wiser and Kay had done some shopping the night before so we had lunch and snacks packed in our bag (technically not allowed but as long as you don't set out a picnic it didn't seem to be an issue) and a place to sit and watch plotted out. It really was a good spot since we could see the players on the green quite well, had shade and it was close enough to the path to the next tee that I could easily walk over and become a part of the autograph seeking horde. Not everyone signed autographs during the round (practice or not) and they could only sign so many but I was moderately successful over the two days: Craig Stadler, Tim Herron, Hale Irwin, Jeff Maggert, Steve Jones, Jeff Sluman, Justin Leonard, Tom Kite, Bernhard Langer, Corey Pavin, Paul Azinger and Greg Norman were all obtained upon my little course map. We did see Tiger, but he wasn't doing signing on the course.

Mid-afternoon we again folded our tent and headed up and away. Truly. We were spending the night in Oakland again. I slipped the traffic rather well and didn't hit rush hour until around 5 pm up a ways on the 880 (the main N-S route for the East Bay) and we just pulled off and had dinner at a Fresh Choice (salad/soup/pasta/dessert bar). After walking it off a bit it was back out into the heat (over 100 along the entire inland part of our route) for the last 30 miles or so in the air conditioned comfort of our car.

The drive home on Wednesday was uneventful. A stop at my Saturn dealership so Kay could ask some questions, TJs for lunch stuff, Real Goods for lunch and some promised shopping and a roadside stand for drinks before arriving home to a happy dog and days worth of digging out.

Ok, back up stuff. Why was Corky being kenneled? We were getting the hardwood floors in the front rooms replaced/repared and refinished. That meant that we couldn't have him at home with a housesitter. Ergo we made arrangement for him to be boarded. We did have a strong recommendation from a coworker of mine for the kennel associated with our vet (2-3 walks plus playtime every day, good people, etc) and after reserving the days we took Corky over 3-4 times to sniff around and get at least somewhat familiar. It seems to have worked since, when our housesitter did pick him up, he was in good health and spirits ((the timing involved the house being unusable W-F only)). Cheeky was easier - we just shut him in the back part of the house and had our neighbors feed him until the sitter came on duty.

As for the floors. We were doing the entire LR, DR and hall. The DR, due to previous pest work, had enough to replace that it was cheaper to do the whole 9x9 area than to patch it. The rest of the space only needed a bit of patching before being ready for the finishing. It should be noted at this time that we did have to remove all the furniture from those rooms so for the last couple of days before and the first couple after the trip we had to keep the Saturn on the street as the garage was a bit too full to hold it. Nice job. Despite some warnings that the old floor wouldn't match too well with the new (colorwise), we rather like the variegated appearance that gives things. Now we just have to finish off our game of tag and get them in to do the last little items (tack down the carpets, put in the step downs and widen one of the openings for our floor heater vent. Then they can have the rest of their money.

I mentioned that Random was still in school. So we arranged to have homework - aside from his regular homework stuff he also had to keep a journal (including our gas usage and the cost of his meals), take pictures to go with the journal, do another book report and write a report comparing/contrasting Eureka with the places we went. A fair amount but he kept at it during the trip and got everything done in good time to be turned in.

The July 1st weekend we spent doing some camping out at a grove on the Van Duzen river. This was part of a temple "Shabbaton" but Random had also asked to have his birthday party there. The weather was its usual uncooperative self (Friday PM was sunny, but the rest of the time was overcast, breezy and cool) we were prepared for that. Still, with that sunny window, Random at least had time to splash around in the river (it was too low to do any more). Friday night was a bit annoying as we didn't start services until almost an hour late and wouldn't have been eating dinner until after 10. So we copped some food for Random to have before he fell asleep into his plate. We also decided that for the rest of the weekend we would work on our schedule and if that fit with the main plan so much the better.

Saturday morning went fairly casually altho we were both a bit annoyed - again - by the rather tardy start to services (scheduled for 10, begun a bit after 11:30). However it was a good thing we had made our decision last night as we had told the party invitees that about 1 would be the starting time. And we pulled it off with a little help from our friends. One friend, agreed to pick up and bring the cake we had ordered, as well as some ice cream, while another friend used his extra space to lug along the extra drinks.

By the time services were over and the regular lunch in progress, we had fed the kids, served the cake & ice cream (with the leftovers as open stock), open the presents and let the kids go off to play and explore. Random got some books (including an IOU for the new Harry Potter), a "Gross Chemistry" set, some \$ and a watch. But I think the best present was that his buddy Nathan was able to come and stay until the next day. No sharing a tent, but they did get to play together a lot - something they don't get to do as often as they had before.

Saturday night devolved into talking and singing around the campfire. And Sunday was just low key eating and cleaning up before leaving the park for the next group. Sunday, after home, showering and lunch, we went off to see Chicken Run (making a clean sweep of the animated films out there). Lot of fun. As most people know, it's a claymation take off on POW escape films. But just enough leavening with Trek stuff for the humor value. I'm afraid the "stars" came off second best for me. I rather preferred "Mac" the **verra Scottish** engineer who, it just so happens, also wears some sort of oddball glasses. Give it a look-see and make sure they make their money back.

It didn't take too long to clear the insurance company. So the car was done in time for the trip mentioned below.

Methinks that about does it unless something interesting happens between now and next week when we head down for my nephew's wedding. (One small bit of amusement on that is that both he and I have been having thoughts along the lines of "Gee, while I'm in L.A., maybe _____ can....". Totally spacing on the fact that the other one is going down at the same time and for the same reason. I don't know if this is significant or not.