

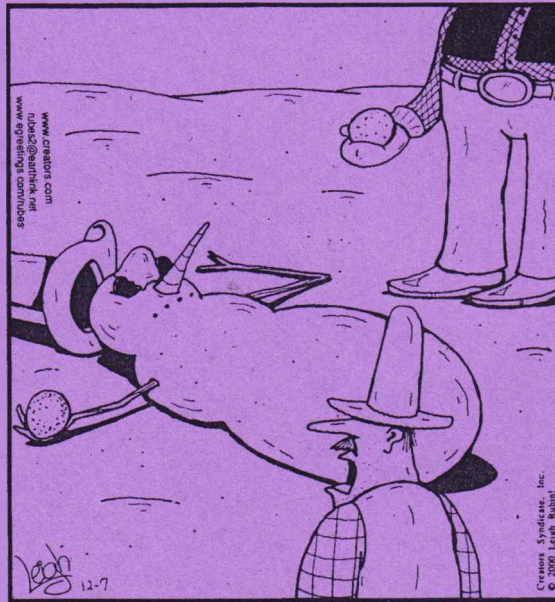
P
E
T
E
R

PAN

AND

M
E
R
R
Y

RUBES / Leigh Rubin



Poor sap ... took one right between
the ice.

PETER, PAN & MERRY #37

A zine for SFPA # 221

David Schlosser – 2041 “N” St, Eureka CA 95501

707-HID-HALO Schloss17@aol.com

Come and tarry (as opposed to Tom and Jerry) on SFPA 220

Southerner – Rule #4: You may have calla lilies, but we’ve got Rhododendrons all around the area. Makes for a great corsage.

Norm Metcalf – Ct Rich: From the sounds of it, I think that forming a new club just for the purpose of being separated from Chuck was not a bad idea. Heck, starting a new country for that purpose might have been reasonable. // Ct Guy: Why are “movies not science fiction” and more than books and magazines “aren’t science fiction”? It’s the tales that are told that are SF, not the media it’s told in. If you’re saying that film only adapts from print, I’d have to disagree since I can think of several SF films that were not based on a specific book. / In any case, my reply to this was to consider that Rod Serling might be a better nominee than Kubrick if you want a visual artist rather than a print one.

// Why does the Nautilus’ being built with “off-the-shelf” technology preclude “20,000 Leagues” from being SF? There may be no extrapolation in the how, but there is in the end product. Not to mention the extrapolation involved in Nemo’s fight against the exploitation and extinction of marine species.

Ned Brooks – That cover picture must be of an old-style Quiddich match. // Ct Rich: As was pointed out in some article I was reading, the big problem with the “faith-based charities” is that you then **have to** allow all groups that call themselves religions into the arena to apply for the monies. Otherwise you end up with a royal problem with the Establishment clause of the Constitution. It’s a mess waiting to happen. // Ct me: Typesetter? No. A better printer (for the nonce) is the only improvement in my zine’s cleanness. // True, given the need a bear could eat a person. But in general I wouldn’t worry about that barring a major famine. We’re way down the list of preferred foods. // I think the *Punch, brothers. Punch with Care* song is supposed to be addictive if you start singing it. // Ct Jeff: I suppose that “aiming” rather than “steering” a car implies not maintaining active control of the car once it’s pointed in a given direction and moving. I’m not sure how successfully one could actually be driving that way.

Guy Lillian – Congrats on your 2nd consecutive Hugo nomination.

Rich Lynch – Ct Ned: Generally speaking CDC is more interested in communicable (or mysterious) diseases than in rare ones. Although an outbreak of a normally rare disease would get their attention pretty fast. It’s essentially just the federal version of state and local public health departments. // Ct me: While probably stereotypical, Japanese tourists here do have a reputation for having a lot of money to spend on their vacations. // Ct Guy: I agree that there is a valid reason for the electoral college, but still think that the “winner take all” model that most states use is just a smaller version of the problem you state would happen with a true popular vote. Let each state’s electoral votes be split by %age of the popular vote in that state. While not exactly the same, it would make things somewhat similar to the way Parliamentary elections are run in many countries.

Guy Lillian – Sorry about the wallet, but at least it worked out to be minimally expensive (if overly disruptive). Maybe Random will find it when next we come there, he does have a knack that way sometimes. // Ct Ned: At least get the story straight. Some pepper juice was daubed around, not in, the eyes of the demonstrators. Over the top, yes. But it doesn't need to be made worse by inaccuracy. // If collecting staplers seems dull, maybe he should collect staples. Those certainly aren't dull. // Ct Rich: And now they will be raising the additional ounce rates this summer too. I realize that it's probably still a relative bargain but that doesn't help in the absolute sense.

Ct me: My side of the story of our New Orleans trip? Are you implying that you have a "side" of the story about our trip? / Yeah, flying over mountains tends to be rough because you get a lot of updrafts so it's tough for the plane to stay level. / Is the flight from NOLA to Philly really over two hours long? Or did you forget to factor in the time change? // "...a stripper...different...than seeing an ordinary woman naked." Think carefully now Guy. Are you really saying that the women who I have seen naked are ordinary? Not only do I take exception on behalf of the ladies in questions, I take exception on my own behalf as well. By definition, those ladies who have allowed me the honor of beholding their unclothed beauty are exceptional. This is something you may want to keep in mind for yourself in the future. / Which doesn't negate the curiosity factor. Maybe I'll give the local club a look one of these years. // The catch with Vader being the "other" referred to by Yoda is that his turning would hinge on Luke's training. In the circumstances as they stood in Empire, had Luke been caught he would not have been in any position to do the things that caused Vader to return. In that sense, Vader would not have been a separate hope from Luke. Leia would have been. // A FAPA Chart. Hmm. Well, to explain, back in the bygone mists of time when LASFPAnS were young and fancy free, several people started "collecting" data on who had slept with whom. The up-shot was that I somehow became the collator of this data into a 3D molecular structure of pink and blue styrofoam balls and pipe cleaners. Obviously, balls sans pipecleaners indicates a rather significant lack of intimate contact among the membership. / Damn but we were a fun crowd. Here's to us and the glory of sexuality at the end of the '70s when trich was the worst we had to worry about. Without suggesting the exact problem, the typographical mess involved either a ' or a ". I was using Works at the time and if I did a paste to email and sent it over to the office computer for printing, it would have that messiness when it arrived at the other end.

Ct Don: 'Scuse me, but if you think that Christianity shifts the emphasis from deity worship to care for other people then you're a few steps behind the curve. That's stuff that goes back into the Torah. // Ct Liz: While I don't know the name of it, I would hazard to guess that APW dipped his toe into the SFPA waters back around 1980 or 1981.

Tom Feller – First off, condolences on the passing of your grandmother. // I think I'm always somewhat surprised (or some such reaction) when I hear about someone's grandparent who is younger than my parents. // Speaking of passings, my paternal aunt, Olga, passed away on my dad's birthday (May 3). If I'm not off by a year, she would have been 104 this next month. Given time I may copy an article about her that ran in their local paper when she hit 100.

Sheila Strickland – In thinking back, I first read LotR when I was 15. Truth be told I hadn't heard of it until a few weeks earlier in my high school class on mythology. I still remember by reaction on finishing the series – the feeling that there was nothing left to read now. / I'm probably coming up on being due for another reread. // Ct me: I think we did a pretty fair job of short-term sightseeing in NOLA. Particularly with the weather and child consideration. It's taken us a while but we've finally figured out that the key is to just not plan to do too much on any given day. If you have time to do more, great. But if you overbook you end up not enjoying the things that you do get to do. // Ct Dengrove: Who needs bagpipes when you have a shofar?

Steve Hughes – Ct Dengrove: I think we have to differentiate between the stock market and the economy. You talk like the two are the same thing and they aren't. While the market may have taken a tumble (and it seems to be recovering a bit at the moment), the economy seems (for the most part) to be in control and not looking to come crashing down. Not even in California. Yet. // Ct Janice: I think the worry with Ashcroft is not that he has strongly held beliefs but that, as head law enforcement officer, he may let his beliefs supersede the law. // I just took a look at the idea of refinancing our house and, given about \$5K cash out, we really wouldn't save much with the 30-year rates as they are now while a move to a 15-year costs us more and we would do better to just throw an extra \$75 or \$100 per month at the premium. Now give me another %age point or so on the interest rates and we can talk.

Richard Dengrove – Ct Arthur: While not exactly a "situation tragedy" as you describe it, the revised version of "Fantasy Island" from a 2-3 years back had some similarities in that many of the visitors lived through the "be careful what you ask for" scenario. It was clearly darker in mood than the '70s version. // Ct me: Has travel taken over Andruschak's life? Who knows? Certainly I have little enough LASFS contact these days to have any particular feel for who does and doesn't attend meetings. // Why not a bronze Nautilus as the prizes for the best answers to your Jules Verne driving question? // The way the Law of Return is set up, I don't think it matters if the Lemba religion has drifted away from Judaism. As long as their ancestry can be properly verified in some way. // The question is, in a culture where all tradition, history, etc is passed down orally, wouldn't the likelihood of the information remaining intact for a long time increase? In modern times it's more of a memory game, then it would have been a necessity. // I didn't say that weight does not have a significant genetic component, just that that can be overcome with diligence.

I'm not sure I follow. If there was no choice of evil, then everyone would "choose" good. And vice versa. As long as good & evil are both choices, any shades within those areas seem irrelevant to that aspect of the Free Will question. // Of course, had Elian just been sent back to his dad without all the hassles by the relatives, there would have been nothing to turn into a cause celebre. // For long term, "most convenient" has no weight in picking a rabbi. For having a rabbi to conduct Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur services, availability (and thus, convenience) can play a major role, not matter what the consequences. // A party doesn't just have to be small per se to make it easy for everyone to participate. It can be artificially downsized if people converge in different rooms. // Does the timeshare pay for itself? When we have rented it out, it about breaks even for the year. When we trade, we usually come out ahead in what the costs would have been for renting at a comparable location. Has it covered the original cost? No. // As we didn't hit any of the Plantations cruises, any description of what we did wouldn't be of much use to you.

Ct Toni: I don't know about expense (although it did look it), but they've now done a set of four TV movies based on the Hornblower books. And very successful ones from all I can tell. // Ct Steve Hughes: Seems to me that the credit/blame for economic conditions always attaches to the administration that is in power when it happens, whether the root causes were their responsibility or not. It just comes with the territory for the most part. (Those who look deeper usually know the "truth" but it's not what gets played up.

Jeff Copeland – Condolences on Holly. / We keep watching our critters for signs of age. But even though Cheeky Bugger has a tendency to hack up rather more often than we'd like, he still seems basically happy and healthy. Corky's hips are starting to show some signs of age in the mornings, but he still loves a good romp in the back yard so they aren't slowing him down much. Dog's at 13 and cat's at 14 so I'm just keep my fingers crossed. // Kay and I both agree with you about Finding Forrester. We saw it independently and I knew before I left the theatre that it was one that she would enjoy. // Ct Ned: If you have the corner on nitpicking, does that mean you've nit-picked yourself into a corner? // Ct Guy: While I haven't been to too many parks, the PacBell outfield seats are certainly quite good for viewing the field. // Ct Guy: I don't have the exact wording handy, but suspect that the protections given under the 1st Amendment seem more absolute than that of the 2nd, which does include it's own caveat. And why the use of "shall not be abridged" vs the prohibition of laws about it? It's a valid use of the word, but seems to indicated that this right is less absolute than those included in the 1st. Not that we'll ever know the why of it. // It sounds as if the Senate is pushing more of the tax cut benefits further down the income ladder. // So, thanks to all the Holmes stories, your time recalibrating the cyclotron was "Elementary particles, Watson"?

As you may know, California has had term limits for about a decade now. The main upshot for this area is having our state assemblyman and state senator (both popular and successful) be forced out of office. The state senator is now our congressman so we can keep him for a while. But in general it's a real kick in the pants for more rural areas since we get one representative while areas with more population get several and if we can't even get a voice via seniority it can get pretty dicey – although I will admit that our current state rep has done a fine job in her two terms. // I guess one way to determine if breast are well-written would be to check them out in Braille. // Ct Feller: It's also possible that, suspecting it could have been a surprise gift, that the credit card company didn't want to blurt something out. Or, they could have suspected either case and figured it was better to be safe no matter what the reason for the purchase.

Ct me: Well, the bottom line is we'll never really "know" for sure what would have happened with a Florida recount ((as all the recounting being done is not being done is the "normal" mode)) and that's the shame of it, not who would or wouldn't have won. // The problem with giving value to "good will" is that – aside from being hard to valuate – it has no set shelf-life. Pacific Lumber was a family-owned, profitable, sustainable logging company that had been around for many years. That carried a lot of good will. When Maxxam bought it and changed the logging practices to maximize return, a lot of that "good will" simply evaporated. Or, if the buying company has a lot of bad will around, wouldn't that just make people worried about changes in the bought company rather than improving the image of the buyers? As you say, a very dicey proposition. // In a lot of ways it's pretty amazing that so few VPs have successfully run for President. Of course the large number who jumped into the presidency via straight succession does skew the data.

Aristotle meets Copeland – Maybe I'm just going to make better "dirty old man" material than you are. So far (aside from the "Not a good idea" alarm) I haven't taken age into account in how attractive I find someone. Of course, it sounds like that's pretty much the same alert level that you have – not that they aren't attractive, just that it "wouldn't be prudent". // Sorry, my mistype. I did indeed mean that Sen. Thurmond was early in line for the Oval Office if the election became a total mess. Of course, Thurmond vs Helms doesn't strike me as much of a difference anyway. // Ct Sheila: Did Allie reference Faulkner to her teacher or simply read a passage? If the latter, I could well see not being familiar with it – even for an English teacher.

Janice Gelb – Having an ARM may have made a difference. We were looking at refinancing at rates around 6.4% and would have saved under \$50 per month with a new 30-year or paid more for a 15-year. All told it seems wiser for us to just toss extra money each month at the principal and end up with (in effect) a 15-year mortgage from this point. // Ct Lynch: My funds all took a hit in the last quarter, but in looking at the most recent statement from one of them it seems to have rebounded reasonably. And is still well above the original investment. // Ct me: It can't be right that it's Micah's Bar Mitzvah because it's just too soon. / Speaking of such things, our incoming President just had her (adult) Bat Mitzvah. I think the most amazing part was that, despite running for around 3½ hours, it didn't seem to be all that long. That she was clearly enjoying herself may have had something to do with that. // I should correct myself. Within some parameters minor league baseball can be there for post-high schoolers who want to play but not attend college. I suppose that there is some potential for such a minor league system for other sports but the question is whether or not minor league football, etc would be able to survive like baseball has. / One interesting thing is that college football and basketball get a lot more attention than baseball. I think a lot of that is because college baseball players enter via the minors while football and basketball players head straight for the pros. And maybe that would be good for the other sports since it would take a lot of the pressure and spotlight off of kids too young to handle it.

No question that LASFAPAns were (and are) on the alert for tempting typos and interesting phraseology. Maybe that's one of the reasons I've been so partial to it – I enjoy the word play and wiseassery. But, of course, that's also just a flavor within the general conversations. It's not as if you can't have a serious conversation. // Actually, Les didn't offer to **treat** us to Galatoires, he just wanted to go there. We like good food as much as anyone, but we really didn't want to turn the entire trip into a gastronomical experience. Save some stuff for the next time around.

Gary Robe – This last week Random was due to test for the red stripe on his purple belt. But the day of the testing he was fooling around on his scooter and managed to twist his knee. So that's been put off for another month. ((They do higher belt testing at one of the evening classes each month. Lower belts are done in regular classes.))

Eve Ackerman – Ct me: No, I gave Kay a ¼ carat *heirloom* engagement ring. Being an heirloom makes it OK for it to be small and cheap. // Or maybe we caught Café Beignet on a bad day. Of course the service wasn't too hot either and that may have had some influence. // Ct Janice: Did you see the second set of Hornblower episodes (only a two-parter, unhappily) that A&E ran a month or so back?

George Wells – Ct Ned: It seems to me that, if the flag issue is really one of “Southern Heritage” vs sensitivity to slavery issues, that the best compromise might (and I ‘d have to check the history to be sure) be to return to the original state flags from when Georgia, Mississippi, etc were first admitted to the union. My gut feeling is that those designs didn’t have the Stars and Bars on them. // And three pairs of pants can stop a bullet if they have been properly starched.

Randy Cleary – Trip reports about places that you know can be rather interesting as you can actually visualize what’s being talked about, as well as getting different takes on familiar stuff. / Thanks for the well-wishes. He started on the antibiotics that night, and was feeling much better by morning. And we did still make sure that he took the medicine for the full course of treatment. There will be no promoting of resistant strains of bacteria in this household.

Arthur Hlavaty – Ct Ned: Somehow the mention of “pants” and “glancing blow” in the same sentence wants to invoke some imagery.

Janet Larson – Ct Jeff: When you think about it, it really doesn’t much matter who is in control of Congress since it’s just a matter of which areas (and locales) get what percentage of the pork in the silly, expensive, wasteful bills you’re referring to. And, since ’94, it’s been the Republicans who have had control of both Houses and thus what bills get passed. // Ct Janice: Having looked at the current mortgage rates, I think we’re going to hold off on a refi for now. The benefit, when you roll the fees back in, just isn’t sufficient compared to what we’re paying now. // Ct Toni: Re the rising tax costs from 1950 to now. In that time, the President was Republican in 28 years and Democratic in 22. Congress I’m not quite sure of, but I think it was Republican-controlled in 14 years and Democratic in 36.

Gary Brown – When I had my proctoscope exam a few years ago, I happened to know the nurse who was assisting the doctor. I was tempted to comment afterwards that I didn’t normally do this on a first date. For some reason I resisted the temptation. Probably because that exam is rather less pleasant than a mere prostate check. // Ct me: I can see two “reasonable” explanations of “Rooms to Go”. 1) It’s a reference to the fact that they give shitty service. 2) They see it in the same way as if you went to a restaurant for a meal “To Go” – they expect you to take it with you. // I don’t think it’s necessarily that there’s stuff “between the lines” that makes animation “aimed” at adults popular per se but the fact that it seems to work better for the kids too – look at all the Jay Ward or classic Chuck Jones, etc. // Ct Guy: If Rosie needs any help in dealing with the pressure to join SFPA, then she just needs to call KaY (mine, not Irv’s). // Ct Janice: The electricity rate hikes are not just 45%. It’s a sliding scale. Those who use a lot get a big rate jump, while those who use down around the baseline amount are supposed to get no increase. It luckily happens that we are in that latter category.

Don Markstein – Ct Gary: But militias, as used by the framers of the Constitution, were organized military groups that were obliged to take orders from the Governor of their state. They were not free-standing organization with no ties to government. Additionally, there were provisions included for when state militias could be called into federal service. The term clearly doesn’t apply to just any group of people with guns (with or without a gripe against Washington).

Toni Weisskopf – Pat Gibbs makes an interesting point but I'm not sure the assumption that vote counting stops when "a decision is reached" is valid. If there was just one office, I guess it could be that you realized that the lead is greater than the remaining ballots and stop (whether it's actually done I couldn't say), but what about all the other state and local elections going on? If you run the ballot through the machine, it counts all the votes, not just the one's where the outcome hasn't been determined. So the tallying would go on well after the time when any given election has been determined. Plus, since the original counts are done by the precinct machines and forwarded to the county office for tallying, all the ballots are counted even if the data isn't downloaded for some reason. And if they have been counted, it's fair to ask what the results of them are. // Ct Steve: Has anyone considered that the market bubble burst because it was too dependent on a new sector that had stock values based almost entirely on expectations with no real fiscal support? Naw, has to be the government in some way.

Ct me: And of those times (2 million??) that weapons have been used to prevent crime, how many were when the potential victim was accosted at close range? I was referring to a specific type of case rather than that there was no deterrent value. // Seems like several apae have done theoretical castings for various "classic" books. I know LASFAPA did a few several years ago. Although I think it was more fun doing the casting using cartoon characters than real actors ((we spent some time casting WB cartoons as LotR characters)), // I think you're being a little too loose on your working definition of a police state – if only because you're requiring that there be enough laws that everyone can be in violation and thus allow selective enforcement. In a true police state, there would be no need for the additional laws since it would be easy to accuse and prosecute someone for any law one wanted to. It doesn't so much involve selective enforcement of given laws but selective per-/pro- secution to control speech, debate, behavior, etc. The late '10s and early '50s here in the U.S. might be the closest local example but there are plenty of them around the world. To put it another way, the application of authority is not arbitrary (albeit that it is subject to political control) and can't be subject to local abuse since it's already being abused on a non-local level.

APAC = NC² (Natter x Comments)

No really worthwhile changes on the work front at this point. The staff that is getting cross-trained from General Hospital is still in a territorial fight as to whether or not we will actually be able to use them at St Jo or not. If we can't use them and can only train them sporadically, it seems a waste of time for the most part. I realize the idea was initiated to help our staffing when the two Emergency Rooms merged into one but in the meantime there have also been plans to shift more of the outpatient workload over to General. That would help maintain their workload – but it also would alleviate some of our crunch from the extra ER work and make the whole training exercise rather pointless. Oh well.

We had an interviewee for the night job. I gather there were communications issues with her (language/accent) which would be more of an issue when you're the only technical person there. So, as we enter the 2nd 6-week stretch of this, I'll be taking the half-overnight (7pm-3am) shift. And, my boss has already asked if I'd be willing to take it for the summer so as not to drive off our new tech (Tony) with too many of them. It's a truly mixed feeling I have. The hours would dovetail nicely with summer childcare needs while still leaving me time to play some golf. I need to think on it some.

Random's afterschool enrichment class for this run is Rocketry and he's having, you should excuse the expression, a blast. Air powered, water powered, alka-seltzer powered, all sorts of rockets. Cool stuff. He's also taken a step in judu. He asked to change from the Wednesday afternoon class to Monday afternoon. Almost everyone on Wednesday is younger and at a lower belt level, so he couldn't really get good training there. Monday has older kids with higher belts so the practice is better, the feedback is more useful and he gets more of a challenge out of it.

We also took him for his pre-camp physical. All was fine except when they did a fingerstick for his hemoglobin and hematocrit (ie anemia check) they got rather low results. Not buying that for a second, Kay and I arranged to do a real blood draw. (Random was very unhappy with the prospect but did admit afterwards that it wasn't near as bad as he'd expected.) In any case, he is decidedly not anemic. They either didn't wipe off the first drops from the fingerstick or they "milked" his fingers – either of which would dilute the sample with tissue fluid.

We're looking into refinancing the house (and getting some cash out to finish off a couple of the smaller projects). It's an interesting decision: A new 30-year loan only saves about \$50 per month, a 15-year loan runs \$150 more and we could effectively reduce our current loan to 15 years from the 22+ we have by paying an extra \$100 per month on the principal. Decisions, decisions.

Some of you may recall that Random used my razor a few months back to shave his eyebrows. Well, we got the picture back that I took of the result ((it was in an less-used camera so we didn't finish the role for a bit)). He wants me to give him the print so he can destroy it. I'm hiding it for now. It is tempting to give him the print while making a few extras from the negative.

As planned, we took a short spring-break vacation up to Crescent City (that's bout 90 mile north of here). The drive up went well (even the dog finally settled down). We spotted one of the local elk herds outside of Orick. (This wasn't the herd used to supply the elk meat at the restaurant near Orick that includes elk, boar and buffalo meats on the menu.)

We checked in to our motel – one that we found out about last year – chosen because they allow pets (you can even leave them in the room if they aren't noisy or destructive). Not a fancy place, but adequate – particularly for its nearness to the local harborside park. From there, we rolled back a block or two for a twofer – lunch at one of the restaurants that I had a discount card for and a trip through the local aquarium. The aquarium itself is built into and around an old boat. While not up to the standards of The Aquarium of the Americas, it's not bad. There's a tidepool tank where you can touch the various stars, anemones, etc as long as you don't mind the cold water. They also have a couple of otters that were in a playful mood – including one who carried his bowl around in his mouth for most of the time we were standing there watching (trust me, it looked far more amusing that it sounds). The main tanks have various and sundry fish and small sharks to look at and, once you're intrigued, they have a shark tank where you can check out the skin of one as it swims by. The tour ends with the sea lion show (about 5–10 minutes of behaviors) before letting you off in the gift shop.

Now when Kay and I were there about 4 years ago, the gift shop was 110% shlock. It was, a classic of the genre. On the other hand, this time around it looks as if someone decided that the should have gifts that people might actually want to have rather than just to give as jokes. Not that they didn't still have a display or two of shlock, but it seemed more clearly a conscious choice instead of a lack of caring. Maybe it was the good influence of the Trees of Mystery gift shop from down the road. But whatever the reason, I approve. Now if that Hawaiian shirt that I liked had just been available in my size...

The plan at this point was to go back to the motel and let Kay take a nap while Random and I took Corky and went over to the park. Unhappily, it decided to start raining about now. And then rain harder. And longer. While I was able to get a walk in with the dog (there's a reasonable amount of cover and an open air "mall" nearby), it wasn't quite the way we had it planned. ((The "mall" is named Tsunami Place and has several markers in it that show the high water marks from the 1964 inundation caused by the Alaska earthquake.))

Dinner was at a nearby Mexican place (also on the 2-fer-1 card from our PBS station). Very much the old Mom and Pop place – which made for the good quality of food that you would expect. Afterwards, it was a family walk before Random's bedtime. (To help him relax, we let him drop some money into the "Magic Fingers" that was attached to one of the beds in the room.) And, as the rain had now let up, Kay and I took Corky for a longer stroll to let Random get to sleep. The walk was down along the park and back along the other side of the street (with a few shops, bars and businesses).

Tuesday was the second leg of our trip – north and east to Cave Junction and thence to the Oregon Caves. I have to start reminding myself that it's 30-45 minutes to get from Cave Junction to the Caves since it's about 20 miles, half of which is twisty mountain stuff. Our timing was tight and when it looked like we would miss the 11:30 tour, I figured we could eat at the lodge restaurant and walk the trails a bit before the 1:00 tour. Buuuut, the restaurant had not yet opened, the main gift shop was also closed and, when we got our tickets, it turned out that there was a tour at noon. So it all worked out fairly evenly.

The basic tour of these marble caves was the same as last year, but our guide this time was a college student/intern with an biology major so we got a bit more of an angle on the relationship between the surface and subterranean ecosystems. He also made mention of an "advanced" tour that is available later in the year that goes for a few hours and heads off into areas without the stairs, handrails, etc (you have to get fitted for cave gear too). Another thing to do for a later in the year visit would be to try and get there a bit sooner, take an earlier tour and then hit one of the hiking trails that they have there. Back to the car and Cave Junction for our traditional Dairy Queen lunch (which Kay felt was rather poorer than at previous visits) before returning to base camp.

((I should mention that, anytime we went somewhere that the dog couldn't come along, Corky came with us and stayed in the car during our excursions. We made sure to give him walk, sniff and business time at rest stops or in parking lots. And he seemed to like the arrangement just fine.))

This afternoon, with no rain. Kay got her nap while Random and I took Corky over to the park. He played in the multi-purpose playground structure (one of those wooden constructs that has multiple levels and parts that look like jails or western stuff or ships, etc) while I walked the dog around and around. Then, together, we wandered around the park a bit just for the sake of the walk and then out onto the beach a bit before heading back.

After much discussion, we opted for dinner at an Italian place. A really good Italian place. Kay had the chicken fettucini, Random the shrimp and I had the pasta in garlic sauce. Almost as good as the food was our waitress – friendly, funny and a little flip. We did make one error as we hadn't been paying attention to something about the PBS card – specials weren't included and since Kay had a special and Random a kid's meal, there was no full-priced regular second meal for us to get the discount on. Our waitress was actually more upset by her manager's decision than we were (hey, it was our fault) and offered – nay, insisted on buying us dessert. Suffice to say that, next time we're there, a meal at Da Lucinanna Ristorante is a nearly sure thing.

Tonight, we left Corky home in Random's company while we took our moonlight stroll along the jetty and back. On arriving, we found that the dog was curled up on Random's bed. (We learned later that he'd been whining and Random had called him up to keep him quiet.)

Wednesday morning we checked out and started south. But first we had to stop at Trees of Mystery – aside from it being a great hike in the woods with interesting tree growths and a cool gift shop, it also allows dogs onto the trail and in the giftshop (as was pointed out to us by the conversation Kay and Random had with the life sized statue of Paul Bunyan (there really is a microphone and someone who carries on a conversation)). Of course I knew that already as having some places we could take the dog along was one of the reasons we took him with us. I'm not sure what he enjoyed more – sniffing all along the trail or getting doggie treats from the gift shop staff.

The rest of the drive home as pretty straight forward and we arrived in plenty of time for Random's judo class and my board meeting.

One thing we found on this trip (after we had the films developed) was that Random is starting to get a feel for the camera ((he gets to use the "cheap" turn-the-camera-in ones so far)). Certainly most of the shots included what he was trying for. A few didn't work too well from lighting issues but overall I was pretty impressed with what he'd managed. Even the one he took of Babe's Blue Balls was decently composed. I expect that some variation on this 3-day vacation will recur on a semi-regular basis even if it's not always in the same direction. Low planning, low stress, that's the way to go.

While talking to my mom on my dad's birthday (we had already sung and given him our wishes), she signed off to take an incoming call. About 15 minutes later she called back to tell me it was from Florida to tell her that Olga had passed away that morning. Happy Birthday Dad. Apparently he was taking it in that mixed sense that you would expect considering her condition for the last few months. I've been thinking about sending a card but also about making a donation in her name to some organization that will send a card. As I may have mentioned, she had been paranoid about her grandkids (and great-grandkids) finding out that she was Jewish ((I'm presuming that her son and daughter-in-law know)). So a card from some Jewish organization stating that a donation had been made in her memory seems like something that should be done. It may be against her fears, but being gone it can't hurt her ((not that I think it would have anyway)) and I don't like the notion of keeping that as a "dirty little secret". Maybe that's just the "I'm the last observant Jew in the family" talking, but so what. Still I do have to decide whether it's the little devil on one shoulder or the little angel on the other that's making this suggestion.

Well, the temple's General Membership Meeting was held today. And I couldn't have asked for a better final one to conduct. Everyone was contained and polite. The discussions were useful and productive. The voting was smooth and we were done in about 1½ hours. It almost feels like a miracle. So on happy notes like that, I think I'll close out the zine for this go around.