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AGAINST THE GRAIN / Glen Foden



PETER, PAN & MERRY #40

A zine for SFPA # 224

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A little lead in is needed. The post office saw fit to hold my SFPA disty for ransom. As it was a busy month, I didn't notice this fact for a few days more than might otherwise have been the case and it was the 24th when I called to request a remailing. Which, sent Priority, arrived on the 31st – just one day ahead of the original parcel. This leaves me about 2 weeks to get my zine done, printed and mailed off before we head down to L.A. for our annual Thanksgiving Birthday celebration. This is all by way of saying that I'm going to be concentrating on replying to comments to me with any additional comments depending on what catches my roving eye. So if I don't comment to you, please understand (assuming you even notice).

Come and tarry on SFPA 223

Southerner – Last time I said, “While I think having a “Priority Mail Membership” is a good idea, as long as the OEShip resides with you, Liz or Janice I think I'll leave my own account as it is.” I may reconsider that position. // Regarding the information from Gary B, my first question would be to wonder if that driving distance standard applies to other parts of the country or just here out west? Anything that traverses the Rockies would probably be flying but it is unclear how that relates to a standard set to driving time. And who's driving time? I can get from here to L.A. in 12 hours, but not if that includes a variety of stops to drop things off and pick things up. Guess we'll find out.

Box Scores – I noticed something on my data: By the page counts you have listed for me, my total should be 67 pages, not 66. New average is 11.16. Big deal.

Ned Brooks – Ct Norm: Maybe the “Harry B./P. Warner” was an odd reference to is having some connection with a large oil company? // Ct me: Whether or not the post office should have been semi-privatized is another question. I believe that the original reason for establishing a federal postal service was that having lots of services each covering a city, county, whatever is an awfully messy way of doing things. Somewhat akin to having separate currencies. Such a system is definitely a benefit to society but that doesn't mean that (once the uniformity is established) it has to be run via the government. That same argument could be extended to suggest that things like the Internet should also be under government management. Overall I think ensuring that there is mail service is a governmental responsibility but not necessarily the running of it. Put another way, as long as it works and is reasonably cheap, I don't much care who runs it. // There would be two lines of reasoning for not animal products in feed for kosher animals: 1) Predators (ie those that eat other animals are forbidden) and 2) Any animal – even a kosher one – is unclean if not ritually slaughtered and feed made with any animal parts from an improper source would make the animals that ate it unclean. Between the two I'd expect that kosher animals didn't have any animal parts in their feed. / The actual raising of the animal isn't regulated per se but contamination issues would still need to be addressed.

Richard Dengrove – Sounds like you had a lot of fun while visiting your folks. I'm glad that things mostly ended on the upswing part of the roller coaster. // Ct me: So a vampire would be nondenominational if it was affected by symbols of any religion? I think that would simply emphasize that it was an unholy creature and its original faith was irrelevant. // I just checked through a couple of Kay's older, basic recipe books and none of the macaroni & cheese dishes involve cottage cheese. American every time. // Just checked in my references and Joseph does indeed mean "add", from Rachel saying "May God add another son for me" when he was born. // Unless you suddenly become a drug addict, I doubt that giving yourself a shot in a vein will ever be your lot. // As I can attest from local (and non-local) stuff, you can make wines from blackberries and cherries too. Considering the Norsemen's places of origin it wouldn't surprise me in the least to find that they knew, drank and liked wines made from more northerly berries.

As I said to Ned, there are ancillary rules on kashrut that could (and probably would) be read as preventing spare animal parts from being used in feed for kosher animals. // It's silly – albeit technically accurate - for Cheney to say that conservation won't solve the energy crisis. Clearly we will eventually run out of fossil fuels and no amount of conservation will prevent that from happening. On the other hand, the longer that gets put off the better the chances of our coming up with alternative sources. // At the moment management really is looking hard for more staff. We've, unfortunately, had little luck in the realm of actually finding people however. There really is a national shortage in a lot of health-care professions. // Well, by back's treatment included traction. I don't care which helped most. And it was my Physical Therapist who told me the most specific scenario for what had occurred and the possible variations. // Ct Liz and Jeff: There is no San Andreas Plate. The San Andreas Fault lies between the Pacific and North American Plates. // Ct Steve H: The only term I know of for advertising by use of items is "Product Placement".

Rich Lynch – Ct OE: You're presuming that the OE is going to be able to read people's contributions if you want them to do any checking or require supporting data for something like what Don ran a couple issue back. That's not a good assumption in my view. // Ct me: I also note in recent market movements that markets can move up amid word of layoffs. That, to me, is strong evidence of the disconnect between The Market and The Economy.

Guy Lillian – As I said somewhere, I see no problem with a "children's" book winning a Hugo. One "complaint" that I find a bit more compelling is the question of it's being fantasy and not SF. Of course that would have been a matter for the committee to deal with during the nomination process. // Ct me: Well there you go. If the Stars'n'Bars only dates from the Civil War, then it's historicity is a pretty questionable hook to hang its defense on. And that does seem to be the main argument used. If Mississippi used it to protest Reconstruction, well, that's been over with for 100 years now too. // OK Guy, just one time to explain about that bit in Shrek. The name of the city that the prince ruled is Dulac (or DuLac). Thus, that parking area was the Lancelot, DuLac. (Just to be complete – Lancelot DuLac is the full name of the character from the Arthurian legends.) // In thinking a bit more about vampires and symbols, I wonder if the cross might truly be the only valid symbol. A Magen David, for example, is not really a "holy" symbol in the same sense at all. Which makes me wonder about what other religions have some actual sort of holy symbol that would be usable vs a vampire. // So there is no legal penalty in LA for someone who unsuccessfully tries to commit suicide? // I'd trade that ace for being able to break 80 for 18 holes. But barring that option, I'm glad for that little bit of fame.

Self – Ct Janice: Well, the National League was exciting down to the end. Both for the playoff situation and for the Barry Bonds Home Run Chase. My only complaint in the post season has been with those Damn Yankees doing as well as they have. As I type this we're heading for Game 7 tomorrow and I wish a few of the runs the D'Backs got today could have come in NY.

Arthur Hlavaty – Good luck on the employment front. It sounds as if this is not going to be a good time to have to be job hunting. // Ct Ned: I'd have to go back through old photos to find out when I was last really clean-shaven. I guess it might have been in high school, before the lip fur started to sprout. The beard has come and gone a couple of times though. // Ct Guy: Your comment about group sex at Minicon reminded me that over ¼ of my lovers have been Minneapolitans. Must be something in the air. // Ct Trinlay: I don't think we would have called the Afghan gov't friends even before Sept 11. Hard to do when we don't recognize them and have no diplomatic ties.

Steve Hughes - I was at a party the other week and talking with someone who has about ¾ through a trip that had him in India in the second week of September. He had that same weird reaction from being half a world away. // At least the house sold, even if your time line didn't go as planned.

Janice Gelb – I have the same reaction to the “it's the result of U.S. foreign policy” response to the attack. (ie that it's akin to a rape being the woman's fault for her clothes.) The thing that galls me is that it's the same liberals saying that about foreign policy that would rip your throat out if someone dared hint that a woman's dress had any relevance in a rape case. (In both cases I can see them as being causes for drawing attention to a given “target” but that has no relevance to the permissibility of the action. // Ct me: I did have an uncle who sort of filled the role of a grandparent for me. Age-wise he could have been a grandparent – except in comparison to my parents' ages. // No question that Shrek had a lot of good bits, both short and long. // Kay and I spent most of our Scotland trip in the north part of the country. And would like to do more of same (just in different areas) on another visit. // I suspect (assuming money is forthcoming) that our rabbi hunt won't take too long once we have our job description ready and officially announce. (I'm assuming that our local student rabbi – who is getting smicha next summer – would be interested in a halftime job.) // Thanks for the congrats and the back is essentially fine these days. // Ct Gary: Aside from issues of respect with regard to canceling sporting events, there was also the issue of trying to get players, teams, etc from where they were to where they needed to be in the wake of all the travel restrictions. // Ct Liz: But you heard what the administration said – that the tax refund is needed to get the economy jump-started again. / Problem is that \$600 for a family isn't going to prompt a lot of new buying. Depending on one's situation, it'll go for necessities, pay down debt, go to savings or (if it really is extra income) maybe be donated to a charity. /// Trip Report: What are the Glasgow in '05 dates that would be affected by some minor holiday? My calendar shows a big gap of anything significant from mid-August through the start of October. / Why would it be significant – let alone important – that Rowling might not care less about a Hugo and George would? Would you really want people to vote for an author rather than the work itself?

Don Markstein – I agree about anyone who would attack an innocent person just for the way they look or what their faith may be. (Obviously no military campaign can guarantee no “collateral damage”, but intent is the issue here.) // I just don't think anyone in a position to disseminate a “catchy” name for this war has any good idea about what to call it. For that matter, are wars “usually” named in the aftermath in most cases?

One-Shot – George’s work is fantasy, but felt like SF and “he’s one of us”, so it should have won?

Tom Feller – So it really has been a Democratic half century for Congress. // Interesting but it was I think it was the Chinese fighter (not spy plane) that collided with the American spy plane. / While provoking a response may have been part of the mission, you have to keep in mind that there was an ongoing series of intelligence-gathering flights so provoking a response seems an odd goal.

Randy Cleary – Ct me: The slant on my first page was just from forgetting to compensate for my being a bit off-kilter. // I plan on saving the No Eyebrows picture for as long a I can. Probably should just put it in the album – he’ll never look for it there. // Ct me (222): No help at work yet, although we’ve had a couple of nibbles. One got away and one or two are still being played a bit. // Thanks for the congrats, and the back is mucho better.

Toni Weisskopf – I’m hoping that many of the security measures that have been put in place will be phased out as things settle in and more permanent solutions have time to be put into place. If all luggage is scanned and random checks done at all check in sites, what does curbside checking matter? If cabin crews are not to come out to deal with disturbances, what good is a razor or box cutter to a potential hijacker? // As for the missile defense system, I think the point of the argument is similar to the battleship vs aircraft carrier debate a half century or so ago. Battleships were the traditional powerhouse, but aircraft carriers made them not obsolete, but less significant by virtue of reshaping the equation. Another issue is that anyone who launches a missile at us is saying “Here we are! We did it!” and asking to be pulverized – to put it bluntly. Assured Destruction with nothing “Mutual” about it. So, to an extent we have a missile defense and would do well to reshape our future research goals to newer threats. You may not agree, but I think there is a valid argument there. // Shooting clubs and marksmanship practice are, in my view, irrelevant to the debate. First because all of those guns would be inaccessible outside of supervised practice. Second because we’re talking about (essentially) hunting rifles in those areas and, mostly, any gun control pushes involve automatics, semi-automatics, special ammo and “Saturday night specials” – stuff that really has no sporting, or even home-defense, use. I have a problem with the “there were always guns, this problem is new” argument: Over the last 200 years, as society has changed, so have the laws – and their interpretations. Why should this one be any different?

Ct Jeff: Two problems with your claim that all the Supreme Court did was require that the Florida Supreme Court follow state law. First, the US Supreme Court has no jurisdiction on state law – period. They have no standing to say “You misapplied your state’s law.” Only if there was a federal law at issue can they step in. Second, Florida law specifically allowed a candidate, in an election as close as that one was, to request manual recounting of ballots. So how could the state court’s ruling to let the count go on be a violation of state law? (If there were contradictory laws, it is their job to decide which gets priority.) // Ct Don: In quoting from the Preamble, you mention three of the reasons for establishing the Constitution but skipped one – “Promote the General Welfare”. I think you could argue that something like the NEA could come under that umbrella. In any case, the Preamble is just the Mission and Vision statement and not any part of the specific rules that says what can and can’t be done. // Ct me: Congrats accepted for having survived a Random decade. // Misdiagnosis is right. While both Fe Deficiency and Thalassemia can give similar blood pictures in some ways, they aren’t hard to tell apart.

Janet Larson – One reason there were probably far fewer SUVs, vans, pickups and the like is the cost of gas in Europe. // It isn't just Germans who do the deli meat and cheese on bread for breakfast. I know it's an Austrian thing too – and probably in other countries in the region too.

Gary Robe – No, I think you're wrong. All the good things you were going to (and did) write about were **not** insignificant and trivial. They were, IMO, among the most important things that you could be writing about – not letting those * mmmphs * dominate our thoughts or our lives. // Glad Nick is feeling better. Those ear infections can be nasty things, and not all that obvious up front. // As always, the trip reports were enjoyed even if not commented on.

Jeff Copeland – Sounds like we're in full agreement. Whatever we do in response, we need to adhere to our country's principles. Anything less is a victory for the terrorists. // More agreement. Keeping the President safe is vital. As keeping in touch and running the gov't wasn't at issue, his movements and locations were irrelevant. // Having had the opportunity to see "The Exorcist" when it first came out, it was pretty chilling but could easily have suffered from changing trends in the film industry. Kay was rather disappointed at Random's lackluster reaction to **Dracula** too. // // Ct Janice: As it happens the only time we ever bug-bombed our house was just before we moved in – we knew that the previous tenants had a flea-bitten cur. // Ct Toni: The book titles you quote from the Phil Enq reporters remind me of the trilogy of works referenced in HHGG – **Where God Went Wrong; Some More of God's Greatest Mistakes** and **Who Is This God Person, Anyway**. // Ct Guy: Does that mean that a book listed with the code "f/w" should be used as fish wrapping? // I agree with Liz, what LASFAPAns were doing back in the late '70s and early '80s was definitely more frolicking than cavorting. /// I think I said something to Toni above about hoping that, once more effective and permanent fixes can be put into place, many of the current "enhanced security measures" will be dropped as no-longer-needed stopgaps. // I think that quote about "Into the valley of death rode the (six) hundred" was about Crimea, not Afghanistan.

Gary Brown – Ct Richard D: Yeah, in politics you're either inflexible (ie your position on something is constant) or you're a flip-flopper (ie you've change you mind at some point). As long as the position is **yours** and not for the polls, I have no problem with either (although I may have big time problems with the position in its own right). // Ct me(?): I'm the only one allowed to misspell my name, thank you. // If by not wanting to compare you mean that I can pass on your tooth stuff and you can pass on my sciatica, I think we can reach an agreement there. Besides, people should specialize in their miseries so they know they're doing a good job with them. // Ct Steve: You can debate whether or not what we did should be called spying but "getting caught" is a strange turn of phrase when the Chinese knew we were flying those missions along their borders (their pilots had played "tag" before). There was no real secret of the fact, nor was it another U2.

Eve Ackerman – The *Nativ* program sounds pretty cool. // My hope is that some percentage of all the new blood donors will continue to give in the months and years to come. That would make a big dent on the blood supply problem. / My time wasn't up to donate again, but when our local blood bank called me (a routine "it's been 2 months" call), I specifically checked if they really needed my type – not yet. So I've held back a bit to let the "glut" move through the system. // What I've been reading about (occasionally) is the number of people applying for jobs in all the various intelligence and law-enforcement agencies

APAC = NC² (Natter x Comments)

It's October. September has come and gone and I haven't really said anything about that month at all. From a personal (as in what's with us) there's not all that much to report but let's start with that anyway.

Within the synagogue community this has been a very active month – mostly very good stuff. Aside from the various holidays that we've been observing there have also been a veritable spate of B'nai Mitvot – four from the early part of September through the middle of October - as well as a wedding (which was held at Wedding Rock in Patrick's Point State park). In some ways it's almost overkill and I can't wait to have a weekend with nothing going on. On the other hand, it's really affirming to see people moving ahead, celebrating the good things and "Illegitimi non carborundorum". ((I think I have that spelling right although I know the grammar would need to be changed to get the tense right)). One small item from the wedding was, in some ways, the nicest for me. As the band was playing the Hora, without thinking, I joined in. A few moments later it dawned on me that I was doing a fairly vigorous dance with a lot of let motion – and it wasn't bothering me (nor did it in the aftermath).

Whilst in the neighborhood. During Simchat Torah* services, our local student rabbi included herself in the aliyah (being called to read the Torah) for those with new beginnings. In explaining, she said that she had made a tough decision and that she'd enjoyed serving us as a student rabbi but that she wouldn't be able to do that for much longer... because this next summer her teachers are coming up to "give her smicha" (ordain her) as a rabbi. (I do need to point out that, while most of the room seemed a bit stunned by her lead in, I had the sneaking suspicion that the other shoe was going to be what it was. Maybe because I once did something similar in these pages.)

*Simchat Torah is the holiday celebration the completion of the annual reading of the Torah and the starting again.

School has started again and Random is enjoying being with his old 2nd grade teacher in 5th grade. We did, however, have a few go-rounds with my checking over his homework. I finally said (more or less) "Screw it". Then, about a week later he brought us the form he had to have signed – daily – that we'd checked his homework. He only brought it out because he was either get it signed or lose recess privileges. Since then he's been rather more pleasant about rechecking his work for me – as well as, to my eye, being both neater and more careful in the work he's doing.

I've also upped the ante on his doing his chores. While he should be doing them without being reminded, I've now told him that when I tell him the first time to do something that that's the only warning he gets. When I check back and the thing isn't done then whatever is occupying his attention (TV or Gameboy) is gone for the day. He wasn't happy the first time I invoked that a couple days later but I'm done with the "after this xxxxxx".

Massaging is looking good (if not yet lucrative). The weekly time at the hospital is going to shift to being biweekly (that may be all the traffic will bear and it will let me have every other Monday as a real day off again). That will dovetail well with the two other biweekly sets of chair massages I've doing (both quite popular) and I'm keeping my fingers crossed that one of the practitioners where Kay works will be able to garner enough interest to have me come there regularly as well ((ideally that could turn weekly since that clinic system has three facilities and I could rotate them on a tri-weekly schedule)). It's not all that much money in absolute terms, but my eyes are still doing **ka-ching** at the prospect while my fingers remain crossed.

October began with jury duty. Both faster and longer than I'd hoped and feared. I didn't count how many people were in our group, but the first set (about 20) was sent over to a smaller court facility while the rest of us got to hang out for a while. It was almost halfway through the morning before the rest of us were sent for the other trial starting that day. For starting the proceedings at about 10:30 things went very well ((note that trials are run in the morning and the afternoons are used for non-jury involved business)). Before leaving at noon, we nearly had the full jury (a full 12 had passed but 3-4 had check on time concerns that could excuse them).

In the morning, 3 of the 4 were good to go. That left one juror and two alternates. I became the third one called for an alternate spot – and the last person from the panel to be called. And away we went. The case was a misdemeanor domestic violence battery and violation of a restraining order. Interesting but not fascinating. The 2nd count (the restraining order) was a slam dunk that even the defense attorney conceded. The battery itself – given the legal definition involved – was pretty much a slam dunk too. Some degree of contact was made (whether it was a slap or more of a push was, ultimately, irrelevant), thus battery.

In any case, Tuesday saw about 60% of the witnesses gone through and Wednesday finished all the testimony. Thursday was for closing arguments, jury instructions, dismissing the alternates and letting the jury have at it. I'm not sure how long they took, but there was a message when I got home in the early afternoon telling me what the resolution was. Yeah, Guilty.

AUF WIEDERSCHREIBEN