



Disneyland

Yes, we did it — went to Disneyland (and Disney's California Adventure) for a full week. Let me tell you (if you don't know already) that you can't get through the place in a day, or even several days — at least not if you've got kids with you because they (unsurprisingly) want to see EVERYTHING. Well, we didn't see everything, but we made a good stab at it. And left some things to see the next time we go, in a few years.



THE KRITZBERGS

Digital Revolution 2002

Yes! This is the year we got a DIGITAL CAMERA

Suddenly no concern for film, suddenly no care for wasted shots. "Wasted shots . . . we spit on them! Hahahahahahaha" (well yes, I guess it's easy to get carried away if you're not careful.

And hence this newsletter. More pictures than you can shake a stick at. And if you do want to shake a stick at them, we wonder what you're doing on our holiday letter list. But never mind.



Unfortunately, nothing happened in February (unless you count the Winter Olympics and the tragicomic "Clear Skies" initiative from the White House). Actually, these days it's "fortunately nothing happened." Yep, we live in interesting times.



The castle of dreams . . . just as Walt built it



Gwendi with the Mad Hatter



Some places are easier to get into than out of



Yes, this is a baboon's behind, done in terrycloth



Remarkable man, remarkable mouse



What's an amusement park if you can't get wet?



A glorious start to a new year. Skating lessons for Gwendi and Richard (while Sarah gets regular refrigeration — hardly necessary in winter — at the ice rink). But

our strawberries do well, despite an unexpected frost.



Bill succumbs to the siren song of previous employer Bechtel and surrenders independence for steady work. Given the parlous state of the economy and the world, it seems like a good idea. So far, so good. Steady work means a lot of overtime, and Bill already years for the free and easy days of consultanthood. Oh well.



Gwendi with the Head Cheese



calif-O-mnia



Richard with the Head Cheese





- Nothing also happened in April (except for death and taxes).

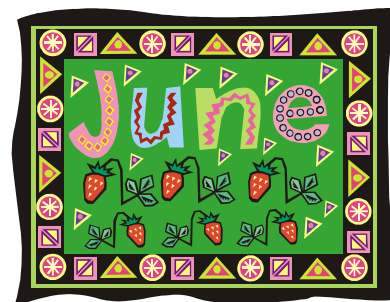


- Gwendi, Richie, and Sarah see the traditional 4th of July parade in Alameda. Bill, grinch-like, has to work and stays home. Ah, well, there's always next year.



- Swimming is the in thing this summer and Gwendi earns her "fish." This doesn't certify her to do anything (like saving the lives of drowning swimmers), but that she's able to keep herself from drowning when tossed into the water. Little steps matter.

- Gwendi, Richie, and Sarah get to go to New York to see old friends of ours from Hong Kong (and incidentally New York itself). Bill, grinch-like, has to work and stays home (this is getting repetitive). They have a good time, except that Richie has a bit of an asthma attack and ends up seeing way too much of the inside of two Long Island hospitals.



- Significant milestone for Mr. Richard (who now prefers to be called "Richie") — graduation from Kindergarten. Now he gets to move onto first grade and play with the big kids. Everything is relative.

- And since Summer is here, so are the obligatory day camps. Richie goes to the same camp Gwendi went to a few years ago (administered by the Alameda Parks & Recreation dept.) while Gwendi goes to a Girl Scout facility. They enjoy themselves immensely.

- Sarah continues her service in the National Guard, and as part of the deal gets to leave home in the summer for an entire week. Since Bill is working full-time plus-plus, Dick and Anne graciously volunteer ("volunteer?") to come to Alameda and provide some quality child care. (And re: the National Guard and the apparently imminent unpleasantry in Iraq — it seems unlikely that Sarah will be called up [the clarinet not being seen by military authorities as much of a deterrent against weapons of mass destruction] — but she will probably be playing a lot of going-away ceremonies and [we can only hope] a lot of coming-home ceremonies.)



- Oh joy, oh rapture — school starts. The kids are excited to go, see their friends, maybe do a little learning. Sarah is ecstatic, a little dreamy, contemplating what she'll do with the roughly 6 hours a day she'll have to herself on weekdays.



- The Guard calls, and Sarah goes to Long Beach for some serious playing — serving as house band for a conference of celebrity presenters you've long since forgotten, if you'd ever heard of them in the first place (I mean, Efrem Zimbalist Jr.?).

- And then, the family reunion at Bass Lake, where Bill discovers his real love of camping died some decades ago (definition of "outdoors" — the distance one must cover between the front door and the taxi; definition of "roughing it" — having only basic cable installed). And where Gwendi discovers that the most fun thing you can do in a canoe is tip it over. And where Richie discovers that despite what dad says, camping (especially the playing-in-the-fire part and rolling-in-the-dirt part) is way cool.



- Our vacation, put off since May, and then July, and then August, actually takes place in October. We go to — Anaheim! No, not to scout the Angels for the upcoming World Series (like it would have helped), but to visit Mickey's place: Disneyland and California Adventure (see photo spread, back page). Halloween comes, and we send our Vampire and Policeman out to make the world safe for candy collectors.



- Ever seen 900 Girls Scouts/Brownies in one place? I have, and it's awesome. The event was the annual "movie day" and Girl Scouts from our part of the world elected (as they did last year) to see the opening of the new Harry Potter movie, in this case *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. All agree that this movie is even better than the first, since the filmmakers didn't have to waste any time on that tedious exposition that other movies have to go through, and could just jump into the story. And jump they did. Our review: highly recommended for the whole family, although there's a scene with way too many giant (and ill-mannered) spiders that some in our crowd found too intense — even though it was too interesting to turn away from completely, so they compromised by covering their eyes with their hands and looking through the gaps in their fingers. Very practical solution, wouldn't you say?

- We also spent thanksgiving with Dick and Anne in Oakhurst, along with a passel of other family from that side of the tree. Had a good time and were lucky to miss the worst of the thanksgiving traffic through careful (and lucky) timing.

- And also got to see a most definitely adult drama in Berkeley, a touring-company adaptation of Euripides' *Medea* staged by the Abbey Theatre. A powerful drama, although a bit heavy going since it's in verse, with chorus and principals exchanging chanted couplets, and many, many, very long speeches for Medea and paramour Jason. Not to mention the story, which details the large number of relatives that Medea has cheated, disinherited, tricked, and/or dismembered. Ending with her graphic murder of her two young sons (carried off-stage, but in a way that leaves nothing to the imagination). Boy those ancient Greeks sure knew fun when they saw it! From the actor's

point of view, the production was brilliant, with Medea and Jason exhibiting the highest sort of craft to reach into this 2000-year-old text and make it accessible to a modern audience. Even so, maybe not fully compatible with the concept of "entertainment," as we define it in the US.



- Holiday times again — we get a tree, decorate it and the house, try to gear ourselves up for the fun to come.

- And also another adult entertainment — we'll be going to see "Lord of the Rings — The Two Towers," continuing the epic that started last Christmas with "The Fellowship of the Ring." That film was so superior to any previous efforts to bring Tolkein's work to the screen that we're very optimistic. And, sometimes a film adaptation doesn't have to ruin a book in getting to the screen. With the proper sort of direction, a film can add to a book's luster rather than tarnishing it.



- Sarah, Gwendi, and hundreds of Brownies and Girl Scouts take part in "Exploree," an overnighter for the knots-and-crafts crowd. Richard and Bill stay home sleeping in their soft, warm beds, and not worrying about the cold, hard ground. Everybody thinks they got the best deal.

And that's it for now. Hope all is well with your family and friends, and hope that the new year will see all the dreadful things looming on the horizon fade a bit so we can all have a genuinely *Happy New Year!*