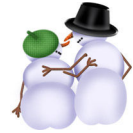




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The Newsletter with "Schmaltz"



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MUSIC HITS A HIGH NOTE

Music again predominated the year, but among all the events three in particular stood out. In January, Brass Band Northwest hosted the 2nd Annual Brass Band Festival. This year's participants cooked up some truly international flavors. Along with the four bands from the state of Washington, Little Mountain Brass Band from Vancouver, British Columbia, also joined us. And if that wasn't enough, noted British composer and brass band conductor Philip Sparke presided over the affair, with guest soloist Rick Pressley, assistant principal trumpet with the Seattle Symphony. The final five pieces on the program were performed by a truly "massive" massed band, which, while admittedly suffering from the sheer logistics of spreading 120 musicians out and still being able to see and play, and the aspect of a public performance after only three hours of rehearsal time, still produced results that were quite admirable.



The Mahler Festival Orchestra in dress rehearsal

My personal highlight was the opportunity to play with the Northwest Mahler Festival Orchestra, which for the tenth year now, gathered the best of all the community music ensembles (as well as an occasional professional) to play music that most of the local orchestras, including the major symphonies, are often unable to perform because of the large number of musicians required. The "Festival" begins in June with a series of reading sessions wherein a guest conductor will spend the first half of the session working with the orchestra on a large piece of music followed, after a break, by a complete read-through as if it were a concert setting. I was able to join them for the Vaughan Williams Third Symphony and Hindemith's Symphony

Mathis der Maler. In July the finally-selected ensemble spends an intense week of rehearsals followed by a gigantic concert in a very professional setting. The final program this year included Bernstein's Overture to Candide, Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto, and, of course, the requisite Mahler symphony... in this case No. 1 in D. It was truly an exhilarating experience to play with such excellent musicians who had an enthusiasm for their music that is sometimes hard to find.

B r a s s
Band Northwest was very

active again this year. In June we had the privilege of playing the national anthem for the opening of a Mariners baseball game at Safeco Field, but the more significant event and the third on my list of favorites, was a mini-tour of Chelan and Leavenworth, two artsy towns east of the Cascades. After a concert in the park at Chelan we were dispersed among many willing



55-mile long Lake Chelan, at more than 1500 feet deep, is the third deepest natural lake in the U.S. after Crater Lake and Tahoe, and the 14th deepest in the world when including saline lakes and one frozen under a thick blanket of ice in Antarctica.

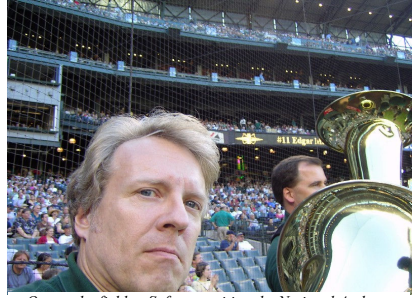
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hosts, who provided us with accommodations for the night. The next day, after whatever activities we saw fit to cram into our limited spare time, we met again in Leavenworth to play the Gazebo. It's nice to have fans all over the state.

Of course, the music would not be complete without mention of the Pontiac Bay Symphony, which now in its second season, is drawing considerable attention from the local art scene. This year saw the Northwest premiere of Leonard Bernstein's Suite from On the Waterfront and a world premiere concert performance of Hummie Mann's Cyberworld 3D. The kids in this group are playing their hearts out

and the adults are getting quite a kick as well.



Out on the field at Safeco awaiting the National Anthem.

Thwarted Trip to Tampa

"Dear Delta Airlines:

On 8/12/04 I attempted to fly to Tampa, a day before hurricane Charley was due to hit. As I arrived in Dallas for a brief layover it was announced that the flight to Tampa had been canceled. The weather in Tampa at the time was fine and other airlines were still flying there. In fact, a Delta agent confirmed that an AA flight had just left. I had been rebooked on a flight for the next morning, but that, too, was canceled within the hour. Per Delta policy I was issued a refund for the unused portion of my travel upon choosing to return to my destination city, however, in view of the facts that I had no intention of traveling to Dallas and that it was a Delta decision to cancel the flight rather than an FAA or airport-issued mandate I would like to request either a full refund or a comp ticket

to Tampa when I am able to reschedule. This trip was for the purpose of visiting my ailing father for a weekend and it is important to do so, but I can't waste air fare like this and not succeed in getting there. What can I do? Thanks..."

Well, Delta was not very cooperative. They did reimburse me for hotel and food expenses while in Dallas, but never wavered on their refusal to provide a full refund for the air fare. This is not standard policy throughout the industry and may be part of the reason Delta is having the financial woes it is. Needless to say, I am doing whatever I can to avoid flying with them now and in the future.

35th HS Reunion

September saw the gathering of student bodies, some worn, some not so age-usted, which was our 35th high school reunion. And it was an ideal weekend for an ideal rendezvous. The weather was perfect, the setting Elysian at the Marriott Hickory Ridge in Lisle, Illinois, and the company exciting as always, (including a chance to visit with some family I hadn't seen in a long while.) So what have I learned in the 35 years since graduation that I didn't learn before that? Well, mostly that good friends last forever, even if they may not be in the picture for a long time. Also, that new friends are always just around the corner, even if they were standing right in front of you many years ago.

Loose in Los Cabos

Excerpts from "Record of activities in Cabo, Thanksgiving week, 2004"

Wednesday: Rented car (\$71 for the day) and drove to Cabo del Sol for golf. Cost: \$250. Golf included two fish tacos for lunch, driving range, cart, bag tags, tees & ball markers, and distance guide. Also possibly included, not confirmed, but removed anyway, a towel. There were two towels and two yardage guides in the cart when I arrived, none when I left. Comments regarding golf: Started as single. Joined a twosome at second hole. Along for the ride was Allison, daughter of Richard and recent wife of Mike, the latter two playing the golf. Ally was very cute but unwise in the ways of golf. After the eleventh hole M & A opted out for sandier beaches while Richard and I parred on. Richard seemed like a pretty nice person, though he was playing from the gold tees until near the end and should have been at either the red or at least white tees all along. It is not my place to judge, but I can

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certainly observe how someone is playing and what kinds of things are causing problems. Apparently someone had hit into us on about the eighth or ninth hole, and Richard complained to the marshal who in turn passed on the complaint and returned with an apology. On the sixteenth hole the group behind inadvertently hit into us from 255 yds out. It did not hit us or otherwise cause us problems, the ball merely rolled up on the green, but Richard, apparently still reeling from the previous event even though it turned out this was a different group, got sufficiently upset that he picked up the ball and threw it back, yelling and screaming all the way. Fisticuffs nearly ensued, unlike anything I'd ever seen on the golf course before. The guy who hit the ball (whom I talked to for a bit after the round was over) said he would have apologized if not for Richard's bad attitude about the incident. He seemed sincere in his concern.

On the one hand one should always assume they are going to hit their best shot when determining when to hit with a group ahead, and this guy probably hit just a little earlier than he should have, despite his legitimate claim that the ball landed on a knob that caused it to jump forward farther than it would have otherwise. At the same time Richard should never have picked up the ball and thrown it back and should have waited for an explanation and at least potential apology from the other players. Both found the remainder of the game frustrating and Richard even quit midway through the 17th hole, which was unfortunate with it being the signature hole of the course.

Well, I discussed things with the marshal, the starter, the pro shop guy, and, of course, the protagonist himself, and who knows, maybe a little insight was spread that will affect the course tee time policies, as congested starting times are a definite contributing factor to ten-

sions of this nature. All right, enough commentary.

Dinner in Cabo San Lucas at a place recommended by the Gringo Gazette, Soloman's Landing. The lobster was cold-water and reputed to be excellent so I splurged on a 20-ouncer and margarita. It was definitely good. Note that this was the first official lobster meal in probably 20 years. Perhaps the last for another 20. Oh, and the tortilla soup with Jack cheese cubes and avocado was excellent. Total cost, \$46. That and



The gardens of Cacti Mundo in San Jose del Cabo

the couple of hooded cotton windbreakers with dolphins on them made for a pretty expensive day.

One further interesting item. Someone I talked to at the restaurant in Cabo (Hugo, essentially a time-share salesman at his "other" job) first told me that it was very surprising how so much of the world, including Mexico, was watching this U.S. election, since it is usually considered a reasonably mundane and innocuous event. More enlightening, however, was the observation that before the elections most foreign countries had only bad feelings about Bush, but after the elections their bad feelings extended to all Americans, since Americans, after having seen Bush firsthand, still voted him back into office. And this comment from a citizen of a predominantly Catholic country.

Thursday: Well, you know me. I generally don't just jump into things when they present themselves. I have to consider and contemplate, reason and reflect, until I'm satisfied that the time for action is right. So now I've been here almost a week and I am finally beginning to "settle in" as it were. This evening I spent quite awhile talking to the bartender at El Patio Restaurant in San Jose. He gave the impression of being the owner but his English was a little crude and he may only have been sort of an associate. The

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The 17th at Cabo del Sol, Los Cabos, Mexico

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conversation covered a myriad of subjects and, though mostly an aid to improving his English speaking, also finally gave me the chance to speak a little Spanish without the pressure of needing something or concern for the listener's opinion of my skill at the language. I had to inquire a little more about the Mexican's reaction to our election. It seems there was some trepidation [about the election results] at first, as Hugo had alluded to the night before, but that the Americans, especially those staying in and around San Jose rather than Cabo San Lucas, were quite friendly for the most part. This consideration, though it should be noted, is a direct result of lack of trust in our government by those in this other country. It's good to know that we can still be accepted as individuals, I suppose particularly with cash in hand, but still

unnerving that world opinion is so strongly divested of the respect we once had.

So I think this could be a nice place to live if only there were a symphony orchestra or perhaps a brass band or two.



Moonrise over Coral Baja

THE BEAST LIVES AGAIN!

For three years the truck sat in my garage, gathering dust, and providing nesting grounds for who knows what strange and exotic creatures in every nook and cranny. Every day as I walked through the garage to the car that I had little choice but to buy when things suddenly went wheels-up, those plaintive headlights stared at me, a little frown curled down at the edges of the usually pleasant grill, now redolent with melancholy.

Over those three years I had attempted from time to time to make the necessary repairs. I had assumed the head gasket had been blown... again... for the third time. But every time I set to work some difficulty stymied me. The need for a 33mm box end wrench, uncertainty over how to support the cam sprocket when it was time to remove the head, how to remove the last bolt holding the intake manifold in place. (OK, all you who have worked on vehicles will have appreciated that last

descriptive utterance. For the rest, I will try to refrain from such passages of excess as I continue.)

I had not wanted to take it to a shop because of what I knew would be at least \$800 worth of repair costs. I figured I could do the job myself for much less. And ultimately perseverance paid off, despite how close I came to putting it all back together and taking it to someone else anyway. When I finally managed to remove the head and took it into a shop for inspection, it was immediately noted that it was cracked, so a simple leveling would not do... the whole thing would need to be replaced... for another \$600. Well, beyond that point it was a fairly simple matter of putting everything back together, including the replacement of an air pipe that cost yet another \$180, and it passed the emissions inspection on the first run. So now that the beast is purring again I have gotten to do all kinds of other projects that I was unable to do (and hence unable to spend money on) before. Oh, What fortune thus!?

DILBERT



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