

It was about this time of year. Spring vacation was approaching, but not fast enough. Midterms were pretty much finished, and papers weren't due for a couple of weeks.

My goodwife and I were sitting in the dreary little living room of our dreary little apartment feeling... well, dreary. "We never do anything exciting anymore," I remember one of us saying. "We used to do wonderfully crazy things, remember?" At that moment, an idea was born; not a great, earth-shattering one, but a small, wonderfully naughty one.

"Hey," I said, "let's be totally irresponsible and go off for the weekend! To... San Francisco."

My goodwife squealed with delight as we discussed the idea. We could make reservations at the Eugene Heapy-Cheapy Inne for a room somewhere near Frisco, take off right after she got off work Saturday afternoon, and drive, drive, drive until we made the Heapy-Cheapy for the night. We'd cruise to The Bay in the morning, and spend five or six hours doing delightfully silly and touristy things, then drive, drive, drive back for classes the next morning, taking turns sleeping and driving.

The next day was wet and gray. "Perfect weather for leaving Eugene," I remarked. The car was all packed and we left from my wife's work on schedule at 3:00. First stop: the Eugene Heapy-Cheapy Inne.

A middle-aged lady who sounded like Emily Latella with a pair of Vise-Grips tightened around her nose helped us with our reservation. "Nyess. I can call fer yuh, but aisle have tuh charge

yuh fer the cawl whether yuh get a place er not. Understand? It's long distance, yuh know."

We felt like big spenders, so we authorized her to make the call. Luckily, a room was available in Vacaville, about two hours from Frisco. We were in business.

Soon we were out in the car, rumbling along I-5. My wife took the first shift driving. With the exception of a traffic cop who shook an accusing finger at her as he pulled over the guy who'd just passed us, the trip was fairly dull. After an hour layover in Roseburg for some soggy pizza and a huge pitcher of caffeine, we were back on the road, heading for the border. It was too dark for homework, so my wife dozed for a while.

Six hours later I was still driving. The caffeine had long since worn off, I'd listened to most of the tapes I liked, and was starting to listen to my wife's French tapes for diversion. My wife was still in dreamland, and I was starting to get Sacramento stations on the radio. There it was, Vacaville, one more mile. I pushed the little button on my watch. "Aren't digital watches wonderful?" I observed quietly. Only 2:00! "Great shape!" I said aloud.

"Gray snakes?" my wife said, waking instantly. Her hair was tousled, her eyes only half open, but she was definitely awake. "Where are we?"

"Just outside of Vacaville. That's Spanish for cow town," I replied. "Wonderful," she

said.

"Watch for the exit. It says here, 'turn left on Blossom Park Court after the Nut Tree intersection and then follow Willigson Way. It says you can't miss it.'"

We missed it. Several times. Although we could see it clearly from the freeway, we spent 15 minutes looping around the freeway interchanges. "You think maybe it's a mirage?" my wife asked. I glared.

Fifteen minutes after that I was considering the fine for driving over the median strip in California. "Do we have any signal flares we could send up?" my wife offered. It was time for drastic measures.

I took a series of totally random lefts and rights, and five minutes later we stood before the night desk.

We awoke the next morning to the piercing tones of my digital watch. 7:00 a.m. "Aren't digital watches wonderful?" exclaimed my wife. "Rise and shine! San Francisco awaits!"

We were soon back on the road, rested, showered, breakfasted and eager to see the

Golden Gate. The Sacramento stations gave way to San Francisco stations.

We arrived at Fisherman's Wharf without much difficulty. The sun shone brightly on the blue bay, the seagulls wailed cheerfully at us. A loaf of sourdough bread and a cup of shrimp cocktail in our hands, we strolled along the wharf.

We worked our way through a number of chic little art galleries, and by a number of jewelry vendors, portrait artists, bad guitar-

ists, candle makers, a juggler who juggled small children (actually plastic dolls that exploded on impact) and a bagpiper who subjected us to torture while we waited for our cable car.

It was late afternoon, and time to start thinking about our homeward journey. "Can we have some seafood? Can we, can we, can we?" begged my wife. We stopped at one of the seafood stands along the Wharf. "This OK?" I asked.

"I meant inside," she snapped. "C'mon, it won't be that expensive."

We were seated at a linen-covered table overlooking the bay. Our waiter tried to look terribly proper as we ordered. My wife had the Sicilian-style Squid. I had the Turkey Salad Sandwich.

Soon the plates arrived, hers full of little tentacles swimming in a watery brown sauce. I watched my wife's face carefully as she raised the fork to her mouth. "I've had squid before," she assured me. "It's just like chicken, only sea-ier."

Suddenly the smile left her face. She poked at another tentacle. She reached for a drink of water. "Ummm, delicious," she said, "only a little rich. Want some?"

As it turned out, she ate half of my sandwich and I nibbled at part of a tentacle. The waiter grinned as he took away the mostly-full plate.

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FRISCO OR BUST

Getting away for the weekend

by matt meyer

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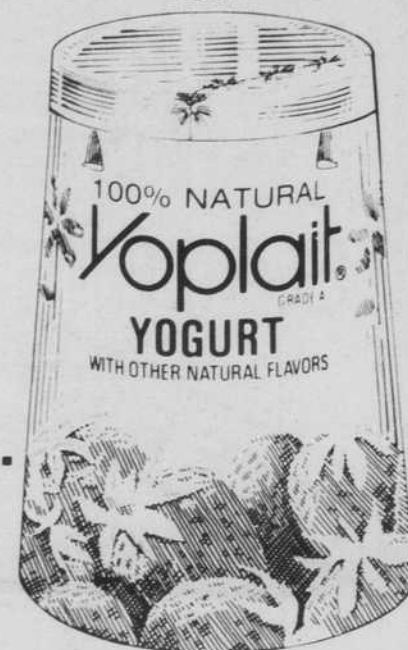
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