

I Get Ideas

Tonight was the first night that the fun began to take shape at rehearsals. Especially when you are with a new cast, it does take a few rehearsals to get acquainted. But I was greatly impressed with the two youngest girls who have for the most part memorized each of the songs they are part of at least in the first act.. "Tootie" has an adorable solo all to herself which is sure to be a crowd-pleaser. She also has a cute little choreographed ditty with sisters "Esther" and "Agnes." And the two young ladies looked great while the older sister admitted that she did not know the steps as well. But it really looked good for the second week of rehearsals.

As for GRANDPA, let me just say, the director has given me a very long leash from which to create the character and there is a lot to give character to. In fact, Mr. Prophater is in a scene with the young ladies in the family room in which he has no dialogue. I was quick to ask... what is he supposed to be doing? "You'll think of something." My eyes lit up and I felt a rather mischievous grin come upon my face. COOL

Given the fact that we were practicing in a very small music room in a church while the theatre was being used for another production, we had very limited space to choreograph our on stage movement but we managed to basically take a stab at entrances and minimal (dare I say) dancing. But I have some ideas during the title song to interact with the family octet.. pending director's approval of course. Guidelines: Grandpa is a rather eccentric old man. Lots of Possibilities.

Zoo Traveler

I really like to travel (NO FLYING THOUGH!), and we were fortunate enough to do lots of it – before we had so many little kids, of course. We still try to make a yearly trip to Florida, especially while we can still fit the entire family in one car – something that soon won't be easily accomplished as the kids grow older. At each travel destination, I have to admit that my favorite tourist attraction is always the local zoo. I made a list of all the zoos and/or wildlife parks I have visited, and I hope to add to it soon! Here is the list by state, country, or territory, followed by the city in which it's located. An asterisk following the zoo means it no longer exists. I put notes about some of the places in *italics* as sort of a guide in case you're interested in visiting one of those particular attractions and want some info straight from a tourist's mouth.

California:

Sea World San Diego

San Diego Zoo

Canada:

Bird Kingdom Niagara Falls Aviary, Niagara Falls, Ontario

Marineland, Niagara Falls, Ontario – *this place is very cool. You can hand-feed deer, Beluga Whales or even Orcas (Killer Whales). You can throw food down to bears who beg and do tricks. There are also a variety of amusement park rides for the whole family. Look at me petting the Orca!*



Washington, DC

National Zoo

Florida:

Wooten's Wildlife Park, Florida Everglades – *a cool, family owned place where you can see animals on display; including alligators, crocodiles, and Florida panthers. You can also hold and feed baby alligators! I wonder if they still exist; their website hasn't been updated since '06!*

Sea World, Orlando

Gatorland, Orlando

Animal Kingdom, Orlando

Idaho:

Zoo Boise, Boise

Illinois:

Brookfield Zoo, Brookfield – *this is the zoo I grew up going*

to. In the 80's when I was a frequent visitor, they had many 'celebrity' animals, with interesting stories to match.

Shedd Aquarium, Chicago

Peoria Wildlife Park, Peoria

Cosley Zoo, Wheaton

Glen Oak Zoo, Peoria

Henson Robinson Zoo, Springfield

Miller Park Zoo, Bloomington – yuck, not one of my favorite places. Their tiger exhibits consisted of teeny tiny cages, and they had a really scrawny, terrible looking tiger, at least in the late '90's when we lived in the area. Hopefully they've cleaned the place up.

Scovill Zoo, Decatur

Indiana:

Ft Wayne Children's Zoo – a perfectly sized zoo to visit with kids. They have a wide variety of animals and some nice exhibits. They just recently built a chair-lift type ride that will take you over the lion exhibit once it's finished – cool and scary at the same time!

Potawatomi Zoo, South Bend

Fun Spot, Angola

Michigan:

Binder Park, Battle Creek

Minnesota:

Minneapolis Zoo, Minneapolis

Missouri:

St Louis Zoo, St. Louis

Nebraska:

Henry Doorly Zoo, Omaha – I know they've since rebuilt it, but when I visited back in 2001-2002, they had a teeny-tiny exhibit for the gorillas, which made them none too happy. I actually witnessed a huge male gorilla charge a kid and beat on the glass from his small exhibit – scary!

Henry Doorly safari park, Omaha

Folsom Children's Zoo, Lincoln – *a very nice little zoo located in the heart of Lincoln. It's so well-laid out that you can forget you're in the middle of a capital city, and they have lots of animals in a variety of nice exhibits.*

Ohio:

African Safari Wildlife Park, Port Clinton – *I love this place! You can feed deer, elands, huge buffalo and a variety of hoofed mammals from the comfort of your own vehicle. In season, they have pig races, animals shows, and camel and pony rides for the little ones.*

Akron Zoo, Akron – *I was really impressed with the layout, exhibits, and the happiness of the animals – a very impressive little zoo!*

Cincinnati Zoo, Cincinnati

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Cleveland

Columbus Zoo, Columbus – *a zoo no one had heard about until my favorite celebrity, Jack Hanna got ahold of it and made it a world-reknown facility. Huge zoo, and the only place to see my favorite animals, manatees in my home state of Ohio!*

**Sea World Ohio, Aurora – we actually lived in Illinois at the time we visited here, but I'm glad we got to see it before they sold it to Six Flags, who sold it to Cedar Fair. Any of the other Sea Worlds are quite a hike from IL or OH for that matter, especially for a non-flyer such as myself.*

Toledo Zoo, Toledo

Pennsylvania:

Pittsburgh Zoo – *very impressive zoo! Lots of kid-friendly playgrounds and interactive areas. The polar bear habitat looked really cool – people go through a tunnel that the bears can swim over – but we didn't see it since the bears weren't in the pool. I NEED a second look at this zoo and will definitely allow more time when I get back there!*

ZOOAMERICA North American Wildlife Park, Hershey – *We did not care for this zoo at all. We visited in the late '90's, so*

maybe they've added more to it by now. But at that time, they only had animals indigenous to North America, and let's face it, those are easy to spot in most areas of the U.S. And let's face it, the real star tourist destination in Hershey is the chocolate factory!

South Dakota:

Great Plains Zoo and Museum, Sioux Falls – I visited here with my family when I was 15. This place was amusing to us because attached to the zoo is the museum, which has many taxidermied specimens. We joked that this zoo had more dead animals than live ones!

**Marineland, Rapid City – note the asterisk, this place doesn't exist anymore, thank goodness. When we visited in the summer of '93, they had dolphins and sea lions held in such tiny cages and pools, it was sickening. I haven't been able to find much info on this place, but I'm sure they were shut down because of poor treatment of their animals. I can only hope the animals found a better home.*

Bear Country USA, Rapid City – a cool drive-thru bear habitat experience – keep those windows rolled up!!! And check out the baby bear nursery – so adorable!

Wisconsin:

Henry Vilas Zoo, Madison

**Serpent Safari, Wisconsin Dells*

GRAND TOTAL AS OF 2009:

41 animal-themed places in 2 countries, 13 states, 1 district... and counting!

New Venue... Same Drama

The other night before rehearsal really got started (before it was supposed to begin), I got a chance to become further acquainted with some of the people involved in the up-coming production of *Meet Me in St. Louis*. While the theatre and people involved may be different, one thing remains the same: the drama involved in operating a community theatre. The director for the musical described how she became the board's president after the previous head stepped down. She then made it known that she is the thorn in many a side. If I had not known better, I would say WCCT had changed faces and buildings. Then, "Lon" passed around invitations to an up-coming membership drive ("No thank you, one is enough for now... thanks" ☐).

We also discussed more on things that would be needed for Grandpa; particularly, the necessity of having multiple versions of the same item. A different one for each scene he is in (which is quite a few). How's that for cryptic? But for being the first week of rehearsals, I think it is going well... of course, we have yet to add an orchestra. I suggested that we do as a few Broadway shows have done recently, have the actors on stage play. I believe that recent productions of [Company](#) and [Sweeney Todd](#) have each had principal players playing instruments. I can see Grandpa Prophater blowing away on a tuba on stage when not singing.

It's Time To Sing The Music

Of The Night

The local community theatre has added a new weekend series of entertainment to its offerings. The first month of shows has showcased "Broadway Through the Years" and has highlighted talented singers from the area... some familiar faces from past shows and some newbies. This weekend was the first show I have been able to attend and was actually quite impressed. A dear friend sang "Tell Me It's Not True" from [Blood Brothers](#). I really love the music from this show and the story; hopefully, one day I will be able to be part of a production.

I must say that a new young lady who has apparently conveyed an interest in auditioning for future productions showed an immense display of talent. Performing DIFFICULT selections from *Ragtime*, *Songs for a New World*, and *Parade*, I began to wonder where this young lady has been hiding.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the talent of the young women who have organized the series of concerts. The two were highlighted in pieces of their own. My favorite was a duet from [Assassins](#). "Unworthy of Your Love" is a beautiful ballad sung by John Hinckley and Squeaky Fromme in the musical. They are both singing to the objects of their affection; Hinckley to Jodie Foster and Fromme to Charles Manson. Yet another musical I know about, see clips of via youtube, love everything about it... but will it ever be staged by this area. Most likely not no matter the number of people who suggest it.

Finally, rounding out the evening was the delightfully entertaining emcee for the evening. Very quick with a quip and able to improvise while performers were searching for music. A good way to "get butts in the seats" for the upcoming production of [Over the Tavern](#).

A taste of India



Sa- a deer, a female deer
Re- a drop of golden sun
Ga- a name I call myself
Ma- a long, long way to run
Pa- a needle pulling thread
Dha- a note to follow pa
Ni- a drink with jam and bread

Hmm. Something doesn't seem quite right there. On Friday, I, along with the 6th grade body of the school I was at, got a little lesson in playing the [sitar](#). A college student who used to attend that middle school came in to give a demonstration. The teacher I subbed for had "concert" written on the schedule, but it really wasn't a concert though he did play a couple of short tunes. I hesitate to use the word "song" here, because apparently classical Indian songs are over 15 minutes long, but what he played for us were tunes about half a minute in length. The reason? He is just a sitar student himself, but that was good enough to bring him in for a demonstration for students who are in the middle of learning different world cultures in social studies. As far as being a student, in fact, he told us that it takes about 20 years before one can be considered a good enough sitar player to play professionally in India, and another ten before one can teach. Wow.

He started off with a little lesson on musical notation. Remember the song above? Well, the form of musical notation he has learned for Indian music involves a musical scale similar to that referenced to in the [Solfège](#) technique, from

which we get the syllables do, re, mi, fa, so, la, and ti. For Indian music, the syllables used are sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, and ni. The music also doesn't use the staff Western musicians are familiar with. Instead, they use |, ^, and -. These symbols tell them how to pluck the playing string (the one of 17 strings used most of the time) and a letter above the symbol tells them which note- the first letter of the aforementioned syllables. A dot above or below the letter, if present, tells the octave. The sitar is capable of playing three octaves.

Along with the lesson, he played a little bit of a CD which included a type of percussion instrument that typically accompanies the sitar and is capable of 30 different sounds on two drums. I forget what he said the name of this instrument is. Again, he also played a little bit himself. During one of the class periods, a teacher, my former junior high band teacher in fact, came in halfway through with his "Beatles" class (seems the one school with its African drumming course- see post archives from about a couple months ago- isn't the only one to have such specialized music classes ☐) and asked Bob (the sitar player- what do you mean you thought he was Indian? ☐) to play some bits from the few Beatles songs featuring [George Harrison](#) on the sitar ([Youtube link](#)). He wasn't very proficient on this though as his studies were primarily Indian music.

All in all it was a very interesting lesson I thought, even though I learned it five times. ☐ This turned out to be a far better day than the day before. I was definitely pleased that I did not get that second day in that ELL class.

A Living Breathing Hoax

A while ago, I decided to write a series within my blog about animals, my favorite things. I just can't find enough time to learn about animals, and I love sharing knowledge about their incredible attributes. Here is chapter two in my Interesting Animals series. To read chapter one about a scaly mammal called the pangolin, [click here](#).

For chapter two, I chose to focus on the duck-billed platypus; an animal who is so strange looking that people thought it to be a hoax when it was first discovered in 1798.

The platypus is one of 3-5 species (depending on the source – animal knowledge is very differential) of monotremes or egg-laying mammals. I know, at one point we were all taught that one of the characteristics of mammals is that they give birth to live young, but that is not the case. Monotremes lay eggs, and the platypus join echidnas (spiny anteaters) in this animal order. The platypus is found in Australia – seems like they have all the cool animals, doesn't it? I just wish they weren't so stingy with their animals. I know they stopped loaning out the Tasmanian Devil years ago, and now that the last one died (it resided in Fort Wayne Indiana until its death – I could kick myself for not making the less than hour trip over there to see it while it was alive), the only place to see them is in Australia. The same goes for the platypus. I've visited many zoos, and I've never seen a live platypus. A quick check on the internet reveals that they are only found in Australian zoos.

But anyway, aside from being an aquatic (with water-repellent fur), egg-laying mammal, another cool thing about the platypus is that the males are actually poisonous. Both genders have a

spur on their left foot, but the males' spur produces enough venom to really hurt a human being. Here is a picture of the duck-billed platypus – note the soft, leathery duck-bill which is actually used by the animal to sense the electric fields caused by its moving prey (feeds on shrimp, fish eggs, small fish, and aquatic invertebrates found in streams and lakes).



Easy to see how this duck-billed, beaver-tailed, otter-footed, egg-laying mammal was once thought to be an elaborate man-made fraud, huh?

You've got the what?

I now have permission to write this blog. The news has been spreading and most of the people that needed to know, know. So with this post we will all be more knowledgeable.

Last weekend, my oldest left a message on my cell phone for me to call her. Her news was that she had three bars. Being bit dense, I thought 5 bars was good for cell phones. She was talking about different bars. Apparently my oldest is expecting her first child. So I have a grandchild coming into the world. Great news for this grandfather. I'm rather looking forward to being able to spoil a grandchild within easy visiting distance.

Those who know me, know that my two oldest daughters both have step-children. As far as I'm concerned these are my grandkids too. Unfortunately, I do not get to visit with them as often as I would like. Two of these children are many miles away, and I don't have the time or cash to be able to take off at the drop of a hat to visit. I surely wish I was able to, but right now I can't. My other granddaughter doesn't get to visit very often, situation is complex, as often happens. So now I will have a grandchild only 1 hour away. Great for the child, but I'm not sure how the parents will react. Hee! Hee!

Now for the fun part. My future grand child already has a nickname. When darling daughter was calling people to let them know about the future happenings, she called her grandparents. They were involved in this or that, and wondered if my daughter could call back. My daughter, with her usual humor, responded: "Sure, I've got 9 months." Her grandmother heard: "Sure, I've got the mumps." It apparently took a bit of explaining to get across the wording of "9 Months". Grandma kept hearing mumps. I really would have liked to be a fly on the wall for that conversation. Anyway, my future grandchild's current nickname is Mumps.

It should be a fun time in NW Ohio for the next few months, or even years.

Upcoming...

I am too tired and lazy right now to write up anything, but upcoming are two posts. The first is about an interesting day I had on Friday with a musician who came in and talked to the students. What sort of musician? You will have to wait for the post for an answer to that. ☐

The second post will be about the winter retreat we just had, essentially a 24-hour lock-in at my church, also known as the reason I am too tired to post right now. Note the lack of an accompanying picture to complement this post which just serves to give proof to my tiredness. 8)

Why bother making this post at all? Why to add to my diminishingly-increasing post count of course. ☐

Until tomorrow. ☐

peanut butter

Recalled peanut butter and peanut butter products are in the news. Another outbreak of salmonella. Salmonella in spinach, lettuce, carrots and other salad fixings, but now in peanut butter.

What got me on this is that I heard about the recall right

after finishing off a box of nutty bars. No, I didn't eat they box all at once, I just ate the last one right before I heard about the recalls. Quick check of the recall list, and I found out these were not on the list. But what kinds of foods that I eat are on there? Peanut Butter Cups? Cookies, Ice cream, candy?

So far, the things I normally buy are not on the list. Unlike the recall of the baby spinach last year. I guess I will have to keep an eye out as this recall expands or contracts. Peanut butter is in a lot of things I buy. I sure am glad I don't have peanut allergies.

More about the [peanut butter recall and list of products not recalled](#).

Something Suddenly Came Up

The following post, while going beyond my normally tame fare, just could not be resisted. Besides, it reminded me of one of my favorite moments in the entire Brady Bunch mythos. You know the moment when Peter threw a football and it came flying into the daydreaming face of Marcia, Marcia, Marcia. Marcia screamed "[OWW, MY NOSE](#)". This gave the young lady a huge swelled nose and a severe blow to her ego as well as throwing any chance of her big date with the star football player out the window. Well... a similar incident recently occurred at an establishment in Akron, Ohio. However, it did not involve a football.

AKRON, Ohio – A northeast Ohio man who was smacked in the nose by a stripper's platform-style shoe is suing a nightclub for \$25,000 over injuries he says will require surgery.

Yusuf Evans says he wanted to entertain his cousin, who had come to visit from out of town, so he took him and a friend to the XTC Nightclub in Akron. 30 minutes later, Evans says he was doubled over in pain.

“When the boot hit me in my face all I could do is drop...and just holler for about ten minutes”, he said.

Evans says, while performing a dance move, a stripper’s shoe flew off her foot and smacked him in the face. “She ran, at a nice speed, grabbed the pole and flung her whole body around, all her weight flung like that in a circle around the pole and her boot flew off and it hit me in my nose”, explained Evans, who filed a civil lawsuit on Tuesday in Summit County Common Pleas Court. He’s asking for \$25,000 in damages over injuries he says will require surgery. “Right here. It’s chipped”, he said, pointing to the left side of his nose. “This side of my nose, I often get clogged all the way up, where I can only breath out of (the opposite) side”, he said.

The lawsuit says XTC management allowed dancers to wear improper attire and required strippers to perform dances that made the stage a hazardous place.

“Safety reasons and that they’re responsible because it happened in their establishment by their employee”, Evans told FOX 8.

The owner of the XTC Nightclub had no comment.

Evans filed the civil lawsuit the same day he says he was injured exactly one year ago. The 37-year-old Akron man says he still has pain from the chipped bone in his nose.

He says he saw a doctor the day after he was injured. He has medical bills and was told he’d need surgery. “The bills, the pain, my nose that ain’t gonna go away unless I have surgery and I don’t like surgery so I don’t know what I’m gonna do about that.”

I guess next time I decided to invite a cousin to a night on the town, I would choose a safer place to be entertained. I wonder what the man's significant other thought about the incident. The evening news reports that the victim is not a frequent patron of clubs and just wanted to show his cousin a good time. I guess he thought the good time would be a little safer. [poll id="15"]