

The Superhero Network

OK... I am about to illustrate my profound geekiness (or my wealth of Useless Knowledge, you decide). Way back in the mid to late 1970s, it seemed like at least two of the big three networks (remember those days?) had at least one live-action superhero show on the air. ABC had *The Six Million Dollar Man* which lead to the *Bionic Woman* (which jumped ship to NBC for its third and final season... told you I was going to demonstrate my geekiness ;). Over on CBS, you had *The Incredible Hulk*, *Wonder Woman* (which ABC tried for a season by putting the story in the original WWII time frame), and *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

The Hulk and Wonder Woman are much easier to track down than your friendly neighborhood web-crawler for a number of reasons. Sad to say the budget for the live-action Spider-Man was not over the top. After locating several of the 14 episodes via [youtube](#), the special effects definitely showed the lack of money put to it. The crawling up and down buildings left much to be desired and to save even more money, stock footage from the pilot episode would be used. Funny, but what finally spelled Spidey's doom was not the cheesy effects but CBS' self-described fear of becoming THE Superhero Network. The Amazon Princess and the arachnid were given the ax while The Hulk continued on into the early 80s.

HOWEVER, this was not Spider-Man's first appearance as a live-action hero. Beginning in 1974, he was seen in short live action bits on the children's series *The Electric Company*.

Here is a Great pseudo cross-over Spider-Man episode tied with a classic episode with another series:

And here is an Electric Company short. Guess the voice of the narrator:

Ok... enough geekiness for one day. I won't go further by saying that Nicholas Hammond also played Fredrick (the oldest Von Trapp male child) in *The Sound of Music*... although I think I just did.

Coming Full Circle

On Thursday, I purchased my "new" car. As another of our tangenteers surmised it is indeed a 2002 Honda CR-V complete with slide out table in the back. I was informed that Edy would be at the shop and then she and "Big" John would go to the bank and sign the title over to me. After this, I took a trip to the DMV and paid the taxes. The lady at the desk looked up at me and said "Two seventy five" and I reached in my wallet and handed her a \$20.00 in all seriousness. She looked at me and said, "Nice try." I had a good chuckle and made out my check for the correct amount.

A rather historic tale goes along with this purchase. Last week, I was informed that nearly 38 years ago I was driven home in a Firebird owned by the same couple from whom I bought the CR-V. On that day, my mom was ready to bring her third newborn son home. Instead of waiting for dad to come which would have added another day on our stay at the hospital, she called Edy and she took me on my first car trip.

Along with this purchase comes certain provisos:

- I am to inform everyone that it was previously driven twice a week (to church on Sundays and to the beauty parlor on Thursdays)
- It is to be waxed twice a year and all the chrome and interior looking like new.
- No alcohol (in my present state, I am forbidden to drink

and even if I were not, I would not have it open in any car I own... and neither would passengers)

A nice little car... and it doesn't even feel like it is much different than driving my old Sunfire... may she rest in peace.



Now THAT'S A Jamiah Song

I now have my set list for my little weekender. I'm sure it is too late to submit until fall arrives as they usually take the summer off... or have the last few years. Today at my lesson, I informed K that I had made a few changes... deleted a few songs and replaced them with others and whittled my list down from about 15 to 10. Some of them require a second voice... so be on the look out for a request those of you who would be willing (I know at least one tangenteer who I will not ask... upon pain of torture or worse). One of my new additions was a spark of hilarity. I have had the song in the back of my mind since I began. K was not familiar with the song until we had gone through it a few times. She was in her husband's car listening to the satellite radio when it came over the air. After hearing it for the very first time she exclaimed... "Now THAT is a Jamiah piece!" So glad she agrees. And it even went fairly well for a lesson in sight singing.

In other news, I must wish a Happy Birthday... in case I don't make a post tomorrow... to a GREAT friend! The last few months have not been the greatest for me personally and our Wonderful admin has been right there for me every gimpy step of the way. Definitely not the only one who has been but I thank God

every day for his wisdom, guidance, and above all his friendship. Happy Birthday, C!

Free Fridays

One of the great things about the Nook (of which there are many) is "Free Fridays." Most of the titles offered every Friday by Barnes and Noble interest me not at all, but occasionally one piques my interest. Last Friday's offering, *Stupid History* by Leland Gregory, is a compilation of "Stupidity, Strangeness, and Mythoconceptions." The truth about Paul Revere's famous ride; the trial of Lizzie Borden; the Battle of Bunker Hill; and countless other tidbits.

Ironically, earlier tonight I was playing a game in which one of these tidbits would have come in handily. In the game "Malarky," the reader reads the question on the card and either reads the correct answer or makes up a load of malarky.

The other players determine whether or not the reader is giving the correct answer or feeding them a line.

One of the questions had to do with sardines which everyone knows is purchased in a small can. I cannot remember the actual question but the answer had something to do with the fact that there is no such fish as the sardine. They are usually pilchard or small herring packed into the can like... well... sardines. I came home tonight and read that fact and had a good laugh. Imagine how funny it would have been if I had read that tidbit BEFORE the game.

Perhaps this is in bad form, but did you know that Arnold had competition for the role of The Terminator? Apparently, O.J. Simpson is "too nice to be taken seriously as a killer."

All of these are but a few of the (at times humorous) moments in *Stupid History*. I may regret this post as the number of trivia games seems to be dwindling at game nights. However, how much useless trivia do I actually retain? Ok... perhaps this Free Friday was an attempt to encourage readers to pay for the humorists other books as this was published in 2007. But still a fun read.

How To Succeed At The Tonys

Tonight (or last night) was the 65th presentation of The Antoinette Perry Award for Excellence in Theatre. Once again, Neil Patrick Harris shined as the host as he poked fun at himself, Spider-Man (30 seconds of jokes about the troubled musical), and battled with Hugh Jackman to see who would be the better host. Really in his element as an entertainer. Since I had to work until 9, I had to watch via the DVR an hour late.

Honestly, I was not overly impressed with the excerpts from the NEW musicals. Two based on movies ([Catch Me If You Can](#)... never saw the Hanks/Decrapio movie; and [Sister Act](#)... which surprisingly did not translate that well to the stage). [The Scottsboro Boys](#) is the now closed and soon to hit the road swan song of Kander and Ebb (who created *Cabaret* and *Chicago*). The winner of Best Musical, [The Book of Mormon](#), was co-created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone (known primarily for bringing "South Park" into our lives).

I was much more impressed by the two shows battling it out for Best Revival of a Musical. Daniel and company were very fun while performing "Brotherhood of Man" from *How to Succeed*... Congrats to John Larroquette on his win for Best Featured Role

by an Actor in a Musical. Sutton Foster and her cast of the classic *Anything Goes* was the odds on favorite to snag the revival award and it did not disappoint. I am still amazed that Radcliffe was not nominated for his role. It does not make sense to blame Harry Potter itself when Jackman won for *The Boy from Oz* while he was still riding high as Wolverine in the *X Men* films.

Memorable moments:

- *Spider-Man* excerpt did not do a thing to endear it to me. Re-opens Tuesday. Julie Taymor is suing for royalties due to her after she was fired from the director's gig.
- I found bits of *The Book Of Mormon's* song, "I Believe," to sound like a mockery of "I Have Confidence" from *The Sound of Music*. What can we expect from the co-creators of "South Park?"
- Brooke Shields (soon to join the cast of *The Addam's Family*) got a big long BLEEEEEEEEEEP (or was it a long mute)
- Christie Brinkley (yet another to soon revolve into the endless cast of *Chicago*) looked like a deranged Barbie doll and sounded like a munchkin.
- "No audience members have been injured during a performance.... YET!" (30 seconds of Spider-Man jabs)
- Whatever the (what can only be best described as) **THING** was that Whoopi had on her head.

So... while the year's crop of NEW musical highlights leave something lacking, the awards and revivals were entertaining.

And please...**KEEP THE SUPERHEROES WHERE THEY BELONG! IN THE COMICS, ANIMATED SERIES, OR MOVIES!**



Feelin' Groovy

I can honestly say that I AM feeling better today than I have for a while. I was able to stand throughout my entire voice lesson without feeling the need to sit. Maybe this thing is not going to take a year to fully heal after all. But if it does, I can deal with it. Someone asked when I was going to be in another show. It just dawned on me that I COULD have tried out for the role of FDR in *Annie*... no walking involved and he does get to sing and harmonize during the White House reprise of "Tomorrow." AH, well...

I am a step closer to replacing my blown Sunfire. "Big" John and Edy are in the process of looking for a new auto and they know I am in the market for a good, reliable mode of transportation. I went to their house this morning and checked out the '02 Honda SUV (a compact SUV). Definitely a car that has been well taken care of and very nice, full of bells and whistles. During my test drive, I commented to Big John that there was no "ka-chunk ka-chunk" as I approached a stop sign as there is in the car I currently drive. I have been told that it is "nothing to worry about" but somehow...

Back to my latest lesson... I am thinking my list of songs I have been working on is about to be edited. There are some songs which I do not think I am going to have performance ready anytime soon and there are others that I have been looking at which will take no time at all... one of which we ran today. Plus, by the end of my first song, I was on my feet! Much better than sitting on the chair.

Potter Fever

While watching a documentary on the making of the Harry Potter movies, I felt the anticipation and excitement of the approaching climactic cinematic experience building. What is it that has made this series of first books and now motion pictures so phenomenal cannot be answered simply. There are layers and layers of brilliant creative aspects created by J.K. Rowling that you can not name one. But I do have a favorite aspect of the series. Character development is so integral to the world. Not only MUST the big three of Harry, Ron, and Hermione develop and grow but it is so amazing how even secondary characters are almost as important as the core trio. How many other series contain so many wonderful characters that even the actors profess to being surprised at their growth and the challenge that growth created.

One of my favorite characters, Neville Longbottom, has grown tremendously since his introduction. In the first 3-4 movies, poor Neville had trouble with even the most elementary of spells. Who can forget the scene in *The Chamber of Secrets* in which he is suspended from a chandelier by two cornish pixies ("Why is it always me?")? By the end of *The Order of the Phoenix*, Neville has nearly come into his own by joining Dumbledore's Army and proving his worth. Hopefully, we will see him grow even more in the final film.

The youngest red-headed Weasley child, Ginevra, has developed from the bashful 10 year old who watched Harry, Ron, and Hermione being carried away on the Hogwart's Express. During her first year at the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Ginny was possessed by the 16 year old Tom Riddle... not a good way to begin one's education. As Neville has, Miss Weasley has become more vocal, more active, even so far as to come to the defense of her hero, Harry, on the quidditch pitch.

What would a post from me on Harry be without a mention of my

favorite character, one of the most mysterious creations I have ever encountered, Professor Severus Snape. At the start of term festivities in *The Sorcerer's Stone*, the glance that Harry and the teacher share is filled with so much meaning that its implications will progress through the entire series.

The loathing seen in Snape's eyes will not fully come to light until the final film. Not only did Harry feel a burning in his scar, it made me tingle.

So... three characters... three SUPPORTING characters who are as instrumental in the World of Harry Potter as the title character himself. Just the tip of the wand in the marvelous creation of J.K. Rowling. 37 days and counting! A Potter movie fest (non ABC Family fest with commercials) will be a fun way to build up to July 15! Yes... Even *The Half-Blood Prince*.

Who Knew In NW0?

Tonight, I joined Megs to partake in a concert performed by The Black Swamp Strings of which CC is a cellist. I remember learning a month or so ago that the concert was this weekend but I was not sure of the date, thank heaven my friend invited me to come on my SATURDAY OFF!

The music was phenomenal! It ranged from Bach's *Jesu. Joy of Man's Desiring* (one of the most beautiful pieces EVER written) to more contemporary fare such as theme from *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Schindler's List*, and "All I Ask of You" from *The Phantom of the Opera*. Another favorite of mine... Brahms's *Hungarian Dance No. 5* was also presented. I know that almost everyone has heard this piece somewhere.

I was particularly impressed with the age range of the musicians. There were several who had just or were about to graduate high school who started with the group at age 14 back in its "garage days." There were also the seasoned veterans.

I don't know how long it takes to become even close to being proficient enough on a stringed instrument to perform with a group of this talent, but it seems like you would have to start at birth!

One of our neighboring audience members has a nephew who was a member of the group who is now a professional musician. He will soon be heard on the scores of two of this summer's sure-fire hits: Steven Spielberg's *Super 8* and *Cars 2*. He is also in the Santa Barbara Orchestra. I guess it is possible to achieve a life-long dream no matter where you grow up. The audience member told me to congratulate "my wife" on a great job! Sorry, she only plays my wife on stage. ☐

THANKS MEGS...Had lots of fun! And great job, wife ☐ Until next time.

Here is Brahm's Hungarian Dance for those of you who think they have never hear it!

Yo, Adrian! NO, ADRIAN!

I KNOW that there have been VERY few musicals that have not been based on other source material. Even in the Golden Age of Broadway, creators such as Rodgers and Hammerstein, Lerner and Loewe, and their contemporaries found inspiration from other works in order to bring "the classics" to the stage. *The King and I*, *South Pacific*, *My Fair Lady*, and *Camelot* were all based on well established works that came before. Although I was not around when these masterpieces were first produced, it seems to me that they all made some sense and were meant to transcend artistic genres.

That being said, there are times when (it seems to me) that things are better left alone. While it is only in the developmental stages, [*Rocky: The Musical*](#) is well on its way to becoming a full-blown reality. The collaborators of such shows as *Annie*, *Seussical*, and *Hairspray* along with Sylvester Stallone himself have already tabled a reading of the work (8 years in the making at Sly's request) with plans of mounting a production in Germany next year and a possible NYC debut as early as Spring 2013.

While the original series of movies do contain some musical elements (the brilliant original theme, "Eye of the Tiger," and the seemingly endless montages of *Rocky IV*), most of the music seems to have been placed in them for nothing more than selling a few albums and doing nothing to advance the plot. I suppose that the streetcorner crooners in the slums of Philadelphia could have a place in a musicalfied version.

However, I cannot see two men in a boxing ring beating the tar out of each other while singing and being taken relatively seriously. Suspension of disbelief MUST have its limits although a musical of Rocky Balboa would seem to ask you to do

just that.

Goodbye to the Greasy Spoon

Lester's Diner has been a staple in Bryan Ohio since its inception in 1955. On Memorial Day 2011, it closed its doors for the last time. Like many small towns, the restaurant was a gathering place for seniors who sat around the "round table" (whether or not it had an actual round table... I think Lester's feature was its lunch bar). Not only was it a hang out for the young-at-heart, I have heard a story or two about a group of young whippersnappers who frequented the joint after high school football games.

OK... maybe they were not so young. My parents along with the former high school band director, his fiancée, and other friends would travel there occasionally after the game while high schoolers would head to Pizza Slut (err... Hut). The next day, we would be regaled with tales of "Sweaty Betty" who would make perfect hamburger patties by placing a ball of meat under her armpit. Dad said that he once found a hair in his burger. All right, I doubt if that was true but it sure made for a good laugh for a 7th or 8th grader (I was in junior high at the time)! I'm sure regulars could sit and tell tales a mile long about the "spoon."

The atmosphere and scenery of the eatery took the diner back to the fifties complete with swiveling stools at the bar, four person booths with classic mini jukeboxes, and milkshakes served with the tall silver shake cup. The giant sign outside the establishment featuring the giant "16 ounce cup" (I stand corrected, it was a "14 ounce cup") of coffee was the inspiration for the sign outside Mel's Diner on the 1970-'80s

tv series *Alice*.

Yet another piece of Americana dissolving only to be a memory to those who knew it.

