

Home Again

Sunday morning Mom and I brought Dad home from the nursing home. We got the call early last week saying that he would be able to leave as early as Wednesday, however, with the in-and-out schedules around here Sunday was the first possible day we could make the transition easily and as smoothly as possible.

We arrived while he was in church services so Mom filled out the paperwork and I sat in his room. I sat on the bed that Dad has tried to sleep on during his stay. I must tell you, it is no wonder he did not get much sleep... UGH! After checking out, he was a bit slow getting into the car but getting up the porch steps to the house was not a problem at all.

Sunday afternoon, the rest of the family came at various times for chili. I had to leave for a few hours for rehearsal but there were plenty of people here to keep Dad company while Mom ran to WM for prescriptions.

Monday was a little scary. Dad's blood sugar was really low. However, he assured us that he felt fine and we got him something to eat.

Tuesday was a big day. A rep from home health services came to the house. We thought she was coming to set up a schedule for visits. However, she came to the conclusion that no services would be necessary. WOW!!! Tuesday night, he went to a volleyball game with Mom. Quite a switch from last spring/summer when he wanted no part of outdoor activity!

As expected, it is going to take some work to keep him motivated instead of sitting around in front of his Game Show Network. We will see how that works out in the days ahead.

Until then... PRAISE GOD for all he has done and thanks to my fantastic friends and family for their continued thoughts and prayers!

A Two-Fer

Good news all around! Dad will be home soon (within a few weeks).

Wednesday, the therapist had Dad come to the house for about a half hour to see how he did in old surroundings. While still under guidance, he walked through the main floor... though the front door; to the bedroom, the bathroom, and the kitchen. He sat on his recliner and the couch. Laid on the bed and got into his dresser drawers and closet. Sat on the loo and stepped into and out of the shower. He then sat at the kitchen table and got into the cupboards. All in all, what you and I would consider menial tasks yet important to have him do in order to see where is at in his progress. Before leaving, the therapist stressed the importance of motivation and activity once he is released or he will be right back out.

Today, the siblings and I met to discuss ways in which we all could make life easier for the two of them once he does come home. Thankfully, we collaboratively came up with a plan even determining our holiday gathering schedule. Tonight at dinner, I was amazed to learn that Dad is prepared to once again go to the school ball games. Until last spring, he and Mom went all over as she drives the bus and keeps the book for volleyball, boys AND girls basketball, and softball. Last spring, he fell off the bank wagon and had no interest at all in attending. His desire to go shows (I believe) that he is indeed ready and willing to return to his old routine.

In other news, I have been offered and accepted the coveted role of Mr. Sawyer in *Miracle on 34th Street*. This afternoon,

the full cast and director Mare met to watch the glorious 1947 classic... even if it is only the last day of September.

Throughout the movie, several cast members asked if I would be portraying Kris Kringle, himself. While playing Santa would be a fun opportunity, I think the villainous psychologist will make for an even more fun challenge.

Searching the archives, I noticed that the last performance I was in with a theatre company was October 17, 2010 as Barrymore in *Hound of the Baskervilles*. Last weekend's adventure was something else entirely. However, while watching the movie I see ALOT of opportunity for a memorable character to develop. Time to grab the erasable highlighter that I received in October 2009 after a performance of *You Have the Right to Remain Dead*.

great and beautiful marvelous things are happening!

Walk ON

This weekend was quite the adventure. Friday night, My oldest niece and I headed out for an area campsite for a weekend event that promised to be a fun-filled, faith-expanding, challenging time. As this was the first of what is sure to be an annual event, the numbers might not have been overwhelming but a great deal more than the 0 that had signed up only a week ago. I will let my fellow [tangenteer](#) go into greater detail (time permitting... which seems to be little) about the fabulous time since it was a joint venture began by L & C. I will post some personal thoughts. I will say that I was extraordinarily proud of all of the efforts put forth by our esteemed President, the mentors, the hideous game makers (one of whom scared the Wooly Sheep out of Shelby), and most importantly, the young adults who braved the cool, damp

beginning of Autumn.

As for my part, on Wednesday I was was asked to develop yet another crazy, over-the-top character to serve as game announcer. No problem there, right? The only thing I was given was a name "Leviticus Onineosix". We'll stick with Leviticus. But I think our president/co-event creator knows me a little too well. I hope my character was OTT enough.

Most of the kids did ask if I was really insane. Trust me, the script called for "crazy, over the top." For some reason, a prop cigar added much to the mystique. I wonder what impact the rainbow clown wig would have added (apart from getting wet and ruined).

Night one saw the tributes sorted into districts followed shortly by the beginning of the activities. The individual districts with the assistance of their mentor had a series of tasks to complete based upon provided scriptures.

Unfortunately, Leviticus had to leave for the night as his portrayer had to work the next morning. Before leaving, I was asked to assure Shelby that the EEEEvil Game Maker was only a character and was not going to hurt her. Luther took off his mask and introduced himself to her (aside from the rest of the participants).

Day two (or after 2PM) was a lot of fun. One of the highlights, for me, was the talent show around the bonfire.

It was so neat seeing EVERYONE at least tell those gathered what they were good at (if not demonstrate). Throughout the day, many of the tributes asked me to sing?! How did they know what one of my favorite things to do would be? I did not tell them. So I told them... during the talent show. So... what to sing that would be appropriate... one of my favorite songs that I have never practiced nor performed.. "You'll Never Walk Alone." Later that evening, after the groups made their way back to their individual areas, I was asked to sing again.

WOW!

Sunday morning after eating breakfast (I stayed overnight and slept in the car), Shelby and I had to leave before everything was wrapped up. As I was congratulating the group of young ladies and gentlemen, I was asked to give an encore. I know that false modesty is frowned upon but I was absolutely humbled to think that a crowd of 12-17 year olds would want to hear me sing and ask it? I have never, EVER appreciated the fact that my voice is an **ABSOLUTELY GOD-GIVEN TALENT** (with some assistance by some pretty remarkable people) until this weekend. I have always known it as such but to put it on display in the quiet atmosphere was awesome!

Another personal highlight was Shelby, herself. I hope she is as proud of herself as I was watching her develop her own faith further. I was told that she had earned her district some treasure Friday night. Not only that but she was awarded a special prize for being "The Most Mature" tribute. WAY TO GO, KIDDO! I was actually very impressed with all of the effort put forth. There were some stumbles along the way, but they all performed well in their quest to become closer to God.

Sunday afternoon was also my own church's annual festival. The family was going to eat around 1 so Shelby and I had to leave early so we could each shower and put some dry clothes on. I also took my yearly turn in the kitchen helping clean and put away dishes. This was a little more hectic as there have been new refrigerators in place, causing some of the dishes to be relocated. I also sat and played BINGO with Alex (help us all... hopefully, he will be able to participate in next year's Famine Games). Hopefully, Elizabeth will be able to join next year as well. Apparently, he did not know about the corner cluster win in the game. If I had not caught it, my nephew would not have won his \$5.00 reward. I did get a free game out of the deal.

Once again, congratulations to everyone who participated in the Famine Games. And... "May God Be Ever In Your Favor."



Not Even Thinking About It Yet

I know that it is only a bit over three months away but it will be here before we know it. I already have a standing invitation to help my new neighbors around the block prepare for their Christmas spectacular which they did annually while living in the Carolinas. Plus, auditions for Miracle on 34th Street (in lieu of the postponed Sound of Music) are next week, Yesterday, I was informed that Wally World has already started hauling out the holly not to mention the return of layaway. I remember when there was lawawat (I can't even spell it correctly) year-round.

Yesterday at my voice lesson, I saw a stack of Yuletide books underneath K's keyboard, Tis the season, already? Not to worry, I have a few weeks to decide on a few to work up as "I learn faster than most of the other students." Any suggestions? I have always wanted to put a nice "Ave Maria" in my rep AND this would fulfill a request for a foreign language selection.

Another remark from the neighbors (TK is an E-Town native) is the absence of things that were a part of our small town about 20-25 years ago... no more bakery, the town goes to bed with the sun, the second grocery no longer exists. I told her that Halloween consists of one hour Trick or Treat and a parade to the fire hall for a costume judging. Black Friday is another parade with Santa being driven on his Fire engine

sleigh to the fire hall and then he returns to the North Pole after only one night of listening to the wishes of the little ones. And what happened to the carolers who would go door-to-door. She just shook her head when I told her that Scouts (Boy and Girl both) haven't done it for years. Kind of sad.

I guess I have been thinking about the holidays (in a way) for a few months while I have been receiving FB posts of holiday lights set to sounds of the season and photos of A Christmas Story scenes (which will be making its Broadway musical debut soon.... eh... I'm sure it will be successful but, really?!)

How Much Of A Party Can We Take?

Last night, I accompanied my mom as she drove the bus to the band show at the county fair. I essentially took Dad's place but have not gone to the show for a number of years (if memory serves, the last time I went, it ended up being cancelled because of rain ;)) We arrived and went along the grounds to get a ribeye sandwich, kettle fries, and the essential chocolate shake.

There were seven bands in all. They each gave fine performances; however, a few things made me shake my head. It seemed to me that at least three of the schools had changed their "Fight Song" to the one made popular by **THE** preeminent university of the state... home of **The Best Damn Band In The Land**. Also, a certain Party Rock Anthem (made famous last year by the group whose acronym will not be reprinted on this blog) was played by no less than four bands! Honestly, the song may be contagious but really... I believe that I was turning green by the third rendition (and **NOT** from envy). I asked the director of my alma mater's band when she was going to introduce the piece in their show. Thankfully, my band did a Bon Jovi tribute show. The event ended nicely with three of the bands joining for a final number.

During the show, we received a phone call informing us that Dad's blood pressure had once again bottomed out and was being transported to the hospital. Mom and I finally were able to make it there around 9:30. Around 11, we were informed that he was once again dehydrated and had developed a urinary tract infection but after he had been treated was going to be taken back to the nursing home where he better start drinking up.

He's ready to come home (as anyone would be) but he has to learn to take care of himself or it will be that much harder and longer ☐

Running Around + The Sound Delayed But A Miracle Is Due

Well... it has been an interesting few weeks going back and forth to the hospital and finally getting Dad settled at the home here in town. Amazingly, he seemed to be acceptable to the idea so that with work on his part and lots of love and prayers from everyone else, he hopefully will be able to come home one day. We will take it as it comes and put everything into His hands. Really worried about both of them but I'm sure that everything will work out for the best.

Dad started his daily routine of 2 hours of Physical Therapy on Monday morning. This was a day earlier than expected with Monday being Labor Day; however, when Mom and I went out they were getting him ready to go. He does seem to be getting stronger physically. By Wednesday, he was sitting in a wheelchair and walking better (still with assistance from the nurses to get to the restroom). I am sure that this will be a long recovery for him but he wants to come home so he needs to put the work in! It wears him out but that is good for him.

Upcomin events... *The Sound of Music* has been pushed back to the 2013 season. In its place... *Miracle on 34th Street* another show I would love to be part of. I missed out on being in a production of it a few years ago when I played "a warped, frustrated old man." But, the show has a cast of tens or twenties so my chances of getting any role should be pretty

good (even if it is a drunk Santa). Auditions are in a few short weeks so... let the fun recommence!

Just need to focus some good thoughts and prayers to my family, as well! And as always... thanks to my amazing friends and extended family out there for the prayers, fb chats, and impromptu fun times!

Computer Course In The Tub

I have been debating whether or not to post on the events in my family that have occurred these past few days. Because I know and trust the family and friends who read and comment here, I feel entirely safe. I'm sure that it will at least (and most wonderfully) act as a prayer request. Wednesday night, my Dad had a seizure which prompted a call to 9-1-1 by me. Within minutes, Mom, Jeff, and I were on the way to our neighboring hospital. 2-3 hours later, Dad was taken to a larger hospital where they have a neurologist which is required of all first time seizure victims. By Friday, the doctors were still uncertain as to the cause of the event: his blood sugar bottoming out, another mini stroke (he had a major one 6 years ago), or other reasons.

He has been progressively going downhill; yet, he still knows all of us. Saturday afternoon, Mom, my siblings, most of the grandkids, and I were in the room. He was able to communicate but we could tell that he was not all there. He kept insisting that he needed an IV and a blood thinner. We were, at times, able to get him off that train of thought but I believe that seeing the blank monitor triggered its return.

Even the nurse, who came in to check his vitals, was unable to convince him for long.

Sunday morning after church, we received a phone call from the hospital that is a 45 minute trip away. Dad was really upset, confused, did not know where he was, and crying. After finishing breakfast, Mom and Jeff left and were on the way.

In some ways, he has not lost his entire sense of humor. The other day, he was receiving a bath from his nurse (he can do little unassisted but lay in his bed). He told us that "Liv" gave him a bath while her husband sat on the bed. Mom asked if he enjoyed it which drew a chuckle. To add even more veracity to the story, Jeff did see a Nurse "Liv" on the floor who did indeed give Dad a bath.

When Mom returned this afternoon, she told us that "Dad is taking a computer course." A bit surprising but sounded plausible until we were told that he had to go to Jeff's to do his homework.

At this point, it is almost certain that Dad will not be able to come home for a while. Who can say for certain how long that will be? We just have to keep praying and put it in His hands. I keep remarking what a good thing it is that my four siblings live within a mile of us. However, I am still under the same roof and must take on even more of the household responsibilities which (while important) is not my main concern. Attempting to be a source of strength for my mother is going to take a lot from all of us. Knowing that we have a whole town (and more than that) who keeps saying that if we need anything speaks volumes. While walking to the post office this morning, I was stopped by no less than five concerned people. I was able to spend a few hours with my spectacular second family yesterday at a ball game. I just hope that we all can draw strength from each other and pull even closer together.

So ...whenever we are in need, we should come bravely before the throne of our merciful God. There we will be treated with undeserved kindness, and we will find help. (Hebrews 4:16)

35 Years Later And Still Rockin'

Today marks the 35 anniversary of the death of Elvis Presley. A record 75,000 fans were on hand at Graceland for the candlelight vigil held every year beginning last night. This morning, his ex-wife Priscilla and their only daughter Lisa Marie were interviewed side-by-side for the first time inside the mansion. Remarkably, Elvis' biggest fear was that he would be forgotten as quickly as his fame rose. Obviously, it can be argued that he is at least as popular today as he was in his prime.

Also highlighted in a 24 hour marathon is the Hollywood years. 31 movies made in only 13 years (in 1968 he made at least 4 movies). A few show what he could have become. Many are fun to watch while a lot are painful to watch and for him, personally, to make. This afternoon while sick in bed, I tried to watch *Double Trouble*. In one scene, he sings "Old MacDonald" to a 17 year-old girl who throws herself at him every chance she gets. I gratefully rolled over and went back to sleep.

This morning, I also heard a rendition of one of my 3 favorite Elvis songs performed as a duet with Lisa Marie and found a video of it to share. Almost remarkable how much daughter resembles father. Over the years, I have come to not only appreciate the power and heart that he brought to the more "meaningful" songs but to prefer them. What a loss at only 42 years of age.

2 Decades Out

Saturday night, the Edgerton High School class of 1992 met to commemorate and reminisce on 20 **YEARS** of life following graduation. In total, 17 classmates (along with their significant others... well some with their s.o) gathered at Sam's Place. A golf outing had been arranged but those plans fell through which was fine with me (unless it was a round of mini golf). It was a special evening shared with some classmates I have not seen in 20 years. James is a 20 member of the military and a Navy Seal (took him three times to accomplish that but WOW!).

It really was a journey back in time as we shared memories as well as where life's journey has led us. I shared a table with Cousin Dan (and his wife Carla), Amy, and Angie (and her husband Trent). One of our memories took us all the way back to Mrs. Webb's Kindergarten class where Dan met with the paddle (for what I did not catch). He also mentioned that he wanted to have a book read to him so he brought one over to me.

I also caught up with Pastor Matt and Peggy (caught up is a loose phrase since we actually live a block or two away from each other). Matt did not know that I was a fan of the superhero genre. I was a bit shocked at this revelation since I have been for as long as I can remember and we discussed the finale to the Christopher Nolan/Christian Bale Dark Knight trilogy.

Following dinner, we remembered the three (or was it two?) classmates we had lost since graduation. Unintentionally, this turned into a rather humorous debate. We had a set of twins throughout our years and it was finally concluded that

one of them in fact did not graduate with us.

Then, we remembered one of the sweetest girls who we were all pleased to call classmate and friend. After receiving a kidney transplant, Heather's system ultimately rejected it and she passed away on July 19, 1998). Our hostess, Peggy, was able to locate Heather's mother who provided a picture and a poem that Heather had written especially for us:

"MEMORIES"

Hold a favorite memory,

Hug it to you tight.

Dream of it fondly,

As you drift to sleep tonight.

Don't let it slip away like sand through
your fingers,

You'll want to keep it close so that it
always lingers.

Memories

are

treasured

more valued

than gold,

They're

guarded

cautiously,

never to be sold.

Make the most of memories, they're

the best possession you've got,

just be sure you make happy memories

for they never can be bought.

LOVE ALWAYS, HEATHER

Finally, came the obligatory photo session (unfortunately?, I did not make sure that my camera had a SD card). However, a group photo was taken of the 17 of us.



17 Member of the Class of
1992



Just after dinner,
preparing for the
remembrance segment. You
can just barely see the top
of my head behind Peggy. :D

Overall, a fun evening of remembrance!

See Ya Real Soon

This week saw the departure of two very important people in the lives of each member of my family. After only one year, Father Art Niewiadomski really made a name for himself in our community. Unfortunately for all of us in the area, he needed to downsize as he has been in less than ideal health and returned closer to his home. Sunday as the congregation was filing out, I shook his hand, thanked him, and wished him well. He, in turn, thanked me and encouraged me to continue to use my “wonderful gifts” and talent. In the past 30 some years, I have really known 5 of the priests who have come into and gone out of the parish. Father Art was undeniably the most outgoing, down-to-Earth, not to mention musical of them all. It was so awesome that he took the time after each mass or funeral I sang for to thank me and to tell me what a “nice job” I always do. Very humbling and made me feel really good inside and only over the course of one year! Bon Voyage, Padre may you find good health in your next endeavor and bring as much joy and faith to your next port of call!

This afternoon, Aunt Cathy left after a two-month visit to return to her home in California. Her being here was a HUGE help as we continue to see Dad struggle with health concerns of his own. She transported him to doctor’s appointments and ballgames (even when he did not want to go; he usually sat in the car at the little league games). Cathy was such a help to my Mom especially by taking a bit of the load off her. We all know that Dad is going to have his days. Last night, most of the family came by for one last visit before sending Cathy off to Detroit Metro. By the end of the evening, Dad was actually

laughing! I'm not sure what brought that about but it was good to see (even if it was strained). Plus, I have been told that he is no longer under 24-hour surveillance. He can be left alone if need be! This will help once Mom starts driving the school bus in the coming weeks and on days that I am at work myself. But I pray that we all continue to be there for both of them and lift them up! As a farewell gift, Aunt Cathy and I went to see *The Dark Knight Rises* which we felt was the purrrrrfect way to end the Christopher Nolan/Christian Bale Batman trilogy.

THANK YOU BOTH! What a difference you both have made in such a short time!