

My Favorite Day Of The Week

is every other Saturday... my second day off each week. Today was jammed packed. It started about 10 AM when I turned on the radio waiting for a familiar voice to be on during the Blizzard Auction that benefitted the WCCT. I also happened to hear about one of the items that was up for bid that sounded absolutely thrilling: a guest directing gig with the City Band during one of their concerts this summer. I not only walked away with that but also a \$25 gift certificate to a local restaurant as well as a night's stay at the Holiday Inn. Unfortunately, I missed the voice I thought was to be on from 10-12 this morning.

This afternoon, I went to my niece's 4th and 5th grade basketball game. The game was thrilling in that it ended in overtime. Unfortunately, Elizabeth's team came up a few points short. What was even more (I'll say) interesting was the opposing team's coach. She not only was off the bench yelling and screaming at the 9-10 year olds much of the time, but at one point, she went on the court and attempted to demonstrate to one of her players how to play the game. For her efforts, the coach was given a technical foul. Setting a good example for the young Catholic Schools teams.

Later, I went to mass and then met Megan for a walk. At least the wind has died down considerably since Thursday. We walked from her house to the Little Theatre where I picked up my items from the auction. We made great time but by the time we reached the theatre we were quite welcome for the break and warmth inside. After walking back to Megan's place, I went to McDonald's for a quick bite on my way home and some hot chocolate!

Here's hoping that the theatre makes a bundle from the proceeds and puts it to good use.

No Five Mile Jaunts Today

Call it my resolution for the year if you want but it seems that I have been walking a bit lately. Last week being my vacation, I walked a lot. Monday on the zoo excursion I'm sure was good for my daily walk (like to get in a mile or two a day). This Monday was my longest one yet. The weather was still nice so I grabbed my ipod and headed north along 49 and turned down a country road, walked to the next road going west and eventually walked a good country block heading up River Street back into town (that was a good 4 miles). I then continued walking through town in a roundabout way to eventually end up at the post office. Then back home. I must have gone at least 5 miles.

Tuesday was another story entirely. This time, I headed south on 49 and got about a mile out of town when I decided that it was just crazy cold. I then turned around and stopped by my oldest brother's house to go in and warm up a bit before going home.

The long walks really are helped with my ipod mix. I have it on shuffle so that when an album that I really like comes on, I will switch it to play straight through. Before you know it, an hour and a half has passed. Particularly good when I downloaded one of my favorites that I had on cassette (there it is again) back in the day. You know one that you play continuously, rewind, fast forward, and then get it caught and eaten and there you go, no more tape. Oh, the recording: the 20th Anniverary Recording of the London version of Jesus Christ Superstar. Paul Nicholas as Jesus, Claire Moore as Mary Magdalene, and Keith Burns as Judas Iscariot. My favorite piece has to be "Could We Start Again, Please?" Upon hearing the song, it quickly became a favorite... maybe that's

why the cassette got eaten. Of course, another highlight is "Herod's Song." The entire recording is good for at least an hour and a half hike.

Hopefully, the temperature outside improves from the 19 degrees of today quickly so I can take another long walk instead of the walk to and from work.

Strange Thing Mystifying

We have recently become even more technologically advanced at work. We have just installed check readers. Instead of needing to completely fill out the check, all the customer has to do is sign their name. The check is then run through the reader for approval. NOW comes the drawback: each time the customer uses the check reader, they MUST show their ID. This seems like a hassle even to me. Having worked at wM for 7 years, the readers there only checked ID periodically.

Tonight, I had a visit from someone who remembered me from at least 18 years ago. I previously related my tale of waiting on Professeur Peters (my high school French teacher).

Tonight, I waited on her daughter. "I remember you. You were in my mom's French or Spanish class." Then she told me that she remembered seeing me as Rooster. WOW! Even with a little less hair.

Later, I had a heartbreak. A customer whom I know quite well approached me and informed me that he had a little accident.

"OH, GREAT! What did you break now :)" Then I came to the accident. His little daughter had a little accident and was totally embarrassed. I felt so bad for her. I told him to run up to the restroom to clean her up while I took care of the puddle on the floor.

AH... such as life during a nine hour day.

Staycation

Even if my plans for travel fell through, I was sooooo not at all disappointed in my time off. It began last Sunday when I was invited to attend services at my friends' church. I thought the service was very well done. A timely sermon (even if the pastor attempted to parallel it with an hour in the life of Jack Bauer).

Monday, I visited the zoo with the same friends... minus admin who was stuck working. But [taylhis](#) and company had a great time, as always. I then went to auditions for the dinner theatre that I will be part of Valentine's Day weekend. I hope by now that the cast has been set as the director was lacking a few key roles. As I previously mentioned, the play involves improvisation... just the word alone scares me. But after learning who my character is... I am so ready for my new challenge.

Tuesday night, I introduced my friends to the cinematic adventures of Harry Potter. I am pleased to say that all enjoyed the movie. I agree, that while the movie does take a certain amount of liberties, as a whole the movies are really entertaining.

Friday night, I watched *Mystery, Alaska* for the first time. I really enjoyed the "adult take on *The Mighty Ducks*."

Saturday and Sunday nights were spent with some of my new friends of the Village Players. Megan and I went to Mary's and played Disney Scene-It, Movie Scene-It, more Trivial Pursuit, and Megan and I stayed and played cutthroat Scrabble

with Mare and Trav.

And the climax... [Mary](#), Travis, Jen, Megan, and I went to see *Sherlock Holmes* on the huge Rave screen with Digital Sound and Picture. I must say that the ads for the movie do not do the movie justice. THANK GOODNESS it was not all Robert Downey, Jr. with his shirt off... and very little of it actually was.

What we did get was a superb mystery, action thriller in the finest tradition of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's characters. The chemistry between Downey and Jude Law (as Dr. Watson) was great. Irene Adler and Inspector Lestrade (two other Doyle creations) were also instrumental elements of the movie. The way definitely paved the way for a return to late 19th Century London. We definitely left the movie pleased and (myself, at least) am ready for the sequel.

So sometimes, the best vacations are spent right here in the backyard.

In Development?

My sister just informed me of some trailers she just saw on youtube. Some fake and others I knew about already. The reboot of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is due this Spring. I had to laugh when she swore that she saw an official preview for *Jaws V*. Even more telling was the fact that she said that Roy Scheider and Richard Dreyfuss were going to reprise their characters from the original. Hilarious, because Sheriff Brody was killed sometime between *Jaws 2* and *Jaws 3-D*. And once again, following the debacle that was *Jaws: The Revenge* (tagline: "This time, it's personal."), I ask: **WHY?!** Especially when it's been a good 25 years since the last one.

Finally, [Spider-Man 4](#) is about to get underway. Something

very strange: after only 3 films in the last decade, we are getting a re-haul of the franchise. A new director is taking over which will probably mean a new cast. But why reintroduce the series when it has only been a few years since the last film was released. While by far the worst of the trilogy, *Spider-Man 3* still had moments of fun and it did have a lot to live up to following the phenomenal second installment.

Wish Lists For The Separated

I suppose there had to come a time for this. Stores have registries for bany gifts, bridal gifts, even kiosks for people to make their annual appeal to Santa. A store in Great Britain has come up with the next step: [DIVORCE REGISTRY](#). It's not bad enough that the divorce rate is so high (40% for newlyweds and 60% for repeaters), but this seems to almost help it along. So, apparently, those who end up with the short end of the stick following the distribution of wealth, can now ease their hardship by visiting Debenhams and sharing their list with whatever friends and family they have retained. They can replace that wrought-iron grill that was used in domestic disputes. So much for monogrammed dishtowels. Hollywood couples... take notice.

I wonder how long it will take for Divorce Registry to make its way the USA. Any suggestions for the next great registry idea? How about Unemployed Worker Registry?

I think this qualifies for a News of the Absurd column.

The First Important Modern American Musical

That seems likes an oxymoron since the United States originated the concept of the musical. It seems like we were in competition with our cousins across the big pond in the 1970s & '80s with the Second British Invasion and the shows of

Andrew Lloyd Webber and others like *Les Miserables*.

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II began their collaboration in 1943 with the musical *Oklahoma!* While it may seem dull and passe by today's demand for bigger, flashier, even bordering on the cinematic, this show set the standard for which all musicals are judged. This summer, [Fountain City Festival](#) will be presenting this benchmark classic. *Oklahoma!* was innovative for several reasons. Most importantly, it established the "book musical." For the first time, the plot, music, lyrics, and choreography became integrated. No longer would there be a story divided by songs and dances that did nothing to advance the plot.

It did not begin with a big chorus number as had been the practice in operettas. Curly enters singing one of the many songs of the American Song Book: "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin.'"

Something else that was totally unheard of... the title song was not even heard until the end of show.

The invention of the "Dream Ballet" was first used to foreshadow coming events and delve inside the psyche of a main character.

While the simple plot of every day life in turn of the century Oklahoma Territory seems corny 70+ years later, *Oklahoma!* will forever hold a spot in the formation of the modern musical. Better shows may have come along since and seem to overshadow it, but without it the concept of the musical would be far different.

One More Reason To Love The Wrath

Years ago, I came across a cassette tape of the *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* soundtrack. I loved it until I realized that it contained maybe a sampling of the entire score at best. A few weeks ago, I learned that a remastered edition with the entire score with all the musical cues had recently become available. I had to get it and I got it in the mail last Friday. EVERYTHING FROM THE MOVIE IS ON IT! Including the take of the first time that a character other than James Tiberius Kirk delivered the immortal "Space... the final frontier" soliloquy. If you know who it was don't ruin it for those who are not in the know.

Following the disaster that was the overblown, overbudget, snooze fest that is *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, Paramount Pictures demanded a totally new picture that would compete with *Star Wars* and hopefully win over a few of its diehard fans. This even included a desire to scrap the music from the previous film (although many of the themes would later be used in subsequent films and television series including the Main Title and Klingon themes). Ingenue James Horner was eventually chosen to compose *TWOK*.

There is not one bit of music in the score that does not stir. The Main Theme combines Alexander Courage's fanfare from the television series with a heroic march for Admiral Kirk plus a breathtaking nautical theme for the *Enterprise*, herself. Captain Spock is given a mystical tune on the panflute that really invokes a sense of wonder into the character. A menacing piece led by the French Horn adds even more villainy to my favorite *Trek* villain. (Where was I in 1982? Ok... so I

was 9. Or better yet, where was I in 1963 when the character of Khan Noonien Singh was created? I was -10 years old.)
“The Battle in the Mutara Nebula” is an 8 minute 7 second masterpiece of space battle excitement.

I have been asked at which point I would introduce novices to the world of *Star Trek*. I always point to my introduction. Although the plot is a sequel to a then twenty year old episode, my favorite theme of the friendship between two heros is what draws me to it time and again: “You are my commanding officer; you are also my friend. I gave been and forever shall be yours.” So says Captain Spock as he relinquishes command of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* once again to Admiral James Tiberius Kirk after a little training cruise runs into a wee bit o’ trouble. I could sit and watch this movie once a day, every day. Twice on my days off.

The Silent Willies

Last night, I attended WCCT's annual Willie Award Ceremony. I had a good time with many of my wonderful friends I have made over the past nearly four years and two I made just over a year ago! Before I attended the event, I bought a small bouquet for my favorite nominee. When Megan and I arrived at the Little Theatre, I was shocked to see that Carol had already taken care of our \$15.00 admission. Thanks, Carol but it wasn't really necessary. I got a table toward the front of the house: one of only two tables that would sit Travis, Mary, Carol, Megan, and I. And later, the Dukeage crashed our small party. But it was all good... love ya, Cathy Dukes!

The evening's entertainment featured our hostesses in prerecorded bits as mimes. Between each of the awards presented, a filmed scene in which they interviewed several Willie nominees was shown. The bit looked oddly familiar to me.

I really enjoyed the recognition of some of the foundation members of the theatre and the challenge to the younger members to take up the torch. I did not like the laundry list of nominees for many of the categories. It made it appear that if you were in a show, you were nominated. I realize that recognition is important, but really about half of the nominees were present.

OK... here is a list of the winners... congratulations to you all!

Best Male Cameo

Denver (Bullfrog...Honk)

Best Female Cameo

Marylyn (Mrs. Harper, *Miracle on 34th Street*)

Best Supporting Actor

Denver (the role and show fail me... sorry, but I will guess
Phillip, *The Lion in Winter*)

Best Supporting Actress

Sharon (Sister Clarissa, *Over the Tavern... YEAH, MOM*)

Best Actor

Gene (Kris Kringle, *Miracle on 34th Street*)

Best Set

Little Shop of Horrors

President's Awards

Crystal and Shelley (The Weekenders)

Bob ("for wearing a teddy" in a previous season)

Best Show

The Lion in Winter

*Congratulations on a great season and may 2010 bring another
year of great shows.*



Pants On The Ground

Just in case you haven't heard the new singing(?) sensation that is 63 year old Larry Platt and his soon to hit the late night talk show circuit hit, you are in for a rollicking treat. I know that the age limit for American Idol is 28, but somehow sometimes the producers allow gimmicks such as Mr. Platt to slip through to perform for the judges. This season's big news is the departure of Paula Abdul and the coming of Ellen DeGeneres after the completion of the audition process and the arrival to Hollywood. Once again, it sounds like the acid wit of Simon Cowell might be exiting after this, the 9th season, of the show. Personally, I don't think it will be as much of a ratings juggernaut without him.