

The Lights of Zetar and Al Gore

A very different and fun game night was had into the wee hours of this morning (check out the post time). Megan and I made our way to visit with some of my many new Village Players friends and play some Star Trek and James Bond Scene It with a little Trivial Pursuit thrown in. I must say that I was impressed very much with Travis' vast knowledge in Trek. I need to brush up on some of the more obscure episodes including The Lights of Zetar. Really... even my knowledge does not stretch that far. But thank goodness for My Play and the IDIC (Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations) category of questions... pop culture surrounding Star Trek that tests knowledge of things not necessarily dealing with the "Wagon Train to the Stars."

I must say that my knowledge was better served in the James Bond version. Just please don't ask me what make and model vehicle he drove in anything but *Goldfinger* (the Aston Martin DB5 with modifications). Who would have guessed the model of car that Jinx arrived in at the ice hotel in *Die Another Day*? But I did clean up in that game.

The Trivial Pursuit game we played was very unique and very fun. You had the six categories to pick from but each category was divided up into six boxes each card had 6 different levels of difficulty. The level was determined by the roll on the die: 1-6. It was very possible to win each piece with a level 1 question... however unlikely. There is also an added feature that allows such things as face offs in order to win a pie piece, and the ability to move an opponents marker to any space on the board making it harder for the player to win a piece. Very fun and pretty much for everyone!

Thanks Mary, Travis, Jen, and Megan. It was a BLAST!

Better Unheard?

Since I was unable to deliver it vocally, I will post it for posterity.

I would like to first thank everyone in the three shows I was in for making me feel so welcome this past year. I want to thank all my directors; Virlyn, Beth, and Travis. I want to thank everyone sitting at my table:

- my parents for putting up with me which is not always easy
- my brother for recommending me to Virlyn for *St. Louis*
- Megan and Carol for their unfailing support
- Lisa for telling me to go “where my talent is appreciated”
- and my wingman, Chris, who is always there behind me in EVERYTHING and who, if you did not already know, has created a whole new website for the Village Players.
THANKS PAL!

I also want to thank everyone I have had the pleasure to work with on and off the stage over the past year. Working with such a fantastic group of people has made the past year Wonderful. I want to especially thank Greg, Dawn, Mary, and Travis who have all been there since last January.

OK... so maybe it is a good thing I was not expected to give a speech. I would surely have been given the music cue to wrap it up long before I was ready.

Some Fun To End A Rather Dismal Week

Tonight was the annual banquet/awards for the Village Players.

Someone once thought that the awards were known as the Hickies. Personally, I would change the name right away ("I got a Hickie...where's yours?"). Presently, they are known as the Villies. I must say that I believe my table of family of 8 thoroughly enjoyed the entire event. It was very relaxed, informal, and just plain fun. Kudos to Mary and her helpers.

Poor thing was frantic because of little things, but it came off nicely.

I really wanted a table large enough to sit my group of originally 7. Late last night, while not being able to sleep after the events of the past week, I really wanted my oldest brother there so I sent him a message on his facebook wall..

He was instrumental in my getting the role of Grandpa Prophater in *Meet in in St. Louis* last January. By a happy occurrence, the table was right by the food so we got to go first.

The evening began with a recap of last year's shows... 3 of which I was pleased to be a part of and the fourth show I thought was great. Then came a preview of the upcoming shows:

The Curious Savage, Miracles, The Hound of the Baskervilles, and an, as of yet, undetermined holiday show... but the ones being looked into sound GREAT. Director's Awards were also presented. I am pleased to say that Chris was recognized for his contribution to the theatre's website (and this would not be the end of the table's night).

Later, came the excitement of the award presentations. First up... Best Cameo by an Actor presented to... **ME!** for his role as Harnell Chesterton in *You Have the Right to Remain Dead.*

Later, the award for Best Supporting Male Actor presented

to... **ME!** for his role as Henry F. Potter in *It's a Wonderful Life*. I swear I only voted for myself once. I don't know if it is fortunate or not but I guess we were not expected to give a speech; however, I did come prepared. I should have taken the initiative and gave it anyway (but, I will save them for my next post).

Honestly, I don't know who was prouder of my night: me or my "wingman." Chris was absolutely ecstatic. His motivation, compliments, and just plain being there are just so great.

The rest of the awards from what I can remember are

- Zuzu Bailey (Best Cameo by an Actress, *It's a Wonderful Life*)
- Katie, the maid (Best Supporting Actress, *Meet Me in St. Louis*)
- Esther Smith (Best Lead Actress, *Meet Me in St. Louis*)
- George Bailey (Best Lead Actor, *It's a Wonderful Life*)
- Travis (Best Director, *It's a Wonderful Life*)
- Mary (Best Producer, *It's a Wonderful Life*)
- Best Set (*Meet Me in St. Louis*)
- Best Costumes (*Meet Me in St. Louis*)
- Best Tech (*It's a Wonderful Life*)
- Best Show (*It's a Wonderful Life*)

Ok... next post: my speeches. A fabulous time organized by Mary and her help.



A Swary Family Reunion With A Voice From Beyond

Today was Aunt Carol's memorial service. It was really difficult but a very nice way for friends and family to gather to celebrate fond memories and the long, hard fought battle she waged for a remarkable 7 years (even more remarkable knowing that her original diagnosis was 5).

We arrived at the funeral home around 2. After consoling Alicia and Stacy, Mom decided to sit in the most comfortable seat she could find which happened to be in the back corner. By the time the service began at 4.30, the section we sat in turned into a Swary gathering with some very old friends in the mix. I was getting tired of sitting in the rather uncomfortable chairs and Mom and I both decided that it would be nice if I went up front and sat with Diane (one of Carol's close friends and my boss) since she was all alone as her husband had to work. Good chance to pick on her.

Behind us was a woman who has seemingly completely channeled Emily or knows her just as well as I do... or more likely, both. A few weeks ago, Aunt LuAnn commented on my facebook post wishing everyone a Happy New Year by posting "What Would Mrs. Curtis Say?" (kind of like the old bracelets people would wear asking "What Would Jesus Do?"). Today, I was reminded of an escapade I undertook that ended after I exited the Ohio turnpike and came back home. How those two told me to take three months and see where I ended up. Work at McDonald's or some other job and see what happened. I told her that I am not dead yet. Let's see if this brings out some lurkers and you know who you are ☹ ! It was just scary... I swore I heard Emily talking to me in Lu's body.

Back to the service. Just like Emily, Carol had the entire thing planned. Except for a letter written by Alicia that was

so heartwarming that I lost it. Carol fought tooth and nail until her work on Earth was complete. I think the time really came to her final breath when she said she was ready to "go home."

After the service, I had to quickly pull it together as I had to song lead at mass. I was really amazed how well I did. More help from above? It was the end of the Christmas season as the Baptism of the Lord was celebrated. Thus, I sang "Joy to the World," "What Child is This?" and "Go Tell It on the Mountain." Tomorrow following 10.30AM mass, the decorations will be taken down for another year.

So... something to consider while remembering someone who was loved so greatly. Alicia and Stacy both commented how much they loved my previous post. Maybe I can get a few more comments ☐

A New Adventure Awaits

I got an email tonight that has lifted my spirits quite a bit!. There is a new theatre group just starting to get on its feet in the area. I was invited to be a member of the cast for its second show coming Valentine's weekend. What little I know about it (don't even have a title) is that it is another Murder Mystery with a twist... full of improv. Kind of a scary word that, but when was the last time I turned down a challenge? This will also stretch my acting chops even further by seeing how well I act under pressure. Could be fun and yet another venue to conquer. Three rehearsals only... whoo whee! Sounds fun.

And Remember The Truth That Once Was Spoken

To Love Another Person

Is to See the Face of God

This morning, the family lost another member to the most hateful word in the English lexicon: cancer. Aunt Carol has been valiantly battling the disease for a number of years until the last few months when she was house-ridden and given home health care. This morning between 11 and 12, the phone rang once and then quit. However it was enough time for the ID to display the caller. It was enough for me to realize that it could not be good news and they forgot that Mom was on her Kindergarten bus route. Shortly after noon, Alicia and Stacy came to the house and the tears began. She passed around 9.30 with both of the girls by her side.

It finally hit home for me at work tonight. I was in the back by myself and I just realized how soon following Emily's passing that Aunt Carol succumbed. One week exactly from 16 months. Two extraordinary women who passed away much too soon. Carol was 53. Emily was exactly one month from her 60th birthday.

Thoughts and prayers to Carol's family.

Down Time

Ok, Ok... It has been three weeks since the curtain fell on the last show. It will be sometime before the next one (at least a few months as I committed to being my godson's sponsor for Confirmation in March). Can we say cabin fever? Ah, well... something will come up. I do have a Star Trek Scene It game night coming Thursday night that I am REALLY looking forward to. I have about 5 versions of the game and really like the game although finding victims to play a few of them with can be difficult at times (Anyone for a little Bond... James Bond?)

I know that there is an 80s Pop Culture version to go along with the Trivial Pursuit version. I would also like the Harry Potter edition but I think I will wait until after the 2 part finale is finished just in case there will be more than one Harry Potter version. BTW, taylhis... how's that first book? I just started rereading *The Sorcerer's Stone* last night. Not sure when the first part of the cinematic *Deathly Hollows* is being released, but we'll see if I can make it through the seven books before that.

Back to another topic. One of Star Trek's finest was recently knighted. Sir Patrick Stewart now joins such icons as Sir Paul McCartney, TWO James Bond's (Sir Sean Connery and Sir Roger Moore), and *Lord of the Rings* director Sir Peter Jackson.

Of course Mr. Stewart is not limited in his credentials by being the captain of the USS *Enterprise* (NCC 1701-D and 'E).

He began his career in the Royal Shakespeare Company and was in a production of the most haunted play in history, *Macbeth*.

I remember watching a video of him playing Claudius in *Hamlet* during a class. He also starred as Professor Charles Xavier in the three blockbuster *X-Men* films. Stewart has now returned to the London stage in a play which I have yet to learn the title of. Anyone?

Hopefully, my down time will not lead to heaviness but with great friends and a crazy family to keep me busy... a few days to relax may be all I get ☐

The Phantom Bowls For Pizza or... The Bucks Meet the Ducks

New Years Day... the traditional wrap up to the holiday season. Parades, football, and one more day when you can indulge in snacking and not feel guilty. After going to bed following New Years Eve festivities around 4AM, I woke to find a great documentary on the making of the stage production of *the Phantom of the Opera*. All of the build up, near closing turmoils leading up to its West End premiere, and backstage drama were retold.

The first of many traditions came next: the viewing of the Tournament of Roses Parade. Always a toss up as to which network to view it on as there are so many that broadcast it. I always enjoy Al Roker's colorful play-by-play full of moans and groans from his one liners but he is never boring. A few of the highlights for me were the Ohio State School for the Blind Marching Band. When I heard that they would be marching their way through the five-mile route, I was amazed. Each member had a guide beside them tapping their shoulder for right turns and left turns. Really amazing... they never did say how they learned the music, but if Beethoven can compose some of his best music deaf then why can't a blind group play and march?

Another highlight was the float for Dick Van Patten's Natural Balance Dog Food. It featured a number of various breeds of

pooches snowboarding down an incline and then being taken back up the hill in a motorized contraption. Really adorable! Sorry, could not find a video to show.

A non-highlight came with a half hour to go in NBC's coverage. Our affiliate decided to go to a Time-Life music of the 60s infomercial. So we decided to turn over to ABC in time for the Capital One Bowl in which Penn State defeated LSU 19-17 in the Mud Bowl.. **GO BIG 10!**

Then... **the granddaddy of them all...** the 96th Rose Bowl Game. Time to see if Coach Tressel could lead the Bucks out of their bowl game funk and "Young Terrelle Pryor could finally silence the critics and come out fighting! First Buckeye drive proved just that: five plays=7 points! I have to laugh every time Brett ("the Mustardburger") Musberger exclaims "nothing doin". Sounds like a good drinking game to me.

Ok... time for my gripe pitch. Amidst the homemade pizza we were enjoying, the Duck's Marching Band was shown playing the National Anthem at pregame. They were then given three or four minutes of halftime air time and the song they played was easily recognizable as "Highlights from Back to the Future." If you throw in the yellow and green pukey windsuit outfits and ball caps they remarkably call uniforms, we were left with a rather unimpressive performance. I wanted to shout out a rather colorful expletive that rhymes with Duck and it was not "Shucks."

And where pray tell was the Best Damn Band in the Land (sorry, but that is their official designation... many people would not recognize the acronym TBDITL)? If you count the time they were shown being covered up by those nay saying analysts behind the desk at halftime and the 30-45 seconds they were shown unimpeded, then I guess you could say they were given equal screen time? **NOT!**

But the outcome of the game kicked off the New Year in

splendid fashion. Sophomore Quarterback Pryor lived up to the remarkable hype put on him by the media and fans (He's only a sophomore, people!) by having a season day. The Bucks erased all memory of the horrendous defeat by that other Pac-10 team early in the season to rest by beating the Ducks 26-17. So much for the critics... most of which put the Buckeyes in the L column. Including a former Michigan player (Really... where do they get these guys?)

So... 2010 has kicked off to a fine start in the sports arena... let's hope that it continues all year long... **GO BUCKS!**

 **And Now A Real, Non-Nike Band Uniform:**

Bring Out The Old... Bring In The New

AH... 2009, where have you gone? Some really high points and some really low ones. Lets deal with the low and end on a high (not **THAT** kind).

- We lost Michael Jackson who was one of my favorite performers growing up and even throughout his wierdness was a genius.
- Aunt Carol is still hanging on however little. But good thing... the doctors did not give her until Christmas and she is almost to the new year of that we can be thankful. So, I guess that can be a good thing disguised as a bad.

And now the GREAT which looking back can easily outweigh the bad:

- Back in January, after being passed over for a role in a WCCT show, my brother recommended me to the director of *Meet Me in St. Louis* and that led to three unforgettable shows at a new favorite venue. I also met some great friends through the VPs some of whom have also transported to the WCCT. When one door closes, another is soon to open up. Good words to live by.
- Last Spring, I got to take another bite out of the Big Apple while once again assuming my role of Manny for the best friends ever. Buses notwithstanding.
- The return of *Star Trek* to the big screen... nuff said.
- A Halloween road trip to the Big City with loads of

friends.

- ***THE YANKEES WIN TITLE NUMBER 27.***
- The evilness of one Mr. Henry F. Potter.

Of course, we cannot forget the fact that I do have a job in this turbulent economic time and have reasonably good health and a loony bin of a family (wouldn't have it any other way) and the best group of characters anyone could possibly hope for that I love to call my friends and second family. Thank you all. **Happy New Year and may 2010 bring you good health, good times, and good fortune.**

12 Days Of Christmas

Since we are in the third day of the twelve, I would like to share with you my favorite song and video of the season. I think it was around last year, but it really got exposure this year.

Since the good doctor made mention of the two songs here is Josh Groban singing Petit Papa Noel from his glorious Holiday CD, Noel.

and... Vive la Vent