

In His Hands

The next few weeks will not be easy ones. This morning, we learned that my "Aunt" Lu's (my Uncle Bob's current wife) mother passed away last night. A very long-lived lady... sweet as anything who lived a very prosperous life (91 years young with 12 kids, I think). She was a huge fan of the WCCT and she would come to shows quite often either with Lu or Father Fred. I remember that following *Grease*, she and Lu came to the basement to say Hi. She was also the Grandmother of one of my best friends.

Yesterday, we learned that Aunt Carol (Bob's first wife) is nearing the end of her long fought battle with cancer. Definitely will be very hard this one. Care givers were at her house with my cousins and the rest of her family to prepare them (as much as can be expected anyway.. can anyone really be prepared?) I'm not really sure how long she has been fighting, but it has been a great while in and out of remission until finally there is no more that can be done except to pray for Carol. So many great memories growing up, spending the night with my cousin until it was deemed inappropriate for Alicia and I to stay over at each others house (I think I was 8). At get togethers, we would always devise a plot whereby we would con the parents into allowing this. Very few people refer to me as "James" but I got so used to it that I expected Carol to address me as such. I remember a Christmas gift she gave me a few years back in a large envelope with "For Your Eyes Only" printed on the front. You will have to use your imagination to determine what was inside and it had nothing to do with the 12th 007 movie ☐

So... could be a rough few days ahead. Not the most opportune time of the year but I don't think there really is an appropriate time. But at least their suffering soon will be ended and will soon be in a much better place.

A New Site For \$6,000,000... Or Probably \$48,000,000 By Now

For a few years now, there has been a site dedicated to the **ORIGINAL** [Bionic Woman](#) (not the so called reboot that was a victim of the writer's strike two years ago... that was definitely HORRIBLE). I have been a frequent fan of the site. Last week, a new site dedicated to the father (or should I be bold and say... husband) series, [The Six Million Dollar Man](#), was started. You know... (or maybe you don't know depending on your age and maybe afternoon rerun viewing of the 80s) the one about "Col. Steve Austin, astronaut... a man barely alive." They rebuilt him following a tragic piloting accident making him "better than he was before. Better... Stronger... Faster." The reluctant hero was endowed with a bionic arm, two bionic legs, and a bionic eye (although Lee Major's now pitches an add for a "Bionic ear.") I fondly remember playing in the yard with my brother and friends. Orders were given by "Oscar Goldman" for the mission of the week. Bionic action complete with the awesomely cheesy sound effects battling evil terrorists, fembots, and other evil doers. Although guess who ended up playing Jaime Sommers several times... only because my first name happened to be the same but spelled differently... somehow I think there was a little more to it than that, but I guess if I wanted to play with big brother...

But the site has brought back memories of rushing home from school to catch the reruns (I was only a year old in '74 after all).

J'ai Besoin Dix Bonbons

I have posted numerous times about my favorite teacher, role model, etc (it is very nearly the first anniversary of her passing). Tonight at work, I had a surprise when my high school French came into my line. "Bonjour, Professeur Peters! Comment allez-vous?" She looked really well. A few years following my graduation, she had some health problems. She asked me if I was still a Star Trek/Star Wars fan. AH, she knows me so well. I made flash cards of French vocabulary in the shape of the NCC-1701 ("No bloody -A, -B, -C, Or -D"). We would get bonbons or other rewards for creativity. I told her that I have been doing plays around the area over the last several years. She has seen pictures in the paper but has yet to come to any.

One of my favorite parts of French class was the video contest. I believe it was a countywide (or maybe even longer reaching than that) contest in which classes could submit short skits to be judged for prizes. How I wish YouTube was around back then. I did not think to ask Madame if she kept any of the videos. Anyway, the senior year video Nicolas, Thomas, Jean, and I made was by far our most hilarious. It was a cooking spoof in which we made *lapin a la moutarde* (or... rabbit in mustard sauce). Think the Swedish Chef (or Julia Child it was French after all) meets the Three Stooges and you pretty well get the idea. Whoever decided to give me the role I undertook, I'll never know but... it was memorable to say the least.

What a fun trip down memory lane!

The New Bonnie & Clyde

This story is so sweet, I just had to share it.

Blind border collie gets his own guide dog

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By [Aidan McGurran](#) [24/07/2009](#)



Collies usually round up sheep not each other... but as the eyes of her blind canine companion, little Bonnie steers Clyde away from trouble.

The five-year-old long-haired border collie, who has lost his sight because of a degenerative disease, relies entirely on Bonnie as his guide dog. He follows her everywhere.

And like the American gangster lovers they have been named after, the friendly dogs are on the lookout for a safe, new hideaway.

They were recently dumped in the street during a storm and are currently being cared for at Meadow Green Dog Rescue Centre in Hales Green, near Loddon in Norfolk.

The centre's Cherie Cootes said: "If Clyde's unsure where he is, he will suddenly go behind Bonnie and put his face on the back of her so she can guide him. He totally relies on her.

“And when she walks she tends to stop and make sure he’s there – she does look out for him. When she’s about you wouldn’t notice he is blind, but when she’s not about he refuses to move. There’s no option of homing them separately. They’ve got to go as a pair.”

A driver found the dogs running through Blundeston, near Lowestoft, Suffolk, during a storm three weeks ago. Neither Clyde nor Bonnie – a short-haired border collie aged two or three – had identifying collars or chips.

Cherie, 40, added: “They’ve got very nice manners and they walk well on the lead.

“They really are a very sweet pair of dogs.”

If you can give Bonnie and Clyde a home, call the centre on 01508 548 216.

MY First Time

A comment on [Taylhis'](#) blog gave me inspiration for post fodder. My first time riding a coaster took place when I was 10. My family spent a day at Cedar Point with my uncle, aunt, and two cousins. I liked riding rides and had been on several smaller coasters. I remember the Beastie at Kings Island (still there, Lis?). I took my cousin Stacy to ride the Jr. Gemini. However this year, I was too TALL to ride the smaller version. Seeing this, my Uncle Bob challenged me to ride the REAL thing with him. Why not? The line for the double train, much like The Racer, was not long so I did not have to wait a great deal. I still remember having my eyes shut tight after we made the turn and approached the first hill. From what I

understand, I also held onto my co-riders hand and squeezed it a little bit too hard. But what a rush! Red and blue racers going up and down hills and then the split at the end when the cars tilt to the side and finally return home. There may be bigger, faster, longer coasters (you can see the [Magnum XL 200](#) which is 20 years old this summer... NO WAY! dwarfing the classic) but the good old [Gemini](#) is still one of my favorites. That day in 1983, I discovered that I was growing up because I was no longer small enough to go on any of the kiddie rides. No more Kid Arthur's Court for me. But I can ALWAYS ride the Cedar Downs racing horses.

“Only One Thing I Want Ya Fellas Ta Do...

Talk me out of it!”

This is my favorite line from one of the most classic movies of all time. If there is one person within posting range who has never seen the 1939 version of *The Wizard of Oz*, I would seriously have a hard time believing it. The scene involves Scarecrow and Tin Man attempting to bolster the Lion's courage as they are about to enter the Witch's castle to rescue Dorothy. Just as he is on the verge of charging into the Lion's den, the feline returns to his old ways.

Back in the days when cable television was in its infancy, I remember well a Friday night around Halloween when the movie was played annually. Friday night because *The Dukes of Hazard* and *Dallas* (ho hum) were preempted. Tonight, it was shown on Turner Classic Movies so this was my yearly trip down the Yellow Brick Road. It's funny, I can almost remember where

all the commercial breaks were inserted. Yet another classic I wish I could see again for the first time. A five year old screamed with delight and a four year old hid her eyes whenever “the green witch” was on screen.

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of assisting in the production of the musical for EHS. Although very faithful to the cinematic version, there were a few additions. There was a covered bridge that the quartet and Toto attempted to cross; however, the Wicked Witch of the West enchanted the bridge making it revolve so Dorothy and her companions got nowhere fast.

Another addition was the Jitterbug sequence which was actually cut from the movie. On screen, the Witch makes mention of the insects as she sends her army of winged monkeys to the Haunted Forest. The dance sequence was filmed and put on the cutting room floor.

I know there is at least one person who would possibly (if not probably) agree that Oz would make a good addition for a community theatre season. If we are looking for famous, well-known name shows, is there any more famous, well-known, sure to get butts in the seats and people to audition (ahhem). Just a thought.

Look For Him Tonight

My middle brother and his son are going to be at the [Great American Ball Park](#) for the Chicago Cubs-Cincinnati Reds game tonight. When I found out that Chad and Alex were going to the big city by themselves, I said “I hope they don’t get lost.” Chad got lost driving home from a town 8 miles away. Myself, I just can’t find the destination I am going to but

have never been lost. However, I believe they went on a charter bus. I remember back in the day when my elder sibling would go to his friend's house and open up his COMPLETE sets of baseball cards and trade them away... not some of his brighter moments. Our parents or his godfather would spend good money on these sets. He would even "autograph" cards himself which pretty well made them worthless collectible wise. During several summers, Chad, his friend, along with "E-town's Number One Fan" rode the bus to Wrigley to watch their beloved team play. Last year, Chad and our Aunt LuAnn rode the rails to Chi-town and watched the Cubbies lose. Lu wanted to keep her tally of MLB ballpark visits up but Uncle Bob had no desire to go with them. Some year (especially if the Bronx Bombers are in town), I must make an effort to go.

My Two Moms

Happy Mother's Day to all those who serve as mothers whether it be in the traditional sense or less than traditional. I am lucky to have had two extraordinary women to look up to and admire who have always been there for me no matter where I was or what trouble I have been in. One, my fabulous mother whom I would not trade for all the tea in China. The other one that I was blessed to "adopt" as the second mother I so wish everyone had (God rest her soul)... someone I could talk to and share private things with.

My mom is one of the most giving women on the planet. She has three jobs: beautician, bus driver (morning, pre-school, and afternoon routes), and bookkeeper for volleyball, basketball, and softball. The sports statistician position I think she does more for the escape from the everyday but she still gets paid for it. She also is the best person to have raised her

four children, husband (he is still being raised), and niece who had been tossed around from 3 foster families before ending up with us when she was in the second grade. So many memories, I cannot pick a single one.

On the other hand, one instance sticks out clearly in my mind concerning Emily. Following one of the performances of *Joseph* nine years ago, the two ladies and I went to McDonald's. We ordered and went to our table. However, the orders were far from correct. Emily went right back up to the counter and in her special way explained the situation. By the time she was done, we had not only gotten our orders refilled correctly but a refund on top of it. I sometimes wonder if the poor guy behind the counter had been employed there long. No one wanted to be on Ma2's bad side.

So... thank you to all mothers everywhere. I'm sure that there is not a harder yet more rewarding job anywhere.

Wasn't It Yesterday...

when we were small?

I dunno... feeling nostalgic but I took out my senior year yearbook (Log of E) the other day just to see how much I remembered. Best facial expressions, moi? There was also a baby picture section. I honestly do remember the picture... not the actual posing, but... Actually having a head full of hair!

Then the not so proud moments of my class. Those who did not graduate and actually had "Did Not Graduate" printed right underneath their photo. Not the most flattering thing to have under your picture I would say. I do not remember seeing the senior photo of the aforementioned inmate who made a few

appearances on America's Most Wanted. I don't know whose bright idea it was to post the DNG, but why defame our class with that?

Our senior trip to Florida was memorable for many reasons. Ours was the first class to have the opportunity since the class of 1988. Ironically, my second brother was in this class and my mother was the class advisor. And the stories I heard about that! Even more ironic, the class of 1992 was the "good" class. Well... the class of 1993 was the last class to go on a trip because of some of the goings on of our trip. I almost felt left out because I was one of the few who was not called to the principal's room days after our return.

The trip was fantastic! On my first trip to the Walt Disney World Resort, I was pulled from 2 different audiences to participate in some of the shows at the (previously known as) Disney/MGM Studio. For some reason, the Superstar Television attraction was discontinued. However, I was put into a scene as a butler in a Three Stooges short in which I got thrown into a pie tossing battle. I hit Curly right in the face and actually got one in return.

I had actually forgotten that a female classmate was called down along with me for the Indiana Jones Stunt Spectacular in which some of the action sequences from the first three films were recreated by a stuntman. I was asked to demonstrate an evil belly laugh as part of my "audition." The show was full of pyrotechnics and other eye-catching trickery. I'm actually amazed that I remember most of this as if it were yesterday.

Another forgotten flashback courtesy of the yearbook was a harmless, yet not so flattering photo snapped of me in the hotel room. Which I must admit was more flattering than someone losing their swimsuit while going down a slide at Wet 'n' Wild. One of the stories that I heard about the class of '88's trip.

Bird Meet Hamster

In earlier days, my family had quite a menagerie of pets (just not more than two at a time. When we moved to town when I was the tender age of 6 months, we got MY dog, Buffy from the wonderful friends who sold us the house. I loved my poodle a lot. The summer after I completed the 4th grade, Buffy had to be put to sleep. She was really ill. Arthritis had set in so badly, that she could not walk upon or down the porch steps. The poor girl would not eat and shivered all the time. So one day, my parents took her to the vet, unbeknownst to me.

In addition to Buffy, we had a total of three cats (not all at once, but one in particular that I know I have posted about). The poodle would go crazy when approached by the felines. I don't think it was the stereotypical dog vs. cat scenario but more like playful chasing around the house.

The Christmas after Buffy was put down, we received a blue parakeet from our "grandparents". We named her Corky after "Grandma" Margaret. One summer while on break from college, my brother brought home Skippy the hamster whom he "saved." The parakeet must have become jealous because he would imitate the hamster by walking around on the floor and following it. I remember going so far as to put the bird inside the hamster's ball and seeing her attempt to roll it.