

Here's To An Even Greater 2013!

I have to say that 2012 went out a lot better than it went in.

I will not dwell on the hardships we faced last year but I still contend that it made us all (in a sense) stronger and brought us closer together.

There were some happier times. I did get back on stage after 2 years and now I am back to the "no stopping me now" attitude since the next audition is this weekend! I am going to be honest here and say that I AM trying out for Captain Von Trapp. Max might be the comedic foil in [*The Sound of Music*](#) but not much of a challenge, personally. I feel that Georg would be much more of a stretch dramatically and it would be my first time playing the male lead (such as it is) in a musical. He does change throughout the course of the show so that would be very interesting to play. However, I will pray that whichever (if any) role I am asked to present that the next 2 months (or less) is successful for our little community theater group.

New Year's Eve was a HUGE day! The bank closed at 3PM and unlike Christmas Eve I was home in less than a half-hour after the doors were locked. Some of the family headed to mass and met others for dinner later. Then, my sister, nieces, and I headed over to "brother number 3's" home to ring in the new surrounded by great friends and **OODLES!!!!!!** (hopefully, this becomes a tradition as **EVERYONE** just **L0000000VES** that game.

MWHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!)



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 motivate 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 Woolly 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."



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)

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!

A Little Princess

I cannot believe how fast the little (or not so little) nephews and nieces are! From Shelby who turned 17 in March to the tiniest Kydall who is 6 months, it doesn't seem possible that one of them is driving. Shelby still has not gotten her permit but I know some adults who have never had a license. Last Sunday, 8 year old Alyssa made her First Communion. It

has been a long haul this school year with all the prayers she has had to learn and devise the meaning of. Then came her First Penance (I still think I made my First Communion before going to confession for the first time). And finally, the "Big" day.

As in year's past, there was a special mass for the 14 communicants. For his homily, Father Art walked down the aisle and asked the children questions about their special day and the journey they had been on. He made an analogy to every person and an old toy (that he insists is worth millions... check your toy boxes) called [Mr. Machine](#). We are so much more than a mechanical robot programmed by a human creator... sounds like a lesson learned during more than a few hours of a certain sci-fi television series and at least the first movie (ZZZZ to that movie).

Following the distribution of communion, the second graders stood front and center and sang while they signed a song. Not the same song I learned years ago. Later in the day, the family tried to figure out how long the current second grade teacher has been at the Catholic school. Just a few years as she has led the classes of my 3 siblings and I (and this year marks my 20th High School Reunion).

After the ceremony, the family gathered at the banquet room of the local restaurant to eat and to celebrate Alyssa's special day,

On a sad note, Father Art will be leaving our church in July after only a year. I had heard that he is not in the best of health and the burden of leading a number of services each weekend between two churches along with his other duties has taken its toll. May God be with Father Art wherever He leads him and his magical sax.



Easter Gala



What a way to celebrate the blessings of the suffering and resurrection of our Savior! The three day cycle is truly the most powerful, and beautiful time of the liturgical year.

This year seemed even more somber as my hometown community lost a true friend during the week. I was truly shocked when I read the post from Wayne's nephew on Wednesday. Once again, the funeral parlor that is a block away from our house was full to bursting on Good Friday.

Friday evening, I made the trip to Wally World with some family and finished birthday shopping for the notoriously difficult to shop for 16 year old (tomorrow) Godson. With some help from my happened upon ol' chum, I was able to come up with something hopefully suitable. Although, I think Elizabeth might get more use out of the 3D attachment for the iPhone ☐ I'm sure that the techno-saavy Joshua will find some pleasure from it.

Saturday night at our sister parish, Mare joined in the Catholic faith. Although I would have been honored to accept her invitation to join in the celebration, I had to work a 12-9 shift. CONGRATULATIONS Mary!

Which brings me to the merriment of Easter Day. Although each week's mass is special, there is something awesome and amazing about emerging from the 40 day journey of Lent. Hopefully on Easter Day, we can all look at ourselves and project a different "reflection" than when we started. One in which we are closer to our creator and yet knowing that at times we will inevitably fall short. After all, we are only human.

Father Art with his unique brand of humor drove the reflection point home by use of a full-length mirror. He constantly pronounced his dislike of said mirrors in every facet of life from fun houses to just looking into ordinary ones. Is it just me or is he part vampire? Or perhaps more likely, it was because the mirror he had was taller than himself.

This afternoon, the family gathered at the local restaurant for Easter buffet. One of the major Earth-shattering topics was the brilliance of the latest installment in the *American Pie* movie series. I guess the cast has matured and gathered to celebrate a class reunion. Aptly entitle *American Reunion*, it sounds like a wait 3 months to rent flick to me.

Finally this evening, the family plus some of our extended members gathered at Jeff's for Shelby and Joshua's birthday celebration. And more creamed chicken sandwiches ☐ Honestly, I don't think I will ever let anyone forget the merriment of the wedding reception a few years ago. Before the evening was complete, the topic and television turned to golf. Like auto racing, this sport brings tears to my eyes. I take more pleasure in picking out the most original sounding name and rooting him on to victory. And did I pick a dandy! Unfortunately, poor Louis Oosthuizen lost to Bubba Watson in a playoff round. Seriously, Oosthuizen sounds like a close personal friend of the Swedish Chef. However, I was assured that the golfer is African.

Speaking of the Swedish Chef, I presented the new Muppet movie to my 17 year old niece. Shelby visited last week during Spring Break and asked if we could watch my copy and I decided that I would buy her own DVD copy of the fabulous Oscar-winning movie. "Man or Muppet" was a nice redemption for the horrendous loss of the nominated "Rainbow Connection" back in 1980 (I think that is the correct year).

I hope that you all were able to enjoy the love, beauty, and

majesty of the Easter mystery!