

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."



Black Friday Madness

I'm not even sure why most stores opened Thanksgiving night at either 9 or midnight. Did they think perhaps it would be less chaotic than opening at 4am? My brother and his friend hit Wal-Mart at 10. My cousin and her annual group headed out at 11. Me?! I traveled to our area Wally World about 8am to a half-full store. While there, I was even able to chat with a few of my former co-workers. It seems that the store was the place to be earlier. No less than 18 shoppers had to be escorted out. A co-manager stated that next year it would be necessary to rethink some of the procedures and have lines around more of the doorbusters. Seriously, it is **Not at all**

worth rushing, clamoring, and FIGHTING to get that 32" LCD tv for \$200 (or whatever the deal was). I was able to find gifts for all but two people on my list (Cyber Monday sounds nice to me) and spend less than \$60 total after getting a decent night's sleep. I even picked up the *All-Star Superman* DVD for \$1.98. Perhaps it would be fun to go in and watch the lunatics have a free-for-all making every effort to get that last Tickle Me Elmo doll (ok... that was **SO** 20 years ago) but not to go in and see 18 people be escorted out. That is lunacy at it's worst and this is SMALL TOWN U.S.A. "Peace on Earth, good will toward men" and Black Friday shoppers.

A Feudin' Festival

The end of a weekend full of fun and excitement. Saturday was the final day of our annual Festival of Flags. Around 10AM, our street was being bombarded by fire engines and police cruisers from surrounding communities as well as sporty cars that would travel the parade route. Being right on the main route, our house is a wonderful, shaded point from which to view the extravaganza. I must say that this year's parade was very enjoyable. It featured 3 area high school marching bands (two more than the last several years, the traditional pageant contestants, Citizen of the Year (who according to the local paper was born in 1984 yet graduated with my mother in 1966), various floats, and handfuls of candy. I saw more adults run up the hill in front of the house than kids. The three nieces all went down the street to the unshaded library lot. I did not understand why because we were getting just as much candy thrown our way. Ah, well...

After the parade, the sibs and I had a few hours to kill before the second round of Family Feud. For whatever reason,

our preliminary round was the only game played on Friday night. I would have thought that it would be more beneficial to play the entire first round (8 teams in all) and continue with the semi and final rounds the next day. It definitely would have been a little cooler. We were told not to expect to play our second round game until 3-3:30. However, the host breezed through the games and it was probably 2:15 when we took the stage. Jeff printed out a huge banner and name tags complete with a symbol indicative of our own unique personas.

His was an OSU emblem; Chad had a Cubs logo; I had a Star Trek insignia; Christi had a NASCAR auto; and Charnel had a baby bottle.

We played a team made up of employees of a local factory. The three questions:

- Name a beautiful breed of dog.
- What does a fancy restaurant have that normal restaurants do not?
- And the third escapes me.

We had control of the first question; however, there were 8 answers and after going through the line once, the responses got more difficult. Daschund and shi tsu are beautiful? Unfortunately our rivals won on a steal.

We got control of the second question as well. I blew my turn when I said "menu" was something fancy restaurants have that regular one's do not. My thinking was that the menus are at the tables and not on a board ala McDonald's and the like. A bit of controversy... Chad said "waiter" which got an X. Maitre D' was a correct response. For whatever reason, my second brother thought that the two were synonymous... Sorry, Charlie.

Our fate was sealed when I faced off at the podium for round three and for the life of me I cannot remember what the question was. I did get the number three response but my

opponent came up with the number one and they never looked back. A fun experience bonding with the siblings and there is always next year. However, I wonder if a different host could be found. Not that his honor did not do a fine job... We did stay and root on as the Perry family was crowned champions after they defeated Team Matsu (the team that dealt us our defeat).

A Shower In Indigo

Today was an extremely busy fun day I had to run to Btown for my monthly poke and got a call this afternoon informing me that all is well and they'll see me in another 4 weeks. From there, I set off to find decorations for a small baby shower, Lutz and I were preparing. Around 4:30, I went to the shelter house to decorate. I hope the guest of honor was a LITTLE surprised?! Fun while I was there briefly, as always. I had to bolt shortly after the festivities began as my siblings and I were set to compete in our hometown festival's version of Family Feud.

The set left something to be desired. Our oldest commented that he could have done a much better job... I would have to agree. Have you ever played Family "Fued?" I don't think I would want to. Our revered mayor played host. He did a fine job but could have slowed the pace a bit. We were done in 20 minutes. I was going to ask if he was going to kiss the girls on the teams, but decided against it.

The Shaf siblings took on the team of Main Stop. We were relentless. We won each of the three rounds. "Name a place where you meet obnoxious people." "Name an expression with the word HEAVEN." "Name an activity teenagers engage in when they

should be studying.”

After some debate, Jeff and I played Fast Money. Since I went last, I was driven around the grounds in a cart so I couldn't hear the questions and answers. It would not have hurt too much to hear the answers since the smart one only got 81 of the 200 points needed.

- Name a vehicle named after an animal. J: Mustang; Me: Cougar (number 1)
- Name any color of the rainbow. J: INDIGO?!; Me: Red (number 1)
- Name a College that generally has a good basketball team. J: Ohio State; Me: Notre Dame (first thing that came into my head)
- Name a Cable Network beginning with the letter “C.” J: CNN; Me: C-SPAN
- Which President has the most streets named after him. J: Washington; Me: Lincoln (tied for top answer).

Indigo may be a color of the rainbow but apparently not a very popular color of the rainbow. In fact, I think I read that it had been downgraded. In the end, we totaled 211 points and move on to round two! The rest of round one begins tomorrow at 1PM. Six other teams play (3 games total) before we take the stage sometime between 3 and 4 o'clock! Would be nice to see some Jamiahsh fans come and cheer us on!

Should Have Gone And Fed The Ducks

Well... another year plus 3 days older. This year has definitely been one of the most personally dramatic I have

ever faced but with God's protective presence through my wonderful family and once again the very best friends He has put out there for me, I feel that I am nearing as close to a full recovery as possible.

I always enjoy doing special things on my birthday. This year, I was lucky enough to have a 4 day holiday (I will be paying for it since I now work until Tuesday without a break... I can handle that). Saturday, my parents and my oldest brother celebrated with me at The Factory restaurant. This is one of at least three family named (Don Hall) restaurants in the Fort: Triangle Park and the Gas House are two of the others... if memory serves there are a few others. It had been years since we had eaten at the Factory and that being the case I decided on that. Being only 5PM on a Saturday, there was not much of a crowd so we were seated right away. The selection was NOT at all what it used to be. In fact, I almost wished that I had decided to go to Triangle Park which has a small pond in which ducks and a few swans are known to gather looking for bread crumbs. However, my surf and turf was wonderful.

Sunday (the actual big day), I was invited to spend the day with my second family. This year, there was no other place I would rather be. C&L saw me and continue to stand beside me as I improve more and more each week. To say that they and their family are really special is an absolute understatement.

We met a few other friends at church service and then went to brunch. On the way, I had two little ones trying to play with the windows in the car. Their mischievous plans were thwarted as they discovered that the driver's door has a window lock. MWAHAHAHAHAHA! Then back to the house and some play time with the littles. Around 6, I had to make my exit as I had forgotten to bring my meds.

Monday, more fun. I volunteered to take the three little ones to church while L took T to her camp. Later, I had a meeting and was invited to help celebrate another guy's birthday (he

CAN'T be three already... I distinctly remember the day I was called informing me of his arrival).

Tuesday... a day to relax and think about nothing. Started reading the original Gaston Leroux *Phantom of the Opera*. Not as dry as I thought it might be in fact it is pretty good so far. Perhaps I will compare and contrast the longest running Broadway musical and the novel somewhere down the line. I did get our team signed up to play Family Feud at our annual village fest on the 29th at 7.

All in all a Happy Birthday. NOW I have to find a day to see the final chapter of Harry Potter opening this weekend. Definitely on Tuesday since I close every night through Monday. Anyone care to join me?

It Was The Rat Poison

Last night, I FINALLY was up to attending a great game night with marvelous friends and one newcomer (a newcomer to me although, he had been to at least the Super Bowl extravaganza, I believe. My first game night in three months was full of laughs and great times. I got to see dear friends I have not seen since New Years or before and this also helped my continued progress. Laughter and wonderful times with some of my closest compadres is indeed the best medicine... better than rat poison, that is for sure.

I also got to see the four kids (plus two tagalongs which one of our regular game nighters brought along). Poor Beebs definitely was NOT feeling up to his normal self. The other little ones played on the Kinect system... something which I

think looks interesting in the near future.

After the merriment of the evening wound down (about 12:30), I set out to make the 12 mile trek home. Before I even left town, I was traveling along and all of a sudden, a raccoon jumped out in front of me. Instinctively, I swerved and crossed the yellow line. Unbeknownst to me, one of B-town's finest was right behind me and turned on his red and blue lights.

"Did you see the raccoon I had sicced on you?"

Indeed I had! Apparently, the town has gained quite a surplus of the critters... living in the sewers until they plot their take over. Sounds like a bad B-movie to me. The friendly officer and I engaged in a conversation about any future theatrical endeavors I have coming up which led to the tale of my 3 month journey. After my identity was confirmed and I was not deemed a known terrorist, I was sent on my way. Good thing I did not indulge in the wine that was brought to our night of fun! I don't think it would be good to mix with the rat poison, anyway. ☐

THEN, I got back home and learned that the Buckeyes were defeated by two points by Kentucky with a buzzer beating shot. So much for my bracket... and I was doing so well for my first time ☐

Manny Returns

Last night, while the parents went to a holiday gathering I got to stay with some of my favorite little ones for a few hours. If I'm not mistaken they get a full two weeks for

holiday break?! I think our own school doesn't dismiss until Wednesday. As always, I had a ton of fun!

Little Beebs was put down for his nap being promised that I would be there when he woke up which (I am informed) put him down almost immediately. It did take him a few minutes to get the grogginess of sleep out of him when he first arrived. Get him busy on his new tool kit and we were all good. Although, I think the cordless drill might be running out of juice. So, I showed him the joy of pounding nails in with the hammer.

Sammie was captivated by her new digital camera. Carrying it around like an old pro snapping pictures here and there.

Dis was her normal, cute self. We cuddled on the couch and spent some time watching Spongebob. I must be outgrowing the adventures of the denizens of Bikini Bottom but delighted in the kids' excitement every time the sponge came on the scene.

Later, the three little ones played Thomas while Manny terrorized the train as the monster who kept throwing boulders from atop a cliff. Thankfully, I had dinner ready so I could put the Tank Engine to bed. Fold up kid size playsets are the best... only took a few minutes to figure out how each part folded up.

I did get to bring gifts for the little ones for Christmas and one for the young lady, Taylor on her birthday. Hopefully, the four can share the joint gift I bought. I thought it was a fun way to enjoy the holiday. But Taylor really has grown from the little girl I met nearly 5 years ago into a very helpful, mature, and fun pre-teen. While changing a little package of my own, Taylor was quick to answer a phone call and to release the hounds. Although SOMEHOW! "Beasel" got into the garage and created havoc or at least paw prints and diaper breath.

C&L and I did get to play a game when they returned and after the game was finished, I knew that we were all ready to say

good night after a long weekend. An evening filled with fun and the unexpected (PSHEW!) as always.

A Person Is A Person No Matter How Small

Another fun-filled weekend! Friday, I invited a trio of lovelies to take in Elizabeth's elementary school's production of *Seussical, Jr.* It was a cute show and what A LOT of work!

THIRTY-FOUR songs and a group of 58 youngsters on stage the entire time. I have no idea how much more is involved in the full-scale edition of the musical but I remember how daunting a task of a 21 song show was especially for the director. For those of you who do not know, the musical combines the tales of Horton the Elephant who Heard a Who and Hatched the Egg.

Along with Horton, we were entertained by the Cat in the Hat, JoJo (the son of the Mayor of Whoville and his wife), Gertrude McFuzz, Mayzie LaBird, and other characters from the pages of Theodore Geisel. I have found myself humming the signature piece from the show "Oh, the Thinks You Can Think" for the last few days. Unfortunately, the youngest of my three companions did not make it through the entire 90 minute production.

Saturday night, I was the leader at mass which went really well as celebrated the Second Week upon the journey to celebrating the Birth of Our Savior.

Following mass, I headed out to another fun-filled game night with an 80s flare. I decided to wear my Indiana Jones t-shirt. One of the other party-goers was REALLY creative and came as the White Cosby in slacks and colorful sweater. He even brought a box of Jello Instant Chocolate Pudding (after his search for Jello Pudding Pops turned out to be fruitless).

While playing Life, we had *The Goonies* playing with no sound which somehow made it go quicker. After Life, the 9 of us formed teams for a round of Trivial Pursuit 80s style while *Christmas Vacation* went on without sound. About 1:30AM without a clear champion, the game broke up and I bid *adieu* since I had to be up in 5 1/2 hours for work.

A fun weekend filled with great friends!

Chicken What?!

Halloween... my SECOND favorite holiday. I guess you could say that it began last Monday when I ran into my very good friend at Wal*Mart where we decided to get coordinating costumes. I'll share a photo or two later.

Friday evening was the quite festive game night... ALWAYS A TON OF FUN! My niece and nephew have had a pretty tough couple of days so I invited them to come along with me. Alex was his normal crazy self in his "professor who just graduated" costume. Poor Shelby, I think, finally came out of her shell as the games began. Later, I took them back home and returned in time to enjoy the very haunting *Exorcism of Emily Rose*. A very good mix of *The Exorcist* and courtroom drama.

Saturday night (or SUNDAY morning) I was awakened about 4am by my cell phone. Oh, great! What joker is playing around when I am trying to get my beauty sleep. Somehow after I found out who the culprit was, I did manage to get a few more hours of shuteye. All good! I did get a good chuckle out of it ☐

After getting off my shift on the big day, itself, Dad, my second oldest brother and assorted nieces and nephews ventured to a relatives yard of terrors. Year after year, they transform their house and yard into a fun, family-friendly fright fest complete with touring train. After having your fill of frights, you are invited into the house to sign the guest book and each family is invited to take a plate of treats and goodie bags for the kiddies. All this for the exorbitant amount of \$0. Certainly is amazing that they can operate this year in and year out for the entire month and not charge a cent. Most of the items that are on display are generously donated. In fact, just the other day, a tombstone was given that had some defect which caused the original buyers to turn away. Visitors even bring along bags of flour and sugar for baking help. But leave your checkbook at home. They may take donations in form of decorations but never monetary.

Even more amazing is the number of people who have signed the book in just the last month. Over 2000! From word of mouth and flyers passed around the area. We were shocked to learn the distance travelled by some of the visitors: Louisiana, "New" England (from "across the pond"), France, Germany. WOW! So... when next October creeps its spooky head around... be sure to visit the Geren's. I have not visited the site after daylight hours for more than a few years but I do remember that after the sun sets is when the real frightful fun begins. Unfortunately, some of the little ones are a little young for that. Even some of the older ones were a bit fearful of the maze in the daylight. OH, Puh-lease!

Hope you all had a Ghoulishly fun holiday weekend!



Boxing Day

No...I am not celebrating the British holiday a few months early. Today, the family gathered at the home of my oldest brother to celebrate the birthday of two of our youngsters. I guess once you go beyond 18 years, my family does not age. We also got to meet big brother's new friend who was introduced in typical fashion: "This is (____). This is everyone." So our uncle got up and did a more traditional introduction.

Apparently, the two groups of parents failed to get the cake situation correct. Both groups swore the other was to order it and pick it up. As it happened, grandma ran into Big Brother and his friend at Wal Mart yesterday. In the end, Grandma and Grandpa went to Dairy Queen in hopes of finding an ice cream cake. No one better complain about the design.

As the party progressed, some of us ventured over to the Wii. Bowling, boxing, and Guitar Hero seemed to rule the day. The boxing is definitely one of the most entertaining games to watch others play as evidenced but the following video. You may have to click the link... not sure if it will be embedded directly on the post.

And it's always a good day when the Cowboys get beat! I'm sure there is another tangenteer who is absolutely ecstatic!