

A haunting we will go.

For years I've enjoyed the simple thrill of various Halloween hauntings. I've been to many haunted houses, cemeteries, theaters, mansions or woods over the years. There was even a time when I was trying to help organize a haunted attraction. This year I've had the pleasure of being one of the haunts.

What can I say, it has been a lot of fun and I get to do it again next week. I will say it is much harder to scare people than I thought. It takes timing and the proper setting. Then there are some people who think it is fun to go through not being scared. It is almost impossible to please them.

I've been through so many haunts that it takes a lot to scare me, I will get startled, but scared takes a bit. But I've always enjoyed myself and recognized the work of the actors. I hope the people going through the haunted forest this year do the same.

20,000 Leagues to Dearborn, MI

Give or take a few leagues.

Last weekend, Sunday to be exact, I was attending my first Steampunk convention. To explain what this is, I tried to come up with all sorts of analogies. The best I could come up with is to think of Disney's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. From the time they board the Nautilus, the movie turns to what is now known as steampunk. Other movies of this genre are League of Extraordinary Gentlemen and Frankenstein. All of the Victorian

era clothing, marked by advanced inventions powered by steam or clockworks.

I was thrilled to spend the day with my oldest daughter, her husband and my lovely step-granddaughter. I was able to pick up some steampunk garb and blend into the convention a little more than my jeans and t-shirt allowed. I know I will wear the coat more when the weather is appropriate.

Now, I have been asked why I would want to do anything of this sort. Easy answer, it was a lot of fun. Going to the events themselves is an eye opening experience, going in "garb" makes it a total immersion. I know I will never get to the point of digging local garage sales and flea markets for pieces of brass, but the theater nut in me will complete at least one set of clothing to wear next year.

It was a step out of my usual comfort zone. And I enjoyed myself that day. Maybe next year a comic book convention. I always wanted to be a super hero, or villain.

What, why can't I do that?

Ok, I understand that I don't know all the ins and outs of iTunes yet, but why isn't it easier to unsync from one computer and then sync to another.

The syncing part is very easy. Unfortunately, I was not on my computer when I first installed the software needed to run the iPad. When I got back on to run a software update (that was quick), my iPad automatically synced itself with my daughter's computer.

Now I want to move that information to my desktop. Ooops, the

iPad is already synced with another computer.. OK, go back to that one and unsync.. I did not see an option to do that.

N000! I have to transfer the stuff to the new computer, and then take the iPad back to Mfg default, and then re-install my purchased/free apps. Hmm. That doesn't copy some PDFs I had placed in the iTunes on the laptop. Why not? I can understand licensing issues. You don't want to have stuff accessible on multiple computers. I get that. But why not have a command to de-sync the mobile device, and then allow the data on that device to be synced with another computer.

Oh well, I'm just glad I found this out before I got too much stuff on the iPad. More of a nuisance than any real problem. Hmmm, I guess this may be the only apple device I get....

I feel like I crossed a line

Last week the price of the initial version of the iPad were dropped by \$100. I went out and bought one.

Initially, I was looking for something to read some manuals for work. My nook just wasn't up to that task. Then I found an app that just may help me to put my thoughts down without wasting lots of paper or post-its. So far I've found many things I like to do with this little device. It is almost too fun.

The iPad has replaced my droid for quick checks of the weather, and quick games of angry birds. It replaced my laptop for email checking and looking up blog post or other social networks. On some books, it even replaced my nook!!

I know I will still use some sort of PC for things requiring a

computer. The screen size and speed are lacking on the iPad for some applications. I also need storage for the iPad. I can envision a time when I will be moving things around to get what I need for a day or week.

Of course, this won't replace my android phone, too big to carry around all the time. My nook is my favorite electronic means of reading books. But I can use this to watch movies during a trip. I can send off a quick email or two. I can post a blog update. I can check on sport scores and news. I have found uses for it and I just like using it.

Good points to this are many, but there are also some things that limit the device. I still have issues with some of them.

1) You must have a windows or Mac PC to even start running the thing. An iTunes account is needed just to start it. As far as I could determine iTunes is not available on my Linux machines. That almost made me take the thing back.

2) To be more useful it needs a keyboard. That limits the portability. The touch screen keyboard works, but it takes up valuable screen space. And you can't touch type.

3) For the same reason I stayed away from iTunes, I have a small problem with this device. It is too easy to make a bunch of small purchases that add up quickly. \$0.99 seems like such a small price, but it could add up.

4) It still seems expensive for what it does. I realize you are paying for the small size and apple name, but I feel the cost is a bit son the high side. This is what you will have when there is really no close competition from any other slate type devices. Apple found their niche and made it their own.

All that said, it is still a fun little device. I'm sure that I will find many more uses for it.

The art of making pie...

I like pie. Pie has to be one of my favorite dessert types. There can be so many varieties. Each pie can create an explosion of taste. It has been a while since I made my very first pie. That pie was a total artistic creation. From finding the ingredients to the actual serving, it was an adventure. Other pies that came after that were less of an adventure, but the ability to make a very good pie is almost an art. Over the last 30+ years I've made almost every kind of pie imaginable, ok not that many, only the pies I imagined I would like. I guess it is time to make another pie...

My first pie was my own (and lost) recipe for caramel apple pie. I was in college and had a bunch of apples that needed to be used (sharing healthy food in college didn't go over well), but little else. I was low on funds, so I started to beg, borrow and steal (ok, I just took more than my share of sugar packets from the lunch room) my supplies. I actually had a pie pan or two (mom eventually got them back...). I was able to find somebody with flour. Salt was easily picked up with the sugar (oops), And slowly the makings of an apple pie were gathered. I'm not sure what came over me to add the caramel candy to the filling. It could have been that I didn't think there was enough sugar or cinnamon. I could have been that they were sitting there and I liked the sound of caramel apples. I unwrapped the bag and threw them in. Two pies made, from the absolute meaning of the word scratch. After baking and limited cooling, a group of us scooped up our first servings (No pie servers to be found anywhere, but we did find an old Ice Cream spade – think little shovel). It was a hit. The second pie didn't even last the night (funny how hungry college kids get for sweets, or pizza). My first foray in to pie making was a success.

As of right now, I have another hurdle to overcome when I make my next pie. No oven.. No, I still haven't replaced it since

that fateful evening when it didn't turn off. Strange how stove makers and the sellers can't tell me how their ovens will fail if the computer breaks down. I won't buy one until I know that. Anyway, I've decide my next pie adventure will be in a dutch oven. Cast Iron oven over a hot fire and coals. Should be interesting. I've never done it, but I have had the results. I can't wait. Now to decide what kind of pie...

And to think this whole train of thought started with a piece of store bought thaw and serve pie. Did I mention I like pie.

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You're telling me I missed Halloween?

Last year I was unable to celebrate Halloween with friends due to some ailment. I was all set to bring some 'frightening' festive holiday food to a party, but was unable to make it.

This year was going to be different. There as another party to go to,. More festive food to prepare. And I had a choice of many costumes. But somehow I missed the entire weekend plus a day or two.

Harumph No party, no costume, but one heck of a cold/flu/sinus infection.

Too make things worse, my oldest was moving and I was unable to help. I think that made me feel worse than my flu. Well, I understand there may be more to move, so as soon as I have my strength back, have truck will haul again.

Oh well, maybe I'll just have to make my next get together with friends my own personal costume night, complete with bloody fingers and toes. Yes, that may be on my list. It isn't like me at all to miss two Halloweens in a row.

Not about books

My youngest and I spent part of the weekend cataloging the movies in the house. What do we have on DVD, VHS and Blu-Ray? Not too many on blu-ray yet, but I'm sure in the coming months there will be more movies I want to own.

I was thinking of this, because I never can remember if I own a specific movie or not. I have a number of VHS that I did by DVD replacements for. I'm wondering if there will be any that I 'NEED' the Blu-Ray replacement for the DVD. I can't see that yet, but I do like the quality of the Blu-Ray. I guess I enough of an audio-video geek that I can tell the difference, even in cartoons.

Anyway after counting the movies, I have 400+ movies in my collection. This collection started when the kids were small, so in some cases the movies are 25+ years old. I'm surprised those old VHS tapes still play. And with all of those movies, I have seen all of them at least 1 time. Most of them at least twice. Over 3/4 of those movies I've seen 3 times. And there are others that I lost count of the number of times I've seen them. Now of those movies, the rest of the family also so a lot of them numerous times.

Interesting fact, if the movie was 'full' price, I know I've seen it more than 3 times. That only makes sense with the cost of a movie and the cost of a rental. If I know I'm only going to watch a movie once or twice, I like to rent them. If they

were bargain basement movies (\$5.00 dollars or less), I may only watch them once, but usually at least twice, it depends on my mood.

So at an average of 2 hours per movie (give or take), it would take at least 80 days (watching 8 hours of movies per day) to make it through my collection. So back to books... Around the movies in 80 days??? Should I make a wager to see if I can watch all of them? Nah, there would be no time for books!

I didn't mean to use that much

I made chicken for dinner and thought that it would taste good with some salsa on it. It did, but I put on a bit much. Now I'm paying for it. Up late at night waiting for antacids to kick in. You can't put it back in the jar after it hits partially cooked chicken. And it was the good stuff too, lots of heat.

Ahh, the joys of aging. I still like all the spicy stuff, but it doesn't like me as much as it used to. The cast iron stomach seems to have some rust.

On another note, I miss my laptop. Even though I got the tower up and running again, it was so easy to have the laptop with me wherever I wanted to be. I have an old machine going, but it is very, very, very slow. I think it is slower than my internet connection. I do have it loaded with a full version of Ubuntu Linux at this time, maybe that is pushing it a bit. I wonder if it would work with the netbook version of that OS. I may have to try it and find out. I need to get a list of USB or other wireless cards that work with Ubuntu or Puppy Linux.

I have two old laptops that I have installed Linux on and only 1 wireless card that works. The newer of the two laptops has an internal wireless, but Linux doesn't like that one either. I even tried a backdoor way that was supposed to allow the use of the windows drivers. No go. I guess for now I share. [I really can't use two laptops at once can I?](#)

A promise to me.

As March comes to a close, I need to reflect or dream about the first part of April and the coming Major League Baseball season. While I have followed the spring exploits of my favorite team, I can't really get excited about spring training. Until this last week of spring training, we hardly ever see a complete starting lineup. There are a variety of minor league prospects, players past their prime and those with little or nothing to offer all trying to get the the 25 player roster. Those that have it made are just getting loose for the coming season. Some good ball is played, but as it is often said, it doesn't count.

Next week the real games start. I will be following every score. Grumbling at losses or poor play. Feeling aggravated when a star player is hurt or not doing well. Cheering for every win.

So if you follow baseball, this is the time of year you've been waiting for. If you don't, your time will come. ☐

My promise to myself. I'm going to go to at least 1 major league game this season. I don't know when or even where, but I will do it.

And to my fellow old-time tangenteers, Good luck to your

teams, until they play my favorite team. ☐

Go Tigers.

Finally cleaned up another problem.

I've been complaining that my laptop is broken for some time now, but I never used that opportunity to fix my Power Box. I've had stuff to do on it for a couple of years now, but it just wouldn't boot up properly after I installed a new hard drive. I thought I knew what the problem was, but I never undertook the job of actually looking at it. So today I did.

Yes, the problem was exactly what I thought it was. It was trying to boot from the old disk drive. Unfortunately, this drive no longer had any operating system on it. It was still formatted as a bootable drive, but there was nothing to boot to. Quick spin through the bios, and that drive is no longer on the boot list. YEAH.

Now I just have to find all of the stuff I needed to do and finish it up. Yes, there may be a Godspell video in there somewhere. I guess I'll have to stop blogging after my software updates from more than 1 year of inactivity.

More work for me. I'm glad I took a break from theater for a while.. ☐