

Christmas Celebrations

I LOVE CHRISTMAS. I still look at the holiday with the wonder of a child. For the entire month of December, I still do believe in the magic of Jolly Ol' St. Nick but still marvel at the wonder of the true meaning of the holiday. I even have my sister wrap my presents and I do still snoop (ok, I admit it). After getting off work at 2 on Christmas Eve, the immediate family and their kids opened presents and had the first of three feasts throughout the weekend. What a haul! The highlight of my haul were two Scene-It games. I had asked for the rather awesome looking *Star Trek* edition the moment I heard about it and submitted a question to the makers of the game when it was being developed. I also received a pleasant surprise. I had picked up the Simpson's edition for my nephew just after Thanksgiving. I unwrapped the one of my own for Christmas. I have played it with some friends and ADORE IT!

Midnight Mass (well, 11PM mass) was beautiful as usual. The past few years singing "Silent Night" at Communion have been really difficult. I am immediately taken back to the four Christmas concerts in high school singing the carol by candlelight. I can still see Emily behind the piano. I then went home and caught my sneak-in viewing of *A Christmas Story*.

Christmas Day was feast number two and a day typically set aside for watching movies people had received. We were treated to *Santa Buddies* courtesy of Alex. I was exhausted and slept through half of it.

More fun and merriment to come with the Swary family Christmas.

A New Miracle

Since none of the channels I get are bothering to show the glorious original 1947 version this year, I decided to spend my nine dollars on the *Miracle of 34th Street* DVD. There is a treasure trove of added features including a very rare 1955 broadcast on the ["20th Century Fox Hour of Stars"](#) of yet another adaptation. I found it very well done for the limited 45 minute run time. There were of course deletions from the original but there was one scene that was in this adaptation that I saw for the first time on the stage: Mr. Sawyer giving his speech on the evils of myth at Susan's Progressive School.

There were also a few behind the scene stories that were very informative:

- The filming of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade was the real McCoy filmed on Thanksgiving Day, 1946. This was the second parade given following its hiatus during WWII.
- Edmund Gwenn (who played Kris Kringle and won the Best Supporting Actor Oscar in the original) was Santa at the end of the parade.
- Many of the interior scenes for Macy's Department Store were actually filmed at the flagship store during the holiday season. WOW! Imagine the chaos that must have caused! An identical duplicate was recreated on a Hollywood sound stage in the event that some scenes needed to be redone.
- Both R.H. Macy and the Gimbel Brothers loved the film much to the delight of the filmmakers.
- The film was released in June, 1947. Fox did not want audiences thinking they were going to a film about the Christmas season in the summer so in its publicity campaign, scenes were carefully selected that would not draw attention to the fact. The risk paid off and "Miracle" became a hit that ran in theatres for an

unheard of 6 month stand.

A holiday treasure that teaches everyone that "faith is believing in something when common sense tells us not to." Isn't that what Christmas is all about?

Modern Day Grinch/Scrooge/Mr. Potter

I think this real individual is NOW the king of the humbugs. Last weekend, a rather disgruntled gentleman shoved a Salvation Army bell ringer to the ground and stole the kettle that held the money passersby had dropped in. When he was apprehended, the person stated that he “hates Christmas and got tired of the ringing bell.” So much for the mob of Black Friday last year who trampled a Wal-Mart employee to death.

MAUMEE, Ohio (AP) — A man who claimed to hate Christmas shoved a Salvation Army bell ringer to the ground and swiped one of the charity's red kettles stuffed with hundreds of dollars, police said.

The bell ringer, an unemployed woman, tried to pull the kettle away from the man Saturday evening, but he pushed her down and said, “I can't stand you and your bell-ringing. I hate Christmas,” police said. The bell ringer chased him into a store parking lot before he tossed the kettle into the back of a stolen pickup truck and sped away, police said.

An empty kettle was found a day later. Police arrested Shawn Krieger of Toledo on Monday morning and charged him with robbery.

The Salvation Army estimated that the kettle held \$500 to \$700.

The bell ringer, whose name hasn't been released, had been collecting money outside a general store for most of the day when she was shoved from behind, said Capt. Steven Lopes, coordinator of the Salvation Army in northwest Ohio.

"She was so upset," Lopes said. "She was concerned that she wouldn't be allowed to bell-ring anymore. We want her to continue."

Krieger, 44, walked by the bell ringer at least twice before he made a grab for the money, said police Sgt. Jeff Siebenaler.

No witnesses have come forward even though the store was crowded, he said. "These things happen so fast sometimes people don't know what they saw was a crime occurring," Siebenaler said.

One shopper wrote down the truck's license plate number, and others consoled the bell ringer, who suffered a small cut when she tugged at the kettle, Lopes said.

Evidence inside the stolen truck, which was found in Toledo, led police to Krieger, Siebenaler said. Krieger could face more charges for the stolen vehicle, Siebenaler said.

Krieger was being held Monday on \$25,000 bond. The judge will assign a public defender to his case.

Not everyone likes the holiday season but what a hideous way to display it. Coal is too good to put in this man's stocking.

Holiday Fun & Chaos

The chaos actually began Wednesday morning. Mom was working in the beauty shop... **UNTIL 11** at which time she wanted the kitchen. At ten, Dad decides it is the perfect time to strip

the counter top off. Granted, it is pretty old, worn, and could stand to be replaced... but the day before we have company over for Thanksgiving?! Oh, MY... am I glad I had to go to work from 12-9.

After my 9 hour shift, I returned to see him still at it. Mom was already in bed, but I can imagine the scene at home. I would not want to have been there ☹️. At around 11.30, he decides it is good enough and **THEN** decides to run the vacuum. At 11.45, Mom comes out, gives him a dirty look, and walks back into the bedroom... nothing even needed to be said.

Thursday morning, I got up at 8 in time to shower, bring the table and chairs down from upstairs, then watch the Macy's parade. Ironically, my favorite part of the 3 hour extravaganza is not the floats, nor the balloons. It is watching the performers from Broadway shows and singing groups seeing how badly they can lip sync. Who is Boy Likes Girl? I must be getting really old! Did anyone see Gloria Gaynor and her 30 year old "I Will Survive?"

After the parade came (not the dog show) the traditional immediate family dinner. Ma and Pa, siblings and their families. I did not indulge too much because I had two other meals to attend. I did get to see Chad and his pumpkin pie (or was it Cool Whip with a bit of pumpkin).

After digesting a bit, I ventured to another gathering. I knew I had a good amount of time between the afternoon and evening gathering so I went to the home of my wonderful friends and had smoked turkey and other delicious food. We have never had smoked turkey, but I find it enjoyable. Carol brought a game that I swear I did not cheat at. I read a few cards without looking at the answer and put them in the back of the box. It's only cheating if you look at the answer ☹️ And I was treated to The Potty Movie... thanks girls. I found it quite odd that a 3 year old had a strangely deep feminine voice.

Finally, I returned home for our traditional Thanksgiving celebration with my mother's family. In total, we probably had 20-25 people in the house. It's always good to be surrounded by family and loved ones but something about the holidays makes it even greater. Maybe it's the constant ribbing Chad tries to dish out about sports but knows he is fighting a losing battle. Outnumbered about 16:1. But the Cowboys again won their gimme. Maybe that's why they always play on Turkey Day. Sorry I can't say the same for the Lions.

Finally, about 10, everyone was gone, tables and chairs put back. and I was pooped. I wanted to go back for a game night, but I did have to be at work at 6.30 this morning and I almost did not make that! Hope everyone had a great holiday giving thanks for the many blessings we receive every day!

Happy Post Halloween

Unless of course you are reading from some part of the world which is still living in October 31st. My holiday was EXCELLENT even with the working part. Friday, I got into my vampire costume complete with double-layered cape, full facial makeup, tuxedo, the whole nine yards. I even got to frighten my young nieces. Poor Sydney may not speak to me for a while. As always, I had an awesome time with friends playing games all pretty loud and late, but great times!!!!

Today was another long Saturday at the store. Unfortunately, no costumes allowed... What crazy place is this?! However, I was allowed to sit on the ledge in front of the store to hand out candy.... as long as I did not go overboard. Hopefully, a bag of Starburst, Baby Ruth, and an assortment of kisses, Rolo, and Reese's PBCs was not too much. I did get to see the

nieces and nephews in their get ups. Shelby was a sorceress of some kind; Joshua was the ULTIMATE NERD; Elizabeth was a dark ninja; Alex was a police officer; Alyssa was a 50s chick complete with poodle skirt and a “leather” jacket I seem to recall from a show or two in years past; Noah was a skeleton; little Sydney was a cowgirl. All adorable.. here is 5 of the seven.

✖ Unfortunately, the 50s chick is not wearing the black jacket. Hope everyone had a spooktacular Halloween. And The YANKS are up 2 games to 1. 2 more wins and they will win their 27th WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP! My favorite part of Game three: pitcher Andy Pettite had a hit, RBI, and was nearly passed by Derek Jeter as the two made their way home! Final Score: Yankees 8... Philllies 5.

Now... I can enjoy my extra hour of sleep. Don't forget to fall back!

✖ Not to be outdone here are little Chloe and big sister Kyli all the way rom Alaska.

I Have Gas

I know what you are thinking... and no... not that kind. This morning, I set out to complete my Halloween costume (still missing something I would have liked to add, but not essential). Ran into some old friends/former co-workers and chatted a bit and caught up and let them know that I have not completely disappeared from the planet.

I also bought my first Christmas gift for the menagerie of people I choose to buy for. Someone mentioned that they enjoy

a certain fantasy book series so I looked for that. Then I realized that a movie was made from the series and luckily enough I found that. One down... several to go.

Just before I hit the city limits on my way home, I glanced at the dashboard. The little needle was in the red zone with very little room to go. I found the first driveway available, headed to the nearest station, and made it just as the little light came on. **PHEW!**

Work And Fun On The 4th

As with last year, I had to work on Independence Day. I usually flip-flop Fridays and Saturdays with a co-worker. This was SUPPOSED to be my Saturday off so I did not feel the need to ask for it off. Sure enough, I was informed that I was going to be closing. Funny thing is, I was told that the worker I alternate days with told the boss that it was indeed her Saturday off...hmmm. When I got to work, I was delighted to discover that we were closing at 7 instead of the 8PM I was scheduled until. However by the time 6PM rolled around, my co-worker and I agreed that we should have closed then. At 6:45, one of our regular customers came in and grabbed a cart. At 7, I locked the door and we waited in the office until the couple was finished.

After finally getting out of the store, I ventured to pick up some friends to check out some AMAZING fireworks. Getting to the site was a great adventure. I was armed with my mapquest directions and Megan had "Vera" with her, so we were sure to arrive with little problems. Before getting out of town, the adventure began. I misjudged the city limits and began to accelerate maybe a mile before acceptable. We did see the

state patrolman as we made our way along. He pulled out of his parking location, began to follow us, and I don't know why it took soooo long but he turned on his lights and pulled us over. Megan had brought along some beverages but we were all of legal age and none were open, so we were safe there. The officer asked why I was going so fast and I "innocently" explained that I was not sure where the limits were. We were mere feet from it. However, the generous officer asked when my last violation was (about three years ago) and he sent us on our way.

As we approached our destination, my companions informed me that they had to visit the facilities and to stop at the next available location. We passed a rest area and then came up to a nice, clean port-a-potty (thankfully, there were no planes in the area in danger of crashing into it). OOPS... did I say that I would not mention this?

After we finally found our friends (which was not too far from the location at which we found the restroom. We watched some GREAT fireworks. I saw something I don't believe I have before. Some began as if a machine gun was being fired, rapidly spurting out in a back-and-forth motion. Really cool.

Around 2AM, it was time to drive back. Coming home was an adventure as well as some fog had developed (pretty thick in spots) but I don't think it added a great deal to our return trip. So about 3.30, I got to bed in preparation for work at 9. But definitely worth a few hours lost.

Hope everyone had a fun and safe holiday weekend.

A Weekend of Fun and Remembrance

Sunday after I got off work, I had a familiar sight on the caller id. Soon after I got home, I was on my way to Hillsdale, MI to [Silo's Fun Park](#). Quite a place: go-carts, bumper boats complete with squirting action, mini golf (did not indulge... the bumper boats were fantastic). On the way there, we got separated from the lead driver when we did not make it through a red light; however, we soon found out that they were in the drive thru of a rather sloooooooooow Burger King. DING! I can see if they have the elusive Spock glass. On the drive-thru menu there was the ad for the cups so... I asked if they had the commander's cup. "Sorry, we are done selling the cups." OK... we would like three cherry slushes. "Sorry, we only have coke and orange creme." SUE BK for false advertisement. But Silo's was a ball. I loved the bumper boats with the added thrill of being able to shoot the others. Even the fountain under which I got a good dousing more than once was fun.

I did rather well on the go-carts until the final lap. I was ahead of my three co-racers until the final lap when something went awry. All of a sudden, I was slowing down and finally came to enough of a crawl to just make it into the stopping point. I believe I was third of our group.

After the fun was done, treats finished, and elaborate gumball machine was watched, we set out on the return journey to the sound of *Little Shop of Horrors* playing in the car. If I can't be in Joseph this summer, I can devote extra time to the audition for the next show. After dropping Megan and Carol off at their car, I went to the nearby BK and completed my glass collection and got some dinner. The price was good so I got a full set so I could have one to keep and one for use..

Today being the day in which we honor all those who have fallen making the supreme sacrifice in order to defend our country, I walked along with the high school/junior high band, Scouts, and American Legion in their parade to the cemetery for services. I had to question the director's decision to play while they marched into the cemetery. I think the one time a marching band should be solemn and relatively silent is while marching into a burial site. I remember entering to a slight cadence by a drummer tapping lightly on the side of a drum in order to keep the marchers in step. The ceremony consisted of patriotic readings, music, and a salute by the American Legion. My favorite part, as it has been for as long as I can recall, is the floral tribute by the children. Armed with bouquets of flowers, many little ones from the Scouts to toddlers (who were assisted by parents) stormed the makeshift stage. I often wonder how many actually realize what the flowers symbolize. Hopefully as they age, they will come to understand that they are remembering those who have been lost in defense of freedom at home and abroad. May we all do so.

On a heavier note, my cousin who moved with her husband and daughter to Alaska had to return for a few weeks following the passing of Rich's father. They flew in last night around midnight after Rich returned from Afghanistan. Ironically, a few weeks after he returns to the Army, Rich will be back for the arrival of their second child.

The Beginning of Another Super Weekend

This weekend is turning out to be another super fun one that started Saturday. I watched the double episodes of The Office

from Thursday night (don't remember what I was doing when they were on at their scheduled time, but no spoilers since I'm not sure if my faithful readers caught them both). The, I went across the street to watch the nieces and nephew in the Easter Egg hunt. I attempted to convince my sister to take them to the theatre's hunt, but apparently, she wanted to partake in the adult hunt. I have yet to participate with the big kids because I really do not relish the chance to get trampled... or like my older brother fall down and lose the eggs that he had picked up. I thought about it this year, but before the time came, I was invited to go to the zoo.

I had not been to the [Toledo Zoo](#) for sometime. The last time I remember, I was on a field trip with an acting class from BGSU. We went to observe and study the animals and then use some of their mannerisms in order to develop a character. Yesterday, I really enjoyed the hippos who were in their pens awaiting feeding time. Quite humorous to see the hungry beasts open their gaping mouths, roll around in their pools of water, and finally leave their calling card after they had finished.

I also really loved the sloth bear. There were two... one was much more animated than his companion. He was very social and came up to the transparent barrier, sniffing at people, car keys, ballcaps, and just about anything e could find. The other bear just reclined in the hammock, seemingly to say... "HAHA! I know how to live! I don't have to make a spectacle of myself!"

After the zoo, we went to a small diner where I indulged in a Nickburger: a full-pound of ground sirloin with lettuce, onion, tomato, and pickle (YUCK! pickle). I was really hungry... so I was not surprised that I ate the whole thing. The fries were a different story.

This morning at mass, I again sang with the choir. The opening song was well-known to me but apparently, someone

(without informing me) had the idea to transpose the hymn down at least two flats. Nothing I could not handle and I discovered that a low A is starting to come along. After mass, the Easter Bunny had stopped by the church as each member of the choir received a REESE'S PEANUT BUTTER EGG (ahhhhhh!!!!!! HEAVEN).

Then, the family (all fourteen of us) went to Ritzy's (or is it Rita's... sorry Derek) for a buffet. My friend's generally comment on the behavior of their four little ones at restaurants. I guess I should point out that most of the 7 nieces and nephews are beyond the age of running around and dropping food on the floor; however, nothing compares to a three-year old who announces to the whole banquet room that "I HAVE TO GO POTTY!" Not embarrassing at all, I found the announcement rather humorous. Later, the same little angel wanted a kiss from grandma. Yet, if you saw the little girls face covered with butter, some mashed potato, and I think some strawberry pie glaze, I'm sure you would have second thoughts. I believe that I must have still been recovering from my battle with the Nickburger, because I did not eat too much. Or maybe, I knew that we will be having a birthday celebration later this evening.

Did you know that certain fans of [marshmallow peeps](#) put the concoction on everything including pizza. They also microwave them. Of course, peeps aren't just for Easter anymore.

OK... Have We Been Had?

Ok... I'm not sure, but when I attempted to access my tangents site the normal way, I came across a message that stated that the domain name [tangents.org](#) is for sale. After some trial

and error, I was able to make my way here to post on the weirdness of the day.

It started this morning when I watched the April Fools Day episode of [The Price is Right](#) featuring a very special surprise guest and gags galore.

While walking to work at 11:55AM, I noticed that the clock at the bank read 12:55PM... funny.

While at work, the manager called and asked me if I would come in an hour early tomorrow as the truck was going to be early. Why would I come in an hour early on Wednesday I said.? She actually took me seriously and thought that it really was Tuesday instead of Wednesday. HAHA!

Later, an apparent wrong number called and asked to speak with Monica. I replied that I am Monica and we carried on a two minute conversation until I could not come up with any more believable conversation. Thank goodness the caller was good hearted and played along.

That was all until I got home and found out that our domain was for sale. I guess we will see what happens tomorrow. I can post, but can my readers find my posts?