

# Thanksgiving Tragedies

The holiday weekend was replete with joyous gatherings and happenings but two events seemed to have drawn a dark curtain upon its close. One was the passing of one of my all-time favorite slap-stick comedy performers. Leslie Nielsen was known in his later days as a master of deadpan antics in such classic spoofs as *Airplane!* and the *Naked Gun* trilogy of movies. However, did you know that he got his start as a serious actor mainly as guest spots on Golden Age television?

It was 1980s spoof of the airplane disaster movies of a decade earlier that put him into the comedy spotlight.

Shortly after that came the short-lived *Police Squad!* television series which led to the films. Mr. Nielsen lost his life Sunday after complications from pneumonia. He was 84.

Another event hit much closer to home. Three young boys have been missing from their Morenci, Michigan home since Thursday. An Amber alert has been issued for young [Andrew \(9\), Alexander \(7\), and Tanner \( 5 years old\) Skelton](#). They were last seen with their father who now is in a mental health facility undergoing treatment after an apparent suicide attempt. The search led to the small town of Pioneer and the surrounding communities, a mere 25 miles from my own small town. Very little is known at this point about the whereabouts of the youngsters. I'm sure that any prayers offered up to the family of these three little ones would be more than appreciated.



# School For Bullies

I think it would be rather difficult to be the only male cheerleader in a relatively small school system. However, even after being bullied to the extend that he received a broken arm for his pains, Findlay, Ohio sixth-grader Tyler Wilson has no plans to give up on it. His trials have met with national press as he and his mother were featured on Good Morning America this morning. He has also received phone calls and visits from male college cheerleaders. And although Tyler has stated that he has been threatened with another broken arm, he has no intention of sitting on the side lines.

**GOOD FOR HIM! YOU GO DUDE!**

As I learned long ago: Find something you are good at and do it the best that you can. Wise words... wonder who came up with that.

Not the GMA clip, but you get the gist of it. One thing the clip does not mention. After Tyler got home with the broken arm, he told his mother that he tripped over a curb and landed on his arm. Just like a sixth-grade boy.

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## **Unsportsmanlike Conduct.. 15 Yard Penalty**

After Saturday's OSU/OU football game, I saw on a friend's fb account that the OSUMB's halftime performance was less than outstanding... full of Looney Tunes, Flintstones, and other cartoon themes. However, I wonder if the Bobcat alumnus thought the following was so extraordinary:

Apparently, the heinous display by Rufus Bobcat upon the unsuspecting Brutus was premeditated. The no-goodnick tried out for the role of mascot a year ago with the ultimate goal of tackling the Buckeye. He has since been summarily banned from all Ohio University affiliated athletic functions. The funny thing is, the miscreant no longer attends the Athens, Ohio college. He now attends nearby Hocking College. OU has issued an apology to the Buckeyes.

In every way but personally, the shenanigans were for naught as the Bucks handed the Bobcats a 43-7 thrashing. They should have tackled the player with the ball instead of the mascot. Kind of funny especially after the games outcome. A streaker running across the field was even more shocking and hilarious.

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## **Courage Under Fire**

While waking up early this morning, I tuned into GMA and watched the story of a courageous 16-year old boy who like most children across the country are on the verge of starting a brand new school year full of learning, friends, and new experiences. Michael Brewer started out at a brand new school in which he will have to adjust following a horrific event that nearly turned tragic.

A day after his fifteen birthday in October 2009, Michael was attacked at his home by a group of his "friends" after an argument over a \$40 video game. After being doused with rubbing alcohol and set ablaze, the teen climbed over a fence and jumped into a nearby swimming pool but not before suffering second and third degree burns over 60% of his body.

Following near death moments and multiple surgeries for skin grafts, Michael is now on the long road to physical and

emotional recovery. The GMA interview showed the teenager riding his skateboard nine months following the ordeal. Doctors have stated that the young man stood a great chance of death from complications incurred by the event. However, Michael's amazing will and fortitude and the prayers and support of family, real friends, and complete strangers have carried him this far.

Like many traumatic events, perhaps the most difficult healing will be the psychological recovery. Michael suffers regular nightmares which he does not remember after they end. However, his mother hears his screams in the dead of night. Showers are agonizingly painful for him to take... in fact, they are the hardest part of his recovery.

Michael's 15 year old attackers are being charged as adults in the travesty in which they each face up to 30 years in prison. Really... is \$40.00 worth losing 30 years of your life?

Michael's story will be a focus of ABC's NightLine tonight.

[Click Here](#) for a more detailed account of the story and a somewhat graphic photo gallery.



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## **Haven't We Been Down This Road Before?**

Seems funny as of late that whenever my little berg is mentioned in the news it is not the most optimistic of moments. We are still in the throes of cleaning up the remains of the [town hall](#) which was devastated by a

“microburst” a little more than a month ago. Today, another quick storm passed through and wrecked more havoc. Around 11.30 at the construction site for the new K-6 grade addition to our high school, an 18 year-old worker lost his life when a section of unfinished wall collapsed and crushed him.

Living about a block away from the site, we heard police, fire, and EMS sirens blaring and thought “here we go again.”

Voices imploring... “Get those candles lit!” “Get the flashlights out!” Phooey... it is daylight out. My dad went down the street to get the grandkids (age 15 and 9) from the trailer and informed us what the sirens were all about.

Of course, talk at work revolved around the tragedy. News crews from Toledo and Ft. Wayne as well as representatives from OSHA all converged on our little community.

[Link to news video and story](#)

Strange that the crew reportedly knew that something was brewing but continued to work on.

May the young man’s family find solace in Him from this day’s horrific events.

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## Edgerton Bombed

It seems we have been inundated with storms, storms, and more storms for the beginning weeks of the summer. Our little area has been relatively lucky... UNTIL Wednesday night. I was fortunate enough to get off work in time to go to the City Band concert (more in that later). I got home around 9:15. I went out to the beauty shop to finish cleaning. At 9:30, here go the sirens (**AGAIN**). Looking out the window, there wasn’t a

lot to see at the moment so we decided to step outside and see what we could see. In the west, we could see the sky lit up up lightning. However, as our neighbor pointed out, it was eerily silent: no birds, no mosquitos (I noticed that myself).

A half hour later, I felt a rather large raindrop and decided that was enough for me. Thirty seconds later, the power went out. So... my brother, his wife, and two kids, my sister and her two little ones, my mother and I all headed to the basement. Someone failed to get batteries for the flashlights or the radio so Dad was upstairs lighting candles. The rest of us lit our way into the chamber of secrets armed with cell phone illumination.

Around 11, we headed back upstairs. The corded phone in the kitchen rang. A neighbor was just informed that the town hall had been hit. Dad and a neighbor went up to check it out.

The night was so dark that they could not see any sign of damage. Our side of town was completely black.

By this time, the excitement was over. Everyone decided to stay the night and hope that there was no damage in the morning. It gets hotter than... upstairs with a fan/air conditioning so I slept on the couch. About midnight, a car pulls up and someone comes in. Still not being able to see, I shouted "Who goes there?" "It's me!" Well... that helps a lot! It was our oldest sibling who had been out driving, surveying the damage. And HE had power at his house. Go figure.

The next morning, I walked around a bit before going to work. Limbs, branches, trees toppled. The east wall of the Flea Market wiped out. VERY noticeable now... the gaping hole in the 120+ year old former town hall. It really looked like a missile went through it! Also gone was poor "Clem" the one casualty of the war. He had been standing guard in front of the building for years whether he was in the courtyard or in the middle of State Route 49. I am too young to remember his transfer from the road, One of our fine firemen was injured

while he was outside rolling up car windows... nothing life threatening but a broken femur.

At work all day, we joked out the condition of the town hall debate. For the last few years, the historical society had been wanting to purchase the condemned building, restore the second floor opera house from yesteryear, and create a museum dedicated to the town. A worthy ambition to be sure. But where was the money for this undertaking to come from? Well, I guess that debate was settled Wednesday night.

Like many storms, it is just amazing the spottiness of the devastation. Indiana Street was definitely the hardest hit. Two blocks north along North Michigan Avenue, I found a small branch lying on the ground. Family safe... could have been so much worse.



town hall



sign from  
the bank  
across from  
town hall



what's  
left of  
"Clem"



a new  
window into  
town hall



clem's old  
home buried



flea market (former True  
Value store) across from town  
hall)

The strange thing the weather “experts” have yet to assess the situation fully and state unequivocally what caused the damage.

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## Aftermath

Last weekend's storms in the mid-west left much destruction, injuries, and at least seven deaths in Ohio. Perhaps most tragic of all, the graduation exercises at [Lake High School](#) (near Toledo) had to be postponed and moved to another location. The back wall of the gymnasium ripped off. Not so tragic in and of itself, but one of the seven who lost their lives was the father of the class valedictorian. Their home also destroyed. Mere hours before what is supposed to be a happy moment in the lives of young adults, family, and friends was put to a violent halt.

My little corner was spared such devastation, I knew the wind had picked up. There was lightning, rain, but no sirens went off. Many of the surrounding neighborhoods issued warnings but I guess we were under the dome. Walking to work Sunday morning, there was no standing water, downed trees, or any of the disastrous signs of the damage that Mother Nature wrecked on several communities in our area. The worst incident I heard of was a customer whose newly purchased picnic umbrella

had been whisked away. We were lucky.

I love a good thunderstorm; however, when it brings destruction, injury, and loss of life it makes me stop and think about the awesome power of things which we have no control over. May God be with those seven individuals and their families and the communities who were in the middle of the wrath.

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## A Buckeye And A Bee

History was made moments ago at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, D.C. as Anamika Veeramani (from North Royalton) became the 9th Ohioan to win the Scripps' National Spelling Bee. Ohio now holds the record for most winners. It has been 42 years between Buckeye victories, The winning word: stromuhr (a rheometer designed to measure the amount and speed of blood flow through an artery).

Also new to me is the inclusion of a Canadian speller (an 11 year old girl from Toronto who would have been the youngest champion since the 1940s... but finishing in the top 10 is no small feat). I was also unaware that a Puerto Rican speller is also eligible.

In the top 4 were Elizabeth Platz of Missouri, Shantanu Srivatsa of North Dakota and Adrian Gunawan of Arlington Heights, Illinois.

One highlight was the moment when Miss Platz told the announcer that his sentence using the word *rhytidome* was "boring." Unfortunately for Elizabeth, her attempt at brevity did not help in the spelling of the word derived from the Greek which is the bark external to the last formed periderm I

don't get it, either). She spelled it r-h-y-t-o-d-o-m-e.  
Darn schwa.

Congrats to all the spellers! And welcome back to OHIO!

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## When You Know The Notes To Play, You CAN'T Play Most A-ny-Thing

This is not meant to be a religious stance. However, it is meant to be a stance on intelligence.

Ridiculous is what I call it. A young lady who attempted to take her case to the Supreme Court was not even allowed in the doors. Separation of Church and State, indeed. Has the "Pledge of Allegiance" been taken out of the school system yet, or just "Under God"? The case may be 4 years old but it is just as necessary as it was in 2006 when a high school wind ensemble wanted to perform an instrumental version of Biebl's *Ave Maria* as part of their graduation exercises. [Kathryn Nurre](#) and her ensemble chose the beautiful piece which had been performed **VOCALLY** at graduation exercises at Everett High School (Everett, WA) one year before!. However, school officials felt that the vocal-less arrangement would meet with criticism? Selections were to be "totally secular in nature."

Let's see... how many art classes study the works of the Renaissance? Better cut that out since the vast majority are religious in nature. Umm... we can't sing "When the Saints Go Marching In" or strike us down if we play it instrumentally. I wonder if Everett High School's Christmas Concert consists of "Jingle Bells" and "Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer."

Sorry [Mare](#), your “Hallelujah Chorus”... **NO CAN DO!** “Silent Night’ by candlelight... **AXED!** I wonder if the officials would be intelligent enough to recognize the original German version (OH, forgive. All selections must be in English). I imagine that their Drama Department will not be performing *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Godspell*, or *The Sound of Music* (shameful) anytime soon.

I applaud Miss Nurre for her bravery in going before the high court to hear her case. I also say a big fat “**B00**” to our government for not even considering to hear the case. Before long, schools will go back to the three rs so as not to cause any “criticism.” At least Justice Alito sided with the young woman.

Ok... rant over... thanks for listening.

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## Wish Lists For The Separated

I suppose there had to come a time for this. Stores have registries for bany gifts, bridal gifts, even kiosks for people to make their annual appeal to Santa. A store in Great Britain has come up with the next step: [DIVORCE REGISTRY](#). It’s not bad enough that the divorce rate is so high (40% for newlyweds and 60% for repeaters), but this seems to almost help it along. So, apparently, those who end up with the short end of the stick following the distribution of wealth, can now ease their hardship by visiting Debenhams and sharing their list with whatever friends and family they have retained. They can replace that wrought-iron grill that was used in domestic disputes. So much for monogrammed dishtowels. Hollywood couples... take notice.

I wonder how long it will take for Divorce Registry to make

its way the USA. Any suggestions for the next great registry idea? How about Unemployed Worker Registry?

I think this qualifies for a News of the Absurd column.