

I Enjoyed His Second Childhood Immensely

They say a hat makes the man. Grandpa probably would say that a hat (as well as a suit) is like a man and likes to step out once in a while (pretty girl or no pretty girl). One of my favorite parts of Meet Me in St. Louis was the enormous array of wonderful hats I got to wear as Grandpa Prophater. I pick out most of them from the costume room at the Huber and one was brought by the producer. Grandpa went from a genuine Shriner's fez with tassel and all kinds of bells and whistles to a Holmesian deerstalker cap on Halloween to a huge Admiral's hat and one more that I will expound upon in a moment. There were a few plain, ordinary hats that were just not wild enough. There were only two scenes in which Grandpa was not seen wearing one: a dinner scene with the family and the Christmas Ball (although I thought the old Civil War vet would have looked smashing in a top hat with his old tuxedo he had gotten out of mothballs).

The Admiral's hat presented a few problems as I began to learn how to wear it. I thought it should be worn "sideways" with the ends at the sides. Then, I had it on backwards with the tailfeather hanging over my face. Finally, I got it right amidst thunderous applause. The first time I rehearsed with it, the entire cast had to stop the scene from laughing. I was told that I looked like Cap'n Crunch which was where I got the inspiration to wear the cap sideways. I also had to be careful entering during the very serious scene as the audience roared as I snuck in through the kitchen door after performing Grandpa's favorite pastime: eavesdropping.

The deerstalker was my idea. It added a nice touch to the Halloween excitement of egging on "Agnes" and "Tootie" in their quest to throw flour into the faces of evil cat poisoners and other monsters. It also helped in discovering

the truth behind the mysterious injury to Tootie's lip.

I had discovered a fez in my combing of the costume department. However, a much better one was found complete with medallion to wear around my neck and handy pouch to store them in. I felt like I should be in the Shriner's Convention scene in *Bye, Bye Birdie* or the Grand Poobah of the Loyal Order of Waterbuffalo.

My next to final costume was by far the most challenging, but one of the most entertaining. The family is awakened EARLY by Mr. Smith on Christmas morning. I KNEW Grandpa had to have a memorable outfit for sleeping. I knew exactly what I wanted. The turquoise robe was already there. The costume mistress took my measurements for a long nightshirt and the *piece de resistance*: a wonderful multi-colored, tassled nightcap. I loved it. After the scene, not so much. I had to make the fastest change I have ever made into my summer outfit for the World's Fair. The hardest part of the role. At one of the dress rehearsals, I came out clutching the night shirt and made everyone think I was Linus from the Peanuts comic strip. Thankfully, I was able to devise a scheme to change quicker.

I think this will be my final post for *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Each production I have ever been in has been different than the last. Each performance of every production I have been in has been different than the last (for better or worse) but that is the beauty of live theatre. Everyone involved has to be on their toes and at their best. That is one of the many things I will always cherish about it.

To those who made a trip to St. Louis, I hope you had a great ride. To those who could not, my apologies. I hope that one was surely watching from above saw me continue to grow. There are better shows out there but I think big, happy, family-friendly shows need to be done if not only as an escape from today's troubling reality.

Were We Off To See The Wizard Or To St. Louis?

I'm not entirely sure but after the final curtain fell, I began to wonder. While we were striking the set, the tornado siren sounded not once... not twice... but three times (a lady). We all piled into the catacombs of the Huber and enjoyed pizza, cake, cookies, and other goodies. I'm so glad the warning did not sound until AFTER the show was over. But everything the theatre took in I believe today at least if not part of last night's take was all profit. Good for the joint venture of the Village Players and Huber Opera House. I just cannot express enough how great it was to be involved in this production in the beautiful theatre. There are stories I have heard about the building only a short 20 years ago that would not be appropriate for this blog.

I just find it amazing every time a set is taken down. All the time and hard work that went into the creation of such a beautiful picture and down in less than half that time. This was even harder because this was ONLY a three day event as opposed to the seven show run of the [WCCT](#). However, no matter the outcome, there is always something memorable to take away from every show... yes, even Grease had a few fantastic things come out of it and anyone who reads my blog KNOWS what that is.

But, once again, thank you to all involved in *Meet Me in St. Louis* to the Village Players and to the Huber Opera House. Hicksville Ohio has a wonderful venue that harkens back to an era long ago. I look forward to auditioning again.

Raindrops On Ceilings And Wrinkles On Grandpa

Amidst the pounding rain on the ceiling of the Huber, the cast gave another fine performance of *Meet Me in St. Louis*. This time, I had a larger fan base in attendance. Family and very great friends (two of which I had no idea were coming) were there. Backstage, some cast members were curious whether the weather would play havoc on the sound, but from audience reaction, it must not have. A funny thing happened during the entre'acte (big French work...the music played prior to the opening of Act 2), the keyboard seemed to be accompanied by a back beat or a metronome, but it was a very curious sound.

Following the performance, I was greeted by most of my fan base. I saw my niece and nephew who came with their mother. Then Sharon congratulated me (I DID NOT KNOW THAT SHE AND AL WERE COMING!!! WHAT A SURPRISE) Chris and Lisa were all proud as always. C even commented on my dancing ability. I dunno... I must just make it LOOK good, right?!

Before the show started, one of the Village Players asked if I had been fully stolen from the WCCT. I told her "Not on your life." I told her that I am planning on trying out for WCCT's production of *Little Shop of Horrors* in October (but never say never about trying out for future shows... I love the Huber stage!!!). "Katie" was very interested in trying out for it, as well. "Lon" also voiced an interest in auditioning as well. So, it seems that we might actually have more some more theatre crossing going on which can only mean good things for everyone. Chris even voiced an interest in auditioning for shows with the Village Players (hopefully, his busy schedule will allow that to happen).

It seems that I need to have a class in theatre etiquette for some of the other members of my group. I totally understand that the hour was late and we have the time change tonight so I will forgive this once, but remember IF YOU REALLY ENJOY A PERFORMANCE, the thing to do is to congratulate those in the cast before walking out the door. Otherwise, the cast member(s) who thought you were supposed to be in the audience might think you did not come at all. But thanks all the same for coming and feel free to comment on the performance. ☐

Ice Cream, Cotton Candy, Lions, And Trolleys

Tonight was opening night for Meet Me in St. Louis (Louis) and it went remarkably well from the stage, anyway. The director presented us each with a carnation and told us that we were the best cast she has ever had (and she has been involved with the theatre since 1974). Prior to the show, she gave a short speech on the historical significance of not only the show but also the Huber theatre itself.

But for anyone who has never had the opportunity to be inside the [Huber](#), you owe it to yourself to visit it. It is really amazing and has a large history to it... some good... some best left forgotten, but all part of history. I vaguely remember when the building was known as Tremors and eventually fell into ill repute until a group went in and cleaned it up. It really is a gorgeous site in which to see a [show](#) and even better, to perform.

During intermission, refreshments were sold. These were also a nice addition to the historical effect. Ice cream cones and

cotton candy were both introduced at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. The break lasted a bit longer than the typical 15 minutes. The ice cream was still hard and people were standing outside the building to get some. Carol, bless her heart, jumped in to help scoop ice cream.

During curtain call, I watched John Truitt, who stood to my right, to bow. Unfortunately, he was bowing all over the place at the wrong time. Finally, I just watched the center of the line for our mass bow. A wonderful show with a very responsive audience.

Following the performance, I went out to greet the public. Megan actually got me a totally unnecessary gift. Just her and Carol's presence in the audience was the only present I needed. There were a few other audience members I knew and had to chat with, lots of cool compliments for Grandpa. I even considered going out to McDonalds across the street in full dress and makeup, but decided against it.

This weekend seems to be jam-packed with theatrical productions. We have *Meet Me in St. Louis* at one theatre. *Lion in Winter* at another (hope it went well, [j](#). *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown* being presented at a nearby high school as well as a high school production of *Les Miserables*. Lots of good stuff happening if only I had time to see it all.

WHOOO HOOO WE HAVE A SHOW!!!

After Tuesday nights ever predictable rehearsal from heck, the cast, crew, and orchestra really pulled together tonight. Tuesday's rehearsal was predictably bad because I have yet to be in ANY show in which opening week was not full of pitfalls. I actually would be very surprised if I ever in one

that ran flawlessly... I would have to walk out and come back into the theatre.

The entire evening was magical. You would have thought we had a paying audience. This was the first time that Grandpa got to be in makeup. The director's major comment after the run is that I needed more age lines. OK, I will inform the makeup mistress of this tomorrow night. I DO NOT do my own makeup. Although a certain female within my home theatre scares me sometimes when she carries around a mascara applicator. Honestly, look into my eyes and tell me that my lashes need extended.

One thing that was mentioned in early rehearsals. Meet Me in St. Louis actually has a basis in fact. [Sally Benson](#)[✖], whose nickname was Tootie, wrote about her childhood experiences in St. Louis and attending the 1904 World's Fair. The house that her family lived in on Kensington was demolished in 1996 as it had fallen into disrepair. That is all that I know that is historically accurate. Like *The Sound of Music*, *The King and I*, *Titanic*, and any other historical musicals or plays like [Lion in Winter](#), I am sure there are many tidbits added for dramatic purposes. But what a treat. Total run time... we started at 8 and got done juuuust after 10. I think the 15 minute intermission went a bit long. We did get to indulge in some chocolate cake following the rehearsal. If you happen to be coming, the doors will open at 7.10 Friday and Saturday nights and I would say 1.50 Sunday afternoon. To The Cast... BREAK A LEG. To those attending... ENJOY!

Two To Go

Dress rehearsal #1! Typical. Still bugs, cast members losing their voice (Daughter Anna needs to gargle), technical difficulties, and other mishaps. Anyone involved in community theatre surely has any number of dress rehearsal nightmares. Happily, I have encountered worse so I knew exactly what to expect. One of the big problems tonight was the sound crew. Apparently, their script was not marked well with cues and such so large spaces in which nothing was heard by the actors on stage. However, IF we had done a full run through yesterday... but that is hindsight and we can only look forward. Lots of improvement continues and lots of positives from the director who actually wants MORE from Grandpa. In fact, some of the cast has mentioned that there has been a bit of typecasting in the role. I cannot understand that AT ALL! More to come.

Drop Hangars And Other Uninvited Guests

Today was a rather hectic, busy, but ultimately rewarding day. The Sunday before the opening of any show I have ever been in (no matter the venue) is known as Tech Sunday (or as I like to refer it... Hell Sunday). This day was much different than ones I am used to. Today involved trying on the rented costumes which we just acquired... I am happy to report that my costume fits nicely. After trying on the costume, I helped hang three drops that will be flown from the rafters of the Huber. FINALLY, the tech rehearsal began. Microphones tried for the first time... some successfully, others... well, we were

promised that they would be worked on. Good to know!!! the rehearsal was much more for the lights and sound cues as we just rushed through lines, songs, everything. I have every confidence that the dress rehearsals will go magnificently beginning tomorrow... The best of times; the worst of times.

I am happy to say that my ticket count continues to grow. Today, I had to pick up two for opening night. For Saturday night, I have already purchased 4 and tomorrow I have been asked to pick up 4 more. Glad to know that I am contributing to the audience count.

After rehearsal, I needed to get the tickets to Megan and Carol. Megan and I decided to make the final showing of [The Uninvited](#). A very suspenseful movie that I will not dwell upon since [taylhis](#) has already done so. I, too would find it hard to post a full review as there is just so much good stuff packed into the 90 minutes that it would be hard not to give anything away. Excellent movie. But I am pleased to say that we both enjoyed all the twists and turns and even were getting to the point of overanalysis while eating at Pizza Hut which I can now tell I will be paying for.

[Buy Movie Tickets Online Now!](#)



Some REALLY Last Minute Choreography

I guess it could be worse. Tonight, the Smith family octet blocked the movements for "Whenever I'm With You." With only three rehearsals to go (Sunday's tech rehearsal is that alone... a day for tech... getting light and sound cues, rented costumes

distributed and hoping they fit, etc. no run through Sunday), the routine is going to be fun... if IT KILLS ME and even easy... coming from a certifiable Redwood.. But it is a good thing we got it blocked because without the choreographer, we were just ambling around the stage looking lost. I think the choreographer has been at a total of 2 rehearsals (tonight being the second). But somehow, the other choreographed numbers are going really well and look good. The dance guru also commented on one of my many costumes. She was jealous and I told her that it would be hard to put away after the show's run. We also saw a copy of another press release from Hicksville's hometown newspaper. There is a website, but it has not been updated to include this week's headlines. I'll keep checking and post a link. I also realized once again tonight how much I LOVE to sing. Guess that is a good thing since I am in a musical?

Here I Go Again

I dunno... the past day or two I have just had this burst of creativity or energy or excitement as the days count down. Tonight, we actually went through the entire show start to finish for the first time without stopping only for notes between the acts. All in all, it went pretty well. We started at 7 and got done around 9.30. To me in my vast experience, two and a half hours for the first full run through is very good. The director was impressed. The last time we did ACT I alone, it ran an hour and a half. Tonight, it went an hour and ten minutes. Another run through awaits Thursday night with the dreaded tech rehearsal Sunday and then the adrenaline-filled, excitement of dress rehearsals and finally the THREE performance run wlll soon be upon us!!!

Grandpa's notes were decent. My energy for the opening title song were great. Full of energy, perfect characterization. A round of applause from the cast. I'm not sure how many shows this makes me on my resume. I will check that out in just a second. Only my twelfth since 2002 and my first since last summer... MUCH TOO LONG A BREAK FROM THE STAGE!!!

Not to sound (not sure what the word is but really negative), but I really hope that some of my best [friends](#) will be able to come and Meet Me in St. Louis but I know that if [C](#) is doing well every effort will be made. Hope you get well soon, pal. And once again, to [J](#) and the rest of the cast of *Lion in Winter*... Break a Leg!

It Takes A Village... Well Almost

Although there is just as much excitement and hard work involved in producing a non-musical, there is simply nothing like the thrill I personally get when involved with a BIG musical. Not only is there lines to memorize, character to establish, blocking to perfect, and everything else involved there is the added excitement of song (ok... and dance... there I SAID IT... I don't have to like it, but have to ACT like I like it). The cast of *Meet Me in St. Louis* is composed of stage veterans but also a lot of stage newcomers even in the major roles. The young man playing John Truitt (the male lead) has never before stepped on stage. The head of the Smith family also has had no previous stage experience. Perhaps one of the youngest actresses (age 12) has SOME of the most experience behind her. "Agnes" has had roles in *The Music Man*, *Aladdin*, *Schoolhouse Rock, Jr.*, and *Hicksville, the Musical*. The

gentleman playing Lon stated that his favorite role has been as Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors* (hmm...) plus he has directed *M*A*S*H* and [Murder by Poe](#) (sounds interesting... right up [j's](#) alley).

Tonight, before rehearsal began, we were shown a copy of The East Allen Courier (a small-town publication of Northeast Indiana) with the first press release from the show. Here is what my portion included:

JS(Grandpa Prophater) has done a lot of shows with the Williams County Community Theatre, but this is his first production with the Village Players. He majored in theatre at BGSU. His favorite roles have been Rooster in Annie and Morat Notborat Nichkor (honestly, I wrote the name out for her when I was interviewed and she still didn't get it correct) in Idol Night at the Karaoke Place. He is enjoying playing a character much older than himself and looks forward to the makeup that will surely be used to age him. He will be heard singing in the title song (and its many reprises), "Whenever I'm with You," and "A Day in New York."

Actually, with a cast full of newcomers as well as many stage veterans, we have come a long way since the middle of January. I'm sure that within the next week and a half we will have a fabulous musical in a gorgeous theatre. But after coming to see this production, be sure to check out WCCT's production of [Lion in Winter](#).