

# And now for something completely different...

Ah yes, Monty Python. From a BBC comedy series, to full length movies. Then the comedy troupe went their separate ways, sort of. A few of them combined talents again in Time Bandit, A Fish called Wanda and Time Bandits.

There is a reason I bring this up, and it isn't that I saw any of the shows or movies. I haven't read any news on any of the members of Monty Python. I was skimming through the channels and saw a commercial for a nature show, in it was a python. Yep, that's all it took for me to jump to the comedy of Monty Python. And if you think about their comedy, it fits. Off the wall and sometimes completely unexpected.

I remember when they were first on PBS, my parents did not want me watching that filthy British show. I'm thinking they only saw the beginning credits, and didn't know what the show was. I would try to watch it whenever they were out during the air time. I didn't get to see too many, but I saw enough to shape what I considered to be funny.

And now for your enjoyment [try here](#).

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# Winter is just getting started!!

Yesterday (Monday 12-Jan) at this time we had winter storm warning forecast for this afternoon into the morning and a Blizzard watch for Wednesday afternoon into the evening. The

winter storm warning has been canceled, but we still may have blizzard conditions tomorrow. This is on top of the 8 to 12 inches of snow that fell over the weekend. It is only January. Tomorrow or this evening it is supposed to get very cold. The forecast is calling for single digit highs (F). Reminds me of some past winter in NW Ohio. Back during my Freshman year of College we had some winter weather that really closed down most of NW Ohio for days. People around here still talk of the Blizzard of '78. A local radio station has an annual on air auction event to remember that storm. It is the 30th year of that auction (started 1 year after the storm). A local PBS station produce and re-runs annually a documentary on that storm. I remember being snowed in at College and we were wondering if we would be able to get food at the cafeteria. I also remember going out in an old Volkswagen Beetle equipped with dune buggy wheels. Classes were canceled for the only time in the 4 years I was at the school.

Then back in 1984, I got married. The day after our wedding (the night/morning of) set a record for low temperature that, as far as I know is still a record. For the next few years, the days surrounding our anniversary were always very, very cold (Highs were below zero F). We always looked forward to those cold days in January.

Then there was the January of 1993, I had just started at my current place of employment the September before. We started having work canceled (I work at a school) because of extremely cold temperatures. I felt bad taking off work and getting paid for it. I never worked at a place that canceled because of cold. My employer no longer does this, since we are not in charge of getting the buses running (Gelling diesel fuel was the cause of all the closures). After few years, I wasn't so rough on myself for those weather related closures, now that we don't have it, I kind of miss it.

So this year, we've had ice, snow and are forecast for more

snow, blowing snow and cold temperatures. While I really don't want much more snow (Sorry daughter #3), I don't mind the cold temperatures in January. Those temperatures bring back many fond memories for me. January and cold weather always went hand in hand. What will we get in the next few weeks, who knows. Stay safe, stay warm is my winter motto.

For further enjoyment, the winter of 1982 was interesting too. There were blizzard conditions in April. 8 inches of snow fell overnight. My new boss, (I started in February), was on vacation in Florida. He was wondering where everyone was. I arrived at work around noon (start time was 8:00) and was the only person in my department. I had to travel farther than anyone else too. For some reason my boss didn't seem to believe the April snow storm happened, at least not until he checked out the news. Massive Ohio snow storm did make the national news in 1982. Fun winter stuff.

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## Winter Weather Ahead

I'm all cozy at home waiting for a winter storm. We already have about 3.5 to 4 inches of snow on the ground with up to another 12 inches still coming. I realize that for some parts of this country, that is just flurries, but for my part of Ohio, that is a major storm. We just aren't equiped to handle that much snow. My guess is that if we get that much, there will be some level of snow emergency here. Oh well, I have plenty of food and firewood.

The house is very comfortable, I finished a wonderful bowl of stew, some fruit and a cup of tea. The creature comforts are here. I wish I could say everything was going well, but I'm missing an evening with friends tonight and my youngest is a

bit under the weather. That, of course, is the way of life.

As I've said this part of Ohio is not used to this much snow. There are many High School basketball games being canceled. Dance classes canceled. Bingo Canceled. And the biggest thing that indicates bad weather, the outlet mall nearby will be opening later in the day than normal... Shock of all shocks!!!

Planned events for the weekend – canceled or postponed, but I'm home safe and fairly sound. That my friends makes a good evening for me. Now off to study my lines....

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## Late night thoughts

I usually spend Saturday evenings at my oldest daughter's house. This is 1 hour away from where I live, so it is a bit of a drive to get home. We go late into the evening playing all sort of games, the normal game is some sort of 'role playing' game. The games are always fun for me, but that is not the focus of this post.

Nope, the focus is my thoughts on the drive home, and the 45 minutes to an hour I need to spend to 'unfocus' from my drive home. Driving late at night, I push my body awake. Kind of like a coffee kick without the coffee. I can just force myself to be alert, unless I'm really very tired. This comes in very handy on long drives, or other activities that need my full attention. It is a 'gift' I've always had. As with all gifts, there is a downside. It does take some time to unwind.

Anyway after all this, I was thinking on the drive home about where I am in life. I am an only parent, but my daughters are growing up. Two are married and out of the house, one is

engaged to be married soon, the youngest is now a senior in High School, just months from turning 18. They don't need their dad as much as they did 5 short years ago. I've been a widower for 5 years, so in most peoples eyes I would be considered single. I won't go into the ins and outs of all the differences with this label, but for me, I prefer the widower label to the single label. I never made the choice to be alone, it was kind of forced on me. That in and of itself is enough for me.

I now know of some people trying to 'set me up'. Dating, while it has crossed my mind, isn't my main concern. I'm not out there looking. If someone falls in my lap, so to speak, I guess I wouldn't mind. But looking for someone to be with is not my primary goal right now. I have good friends, wonderful daughters, somewhat strange, but likable family, and hobbies that keep my mind occupied. I've been busy trying to find out who I am. For so many years I was part of a well oiled team. That team got split up, and now I'm a solo act. I'm just starting to find out what is important to me. There really hasn't been any time to spend dating. I'm not even sure I want to go through the hassle of getting to know someone again. Never enjoyed that when younger, I'm fairly certain I won't now. My wife and I kind of just clicked together. Not from the first meeting, but within a few dates, it was like we knew each other forever. Spent 20 years both knowing her and getting to know her better, not a bad way to spend 20 years. Now, I'm not even sure what I would be looking for, but then again, I wasn't sure 25+ years ago either.

I was also thinking about my weekly gaming sessions at my daughter's house. Does this infringe on the time I should be spending with the two younger daughter still (at least somewhat) in the 'nest'? Do they need more of my time, or is this a good use of my time. I tend to enjoy the gaming, and it does relax me. Good point in dealing with the day to day troubles/situations my two at home can give me. I'm thinking

I should just talk to the other 2 involved. Yep, that is the answer there.

Also thinking about how much time I should spend with the theater. Yes, I'm currently preparing for a show, I'm on the production board, I tend to volunteer for other projects. Am I spending too much time there?

Do I spend too much time blogging? Yes, sometimes I do. (like now) Could I use time better? Sure. Are other interests suffering from this? You betcha. But this is the place I clear my head, so I have more room to fit all the other stuff going on. Doesn't need to be a daily habit, but the clearing is beneficial.

Yes, all this and more went through my brain on an hour drive. Now I've relaxed and I'm able to get much needed rest. Read through at the playhouse later this afternoon.

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## **Do you wonder?**

A day like today was made for wondering. Warm (for January) and very sunny. A day made for quiet reflection. To sit and see the sun shining through the trees with a fire in the fireplace was most enjoyable. With the warm temperature of the day, the fire has now been allowed to fade. The sun is doing an wonderful job providing extra heat to the house. It is comfortable.

So in these times of quiet reflection, I often wonder about the past and future. More of the future now, than the past, but the past does have a place in my heart.

So today I'm wondering what my future holds. What the futures

of my daughters' holds. It is enough to wonder. I don't need any answers yet, the wondering and pondering of this is enough.

My hope is that my daughters are happy in life. I had a very happy life for twenty years. I would hope for at least the same for my daughters.

I don't need to wonder about the past anymore. The past is just that, the past. It is over, the wondering is over. The past is a place to store memories of the hopes of days gone by. A place to keep memories, both good and bad.

Do you wonder about your future? The future of those you love? Today, tomorrow, next month? Do you make plans, or just live day by day? What happens when the plans fail? Do you wonder?

My plans in life are simple. I want to be content. I was happy and sad. Happy is very good. Sad is not so good. Content is restful. Today I am content.

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## **All this and something more**

Did you every have a day you thought would have turned out differently? Did you ever expect one thing, and have something else happen? To answer those questions, yes, I did. Yesterday was one of those days.

It was decided earlier that my daughters and I would go to the Zoo to see the Christmas Light display before it closed for the season. As a family we've always enjoyed visiting the light display. As a family we were members since 1984. The Lights before Christmas started in 1986 and has been our

family tradition since that date. We took our small children in strollers, pushed grandfathers (due to health or injury) on wheelchairs. We took relatives from warmer climates on very cold evenings. We even went on cold rainy nights. It was a winter escape. As a family we enjoyed the evenings together.

Since 2003, we have not been able to attend as a complete family. My wife was too ill to take the cold weather in her final month, and I stayed with her. She hasn't been there since that year of course. The years following one daughter or another has not been there as we toured the lights. This year my daughter in Florida was not in Ohio to attend. I am very sorry she missed it again.

So three of my daughters, my son-in-law, some friends when to the lights, on the 5th anniversary of my dear wife's death. I thought a melancholy day was in order. I forgot how much I enjoy the company of my family and friends. I also forgot the magic of seeing hundreds of colorful lights. A day of memories and togetherness. Not really a sad memory last night at all.

After the evening of lights, we went to my eldest daughter's house and shared a glass of wine and bit of dinner. A toast to her memory and more conversation. A wonderful night. I needed that. It was another healing effect on my life. Family is wonderful.

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## Holiday Hubbub

The past few weeks have been busy, very busy. Here I was hoping for some time to relax and more stuff seems to happen. I had nothing planned for today or most of tomorrow. A time for catching up on all those things that get put to the side during busy times.



That isn't going to happen at all. I need to get my truck looked at by a body shop or two. I'm not sure how long that will take. Then I have to pick up a new head light and see if I can get it pointed in the right direction. Until the truck get fixed up, the headlight assembly is pointing to the sky. The high beam works, but never hits the road. The low beam exploded when the deer hit the truck. The assembly itself seems to have lost any mounting to the vehicle. Which may be a good thing. It is still in 1 piece. Those assemblies are expensive.

Then there will be more things to go to. One more trip to Toledo, for the family, tomorrow night. And any New Years Eve plans. Go here, and there and everywhere.

This holiday season has been busy. In most ways that was very good. In some ways very tiring.

Oh well, off to see a man about a truck.

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## **Traditional Christmas Dinner??**

We had none of the normal trappings of a Christmas dinner. No ham or turkey. No yams or potatoes. No green beans or corn. Not even a goose or pudding.

We did have family close and dear. Cousins and siblings, parents and grandparents. Good food, good conversation, good times. We met early and stayed all day. Presents were exchanged. More conversation, some more food, and a cup of coffee or two. More conversation, more laughs.

What did we have?

Homemade pita, Greek salad, homemade hummos, Kafta, Gyro meat, sliced vegetables, Grilled Kabob chicken. Yes, a Greek dinner. It was wonderful. And for our family it was completely normal. We've had everything from pizza to Chinese food for Christmas and other family gatherings. Eating new foods is a way to celebrate life and love.

Merry Christmas.

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## As the children grow older

They used to set cookies out for Santa, and a big carrot or two for the reindeer. A big glass of Milk could also be found for that jolly old elf.

Then bright and early, actually more dark and early, they would wake up. Anticipation filled their eyes. Waiting, ever waiting for Mom and Dad to say it was Ok to go to their gifts.

Christmas morning was always the time for that 1 big gift the girls wanted. Christmas eve was passing gifts out from our own little family. Even after the existence and identity of Santa was discovered, the girls waited for the Santa gifts on Christmas morning. We did well at hiding the gifts, or even how we were able to get them. Our oldest thought for years, that her Grandparents were helping Santa. Not true and it never was. Save a dollar or two every week and the presents could be found.

This year there are less presents in the house. The girls all know where Santa gets his gifts. They don't wake up before the crack of dawn anymore (Ok, well I still does, but that is her

everyday wake up time). No cookies, no carrots, and no glass of milk was waiting for Santa. Of course Santa joined the gym and is trying to loose weight. ☐

Later today, much will be the same. On to the grandparents to celebrate the day. Much will not. 2 daughters are married and on their own. One many states away. Another daughter engaged, but she, and her fiance will be with us this day. One in her last year of High School. Their mother has been gone for 5 Christmases now, she is missed.

Again, may you find hope and peace during this season, and through the entire year.

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## Five Years Ago (Part 6)

Christmas Eve 5 years ago was not an experience I would ever want to go through again. My dear wife was very sick and feeling bad from the latest round of radiation. Snow was falling heavily, and it took much longer to get to Toledo than anticipated. On top of all that we were going to put our dog in a kennel so we could spend the holidays with family in Toledo.

It snowed so hard, that I could not find the kennel. It was my first time there, my oldest sister set it up for us, our Christmas gift. Road signs were covered with snow and we spent a long time trying to find the right turns. The dog never made it to the kennel. There was no room for him at my in-laws, and a cold cramped basement for him at my sister's, were Christmas Eve dinner was.

Tired and angry, I took my daughters to dinner with my side of the family. After dinner, I dropped the two youngest off at

Grandma's and took the dog and my second oldest back home. With about 8 hours of rest, my daughter and I went back to Grandma's to have dinner with my wife's side of the family. For me, it was a very tense day, but I put it behind me as much as possible to make sure my wife had the best day possible.

We really didn't know how much more time she would have, and I didn't want to know.

After that Christmas, I tried to forget the events of the night before. I was never able to. 5 years later I remember almost every word. Words said in anger and frustration. If I could take them back I would. Little did I know how they would haunt me. That Christmas Eve was not the one I would ever have wanted for our last one together.