

Morning Guilty Pleasure

This morning, I was able to catch most of *Regis and Kelly* (the ONLY celebrity focused morning show I enjoy watching). As I made mention of earlier, John Stamos is now in previews for *Bye, Bye Birdie* for its return to the Broadway stage since the debut 50 years ago (WOW!). Mr. Stamos will be playing the lead part of Albert Peterson. Dick Van Dyke originated the role of Conrad Birdie's manager in the original production as well as the original movie. The cinematic experience does not do the stage version justice at all. Not sure why but like many musicals it is much better to have that live, theatrical experience. I honestly cannot think of many musicals that have translated better or at least as enjoyably on the screen. I guess I would say *The Sound of Music* only because it has been so ingrained into pop culture as a movie that many forget or don't realize that it was Rodgers and Hammerstein's theatrical swan song. That reason and the puppet show version of "The Lonely Goatherd" is my favorite part of the movie and IS NOT in the stage version.

Ok... back to my original topic. During the interview, Reege made mention of the fact that Ann-Margrock (err.. Margret) played the young girl, Kim MacAfee in the movie. Shortly after the movie was filmed, Ms. Margret would be Presley's leading lady in my mother's favorite Elvis movie, *Viva Las Vegas*. However, Mom was not aware that she was in the cast of *Birdie*.

Here's a few more tidbits: one of our fellow [tangenteers](#) has played the role of pop singing idol/draftee Conrad Birdie. I assisted in the directing of my high school alma mater's production a few years ago. AND there was a veery short lived sequel (4 performances) entitled [Bring Back Birdie](#) which was set twenty years following the events of the original. Twenty years is quite a LONG time to wait to attempt a comeback.

Here There Be Trekkers

Tonight was our first dress rehearsal complete with newspaper reviewer and minus one key character from the production... UGH! I dunno... week of opening with 4 rehearsals to go and one of the major cast members is at a meeting but I guess it must have been important. So we had a fill-in read lines from the audience. The reviewer for the Crescent is very personable and has been exceptionally favorable in a few of the WCCT shows he has critiqued and the first show I was in with the Village Players. He even quoted a line from a review of one of my characters: "A gleefully unrepentent psycho" or something like that. He must have remembered seeing *Grease*?

Before we began, the subject of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* was addressed by Mr. Greer. Particularly, the *Enterprise's* fly over, around, and into the behemoth ship that took what seems an eternity to sit through. We then focused on the number of Trek fans in the cast of which there are many. The youngest female in the cast is named Katherine Janeway after the first female character to lead a Star Trek television series as captain of the *U.S.S. Voyager*. Another has a husband who has thousands of Trek books. I used to read the novels from time to time but have since lost track unless there is a really special one.

A third really got my interest soaring. It seems that she is a relative of DeForest Kelley (R.I.P) who played my personal favorite character of all Trekdom: the inscrutable, crusty, curmudgeonly Dr. Leonard H. "Bones" McCoy. She, however, did not inherit the searing blue "Kelley eyes" as her brother had.

Ok... back to the rehearsal. I think that with the absence of one of our actors, it went awfully well. Hopefully, this will

be the LAST time we are minus a performer. But how fun was that to discover something new about so many in our small cast? Hopefully, our kindly reviewer does not print TOO much about the murder mystery in his article... no spoilers. As soon as I see it, I will make note of it in another post.

3 Days, 22 Hours and counting...

Absolute Power Corrupting Absolutely

There have been various interpretations on the old theme of superhuman powers being transferred to another person. Last night, I revisited one of those in a season 1 episode of *Smallville*. During a freak accident during a lightning storm, Clark Kent's powers are passed to one of his high school classmates. Clark gets to discover what it is like to be a "normal" teenager while "Eric" comes to discover that being the world's most powerful adolescent is not all it is cracked up to be. Looking at the show, I realized that it is a spin on the old classic adage of Nature vs. Nurture.

Clark's initial reaction to his loss is one of confusion and fear. Being able to lift the family truck out of the mud, driving a stake into the ground with his bare hands, and other tasks that would be impossible for mortal men were a snap for the Boy of Steel. However, the sight of his own blood sends him into near shock. Over time, he learns to embrace his "normalcy" and not be afraid to engage in a game of two-on-two without fear of accidentally using his powers to injure one of his friends... even if one of them is Lana Lang's quarterback boyfriend. One of my favorite moments from the episode is

Lana's observation that Clark doesn't seem to "have the weight of the world on his shoulders."

On the other hand, Eric takes a totally different approach to his new-found gifts. He flaunts them in front of people on the street. He flirts with a girl right in front of her boyfriend and flings him across the school parking lot smashing him on top of a parked car. When a powerless Clark attempts to intervene (his nature or is his nurturing), he receives a few bruised ribs and a cut to the head. Eric's parents are terrified of the "freak" he has become and determine to send him away to be studied and to find out what happened to him. Overnight, the teenager has acquired strength and abilities he could only dream of before but is totally unprepared to handle them.

Nurture: Jonathan and Martha Kent discovered a toddler inside a rocket ship in the middle of a field and raised that child with morals and responsibilities. Clark was not meant to score touchdowns with his power but for something more. As his powers advanced over time, the Kent's were determined to hide these gifts and use them when necessary and secretly in order to protect their adopted son.

On the flip side, Eric was an awkward kid and constantly degraded by his parents; particularly his father. It may seem cliché to paint Clark in the best possible light and to show his counterpart in shadow. But I think the point here was to show how two different people from different backgrounds deal with extraordinary circumstances. A very good episode from the beginning of the series.

OK... nerdy sidebar: Shawn Ashmore who played Eric also was in the X-Men films as Bobby Drake/Iceman. His twin brother, Aaron played a certain cub reporter for the Daily Planet in the past two seasons of *Smallville*. Such a nerd!

Big Red Robin And The Crazy Technicolor Quilt

I recently started to catch up on some of my DVR viewing (hours and hours of programming, someday when I'm more free...). I watched one of the tens of episodes of *Batman: The Brave and the Bold* that harkened back to the 60s series. The pre-credits teaser found the Caped Crusader and the Boy Wonder up against a villain known as [Crazy Quilt](#). The villain was using a weapon that fired deadly multi-colored beams of light at the dynamic duo. Robin uses a piece of reflective glass to throw the beams back at the baddie rendering him blind.

Years later, Crazy Quilt escapes from Arkham Asylum and vows revenge on Robin. Now, we are presented with an older, but not a lot wiser version of the crimefighter. He no longer patrols Gotham City but is the guardian of a community known as Bludhaven. The last thing he wants is his old mentor coming to town to swoop in and save the day. He grew weary of the "Old chum" bit, felt he had nothing more to learn from the World's Greatest Detective, and wanted to escape the Shadow of the Bat. However, as Bats reminded him, Speedy (The Flash's protege), Aqualad, and Red Arrow all served with older heroes before setting out on their own. Once again, the team regrouped to battle an old foe.

Since there have been a total of three characters to assume the role, I was curious as to which Robin we were getting.

- Dick Grayson is the original and probably the most known. Bruce Wayne's youthful ward reached adulthood and became [Nightwing](#).
- Jason Todd inherited the role and was murdered by the

Joker (ironically, this came after a nationwide 900 number poll in which the public decided the fate of the hero).

- The most recent Robin is Tim Drake. I know little about him apart from his name.
- In this episode, we have a pre-Nightwing Dick Grayson.

The look and feel of the cartoon very closely resembled the classic series. Several of the BEST devices of the show were there. Notice I said **BEST**! No bat shark repellent spray here and no exploding rubber shark for that matter. But we had the classic bat traps and the obligatory “Holy delusions of grandeur, Batman!”

A very fun episode!

Before We Got LOST...

there was the original J.J. Abrams creation, [Alias](#). It began in 2001 and ran for a total of five thrilling seasons. Its debut was actually delayed after the events of 9/11. Tonight, while others watched a race (snooze), I decided to revisit the series courtesy of the DVD collections I received as Christmas presents over the last 8 years (I only have the first three seasons).

In a nutshell, the series centers on young, very attractive, very talented college student and full-time “bank employee,” Sydney Bristow (played by the very attractive, very talented Jennifer Garner... Ben Affleck is one lucky man is all I’m sayin’). The bank employ is actually a cover for her role as a government operative. Miss Bristow believes that she is working for a “covert division of the CIA” known as SD-6. However as Sydney learns in the premiere episode, SD-6 is not

at all what it appears to be.

As with *Lost*, there were many plot scenarios that if you missed one episode you became seriously confused. I honestly cannot remember if this is the way the entire series played out, but each of the first three episodes ended with a cliffhanger. This is reminiscent of other television shows' practice of leaving the audience hanging at the end of the season. Just one of the many series that you wish you could revisit for the first time. But enough time has passed that it almost seems fresh.

Ms. Garner does have a tie to the area. She performed in summer stock at the [Barn Theatre](#) in Augusta, Michigan along with such notables as the late Jonathan Larson, creator of the musical *Rent*.

Papa, Can You Hear Me?

This weekend being the one in which we all honor our fathers, I thought it would be fun to take a peek at fictional dads who have been presented in television. In the beginning, it seemed as if families were shown as perfect, squeaky-clean and conflicts could be resolved in 30 minutes or less. Conflicts like how to get your son to eat brussel sprouts (don't think I've ever had the opportunity to taste them).

I'm not sure when the switch from perfect family to more realistic family took place. I'm thinking in the 70s with *All in the Family*. I think ultra-conservative Archie Bunker was one of the first fathers to have more to solve than a scrape on the knee or to ease a bruised ego.

Today's popular, fictional fathers seem to be lovable

buffoons who somehow manage to fumble and stumble through parental misadventures but somehow come to a somewhat happy ending. Homer J. Simpson has been working at the power plant, drinking Duff beer at Moe's, and going home to his interesting family for 20+ years. A highly inflated picture of the blue-collar everyman... must still be working.

My own father is a combination of the three, not so much the idealised father of 50-70s television more like the Al Bundy type... HAHA. Wouldn't trade him for anything, although...

Baignoire

Sitting here watching the Scripps National Spelling Bee (not sure if it was taped prior or not... OH, it is live) but the staged musical bumpers are getting rather tiresome. Get on with the competition already! It almost seems like a televised round of golf with the commentators including Tom Bergeron (of Dancing with the Stars and America's Funniest Home Videos (IS THAT STILL ON) fame... why?). The audience is dead silent until a comment is made. One speller very humorously attempted to spell her word and after said "DING?" indicating her belief that she misspelled the word.

The gentleman who announced the words attempted to put the spellers at ease with some of the sentences he used with the given word.

"Enough of this low-carb garbage! Bring me the palatschinken."

There were at least two words that are types of cheese: *neufchatel* and *caerphilly*. Someone must have been hungry when

they made the official list. Two the three final spellers were friends who moved away from each other and met again on the national stage.

The winning word: *laodicean* spelled by a young Kansas girl named Kavya.

One word prompted me to make this post: *baignoire*. It is derived from the French meaning either a box in the lowest level of a theatre OR a bathtub. The pronouncer failed to give the second definition. No [numnah](#) this year.

Doomsday In Smallville

I can accept most things concerning the long, tedious 8 year run of Smallville... For example, character introductions much earlier than acceptable for the sake of increasing ratings. For another, the Incredible Hulk meets Superman interpretation of Doomsday HOWEVER, when viewers have been waiting all season long for what is supposed to be the much-anticipated knockout/dragout battle of Clark Kent's life (still just Clark, no suit, no secret identity except for his moniker of The Red-Blue Blur) and they get next to nothing... well. All season long, the arrival of Doomsday has been announced... even going back to the finale of Season 7. And we get two minutes of less than thrilling spectacle. This creature was supposed to be the end of Superman and it was handled poorly. Sure there was a super catch of a flying automobile, rescuing a small child, a few big explosions, but that was about it... LAME! I had been waiting all season for that.

Oh, yeah. For two years, one of the comics mainstay characters has been a part of the show (even if he was once again one of those aforementioned too early to come to the

canvas characters). Jimmy Olsen was killed by Doomsday. At his funeral, we find out that the character's name was Henry James Olsen. The character's younger brother is given his camera. The new character's name? James Bartholomew Olsen: the cub reporter of the Daily Planet. UGH!

Next season, the show is moving to Friday nights which is typically the graveyard of network television. Will I watch? I have my doubts. I enjoy Elsewhere stories as much as anyone, but I see this turn of events as an insult. And on Thursday nights in the 8PM time slot... some teenage angst drama featuring vampires. At least my other favorite show is still looking bright.

Shocking Lamp In A Shout Out

Before turning in for the night, I like to periodically check the guide to see who is going to be on the late night gab fests. Sometimes, they pique my interest (Jack Hanna on Letterman in which case I have to pass the word to tangent's own animal lover, taylhis). Last night, Jay Leno had the curiosity named Lisa Lampanelli. I was introduced to this overtly shocking comedienne while on our trek to NYC and all I can say is WOW! She stepped out and fondled band leader, Kevin Eubanks and was quick to make a heated quip about first guest, Vin Diesel ("tall hairless man, don't know whether to nurse you or spank you"). However, she kept to her goal of making it through her set without being bleeped, but came awfully close.

Before the guest came out, Jay's "Headline" segment always is worth a view on Monday night. One of the pieces was a playbill from a high school production of *Kiss Me Kate*. One of

the things I like about some playbills is the shoutout/pat on the back spaces friends and relatives buy to give encouragement to the performers on stage (something that has been mentioned in our community theatre but...). In any case, the playbill presented last night included the rather encouraging line:

Don't bother coming home because you suck.

Love, Mom and Dad

OUCH... even if it was meant as a joke what a message to send a young person. No wonder the country's youth has self-esteem issues.

The Story Behind The Mask

Have I yet posted on the coincidence involved in the Halloween movie franchise (at least the original 1978 movie)? Well... if so, I apologize. It seems that during the 3 year run of the original Star Trek series, William Shatner was fitted for a death mask. Perhaps if the series had continued on the Enterprise's five year mission ("to seek out new life and new civilizations"... yada, yada, yada...), the good Captain Kirk would have met his demise (guess we will never know). As it turns out, the mask made its way into the hands of the creators of the horror film. You can follow the [link](#) to a more in depth detail with the Shat himself being interviewed by his daughter, Melanie.. I think he might have been confusing the actor Mike Myers with the fictional villain Michael Myers.