

Happy 100th Birthday

This year marks two centennial anniversaries. Of course, the most famous being the launch and sinking of the SS ~~Minnow~~ (err,,) *RMS Titanic*. Today, our village celebrated the anniversary of the dedication of Clem, the Civil War Monument that first stood at the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Indiana Street until it was moved to its present location on July 22nd, 1972 (just under a year before the author of this post made his own appearance in the world). Clem's dedication date was May 30th, 1912 but what a lovely (if a little warm) day to honor him.

My preparation for the day began shortly after my recital. I had been asked if I would be interested in performing a few songs for the day around the time of "Songs I Have Learned" but really had hard little aside from the inquiry. The songs I had to choose from was vast. I figured two from the Civil War era would be appropriate or anything patriotic. I decided on first, "Aura Lee" a little ballad written during the period which lent its melody to a very popular song made famous by a past artist which was the title of his first movie. ANYONE?! (no cheatin). With some help, I also decided on "Just Before the Battle, Mother" another lovely tune that was popular (with different lyrics) on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line.

I was going to perform the pieces accompanied by my guitar-playing coach. Unfortunately, she forgot that she had a prior commitment today. I eventually decided that I would sing them *a capella* unless a suitable accompaniment track could be found. Fortunately, yesterday I was informed that another performer for the event had a copy of "Aura Lee." Because I was really unfamiliar with my second selection, I decided to sing "America the Beautiful." A good thing I did, because the other singer was singing "Just Before the Battle..."

This morning, I made my way to the bandstand where the

accompaniment tracks were waiting. I could have sung them either way but the tracks were both easy to perform to even if they were in a lower key.

So, after the Right Honorable Mayor /Friendly Friar made his opening remarks and the high school band played a few pieces, I was invited to take the stand and performed my "five pieces." It could have been five; however, the other singer stole at least three of the pieces I had considered ("Oh, Shenandoah," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," as well as the aforementioned piece). I was congratulated on my performance by several members of the crowd who braved the temperatures.

At least there were not trains that passed by as happened a few years ago when my cousin and I performed during our summer festival.

All in all, a fun little ceremony and a very fitting tribute to Clem and all the service men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Hopefully, we all made a special effort to remember them today but also everyday.