

Picard's Wonderful Life

I know that there have been many spins on the themes of *It's A Wonderful Life* and I revisited one of my favorites the other night. In *The Next Generation* episode "Tapestry," Captain Jean-Luc Picard lies in sickbay following a mortal wound sustained during a battle. While clinging to life, the good captain is stands on the threshold to eternity where he is greeted by the wonderfully charismatic entity known as Q. The nearly omnipotent character offers Jean-Luc a choice: spend eternity by his side or return to the past and relive a life defining moment. If Jean-Luc changes the event, Q promises him that nothing earth-shattering will come of it.

The event centers around an incident involving the young, brash, devil-may-care Ensign Jean-Luc Picard and two of his fellow Starfleet Academy friends. The trio is on starbase for one last hurrah before going their separate ways. After a game of chance, Picard's friend discovers that he has been cheated by a rather nasty Naussican and a bar fight ensues. At the end of the fight, Jean-Luc is stabbed through the heart (a feeling he laughs at), requiring him to receive an artificial replacement. Also involved is the relationship involving his female friend which may or may not be a regret.

Will Picard change the course of his life? What will happen if he does? Although he is "just not that important" to the universe as a whole, what changes will occur in his personal life? Or will he simply be lead off to an eternity of what must be his own personal hell with Q?

The Popular Social Networking Site Called “Book Face”

It's time for me to officially make my presence known on Facebook. If you watch the awesome NBC comedy “The Office”, then you'll understand the reference in the title of this blog post involving a creative Halloween costume worn by Jim Halpert, a character on my favorite show – it was hilarious!

But back to me learning Facebook... some time ago I signed up for a Facebook account (don't even remember why), but then I stopped using it because it started doing freaky things behind my back – like randomly adding mere acquaintances and business associates as my Facebook friends. That was NOT the way I had envisioned social networking! But my youth group kids have been BEGGING me to join Facebook, and since I took pictures of them last week, we decided that my homework challenge is to get on Facebook so I can post our pictures. So here I go, and the first thing I'll be doing is looking for a way to NOT invite everyone on my email contact list to be my Facebook friend!

Stories of life, love and family

Since I've been sharing some family hints in the kitchen, I remembered many stories and recipes that went together. Most of these stories were due to the fact that my children were picky about the food they ate. Some are more picky, some grew out of the picky stage. As you may be able to tell, some are still in the picky stage. I've decided that my blog is not the

‘stage’ that I want for these stories and recipes. Some may make it here, just because they were so much fun. Others will not. After this project is finished I may want to share the completed work, at least with my girls. ☐

Why share this here? I think I need a little bit of pestering just to get it done. So I’m asking, maybe begging, for my loyal readers to comment on this post every so often. Ask me how it is going, or even if I worked on it.

Some fun Huh?

Week The Third

Ok... former director and current fellow cast member, this is for you (I expect a comment, btw ☐) Tonight began the third week of rehearsals and there was A LOT GOING ON! We have posters to distribute and I grabbed enough to paste all over E-town. We were all informed that Hicks-TV (or is it HIX=TV?) is going to be by tomorrow night to film a piece on the show. My aforementioned former director/current fellow cast member mentioned that this was her least favorite part of her directorial debut? I thought my debut on the news was a blast. Even Travis said it was very humorous as I threw the interviewer for a whirl. Here is a [link](#), Beth... just for you (you can have something to watch as well as read). I must also commend our director in his continued efforts to step into multiple roles for missing cast members... male and female alike.

As for rehearsal, it is coming along quite nicely (which is subjective... I don’t think nice is a good way to describe Mr. Potter). Apparently, my evilness is improving but he said I need to slow down a bit... which I have heard before. Well... as

soon as my goon decides to show himself, it will be easier to make my entrances and exits. But even going through the scenes, I am developing even more ideas and with just under a month to go...

Oh, yes. On the way to my car following rehearsal, I was flashed by said cast member and she had her young son with her as well... SHAME ON YOU! I AM SHOCKED! ☐

Stone Soup

I'm not sure how many people remember the story of 'Stone Soup'. I've heard it many different ways, but the basic story is always the same. Someone who is hungry (beggar, soldier, hobo, ect.) offers to make stone soup when nobody has any food to share. He starts with a pot, some water and a stone. All during the making of the soup, he says out loud how good it would be if he just had 1 more item to add. By the end of the story he has made a pot of soup, getting all the ingredients from those who turned down his meal request earlier. He shares the soup and they all agree it was the best soup ever.

I've made something like stone soup for years with the various leftovers we have had. I don't think I actually used a stone, but I did call it stone soup once or twice. That is when I wasn't serving garbage or poison (family joke, no poison or garbage actually served. ☐). So when you have a lot of leftovers that won't quite make a meal, see if they could be added to a stone soup recipe.

Basic Stone Soup

Cooked Meat

Seasonings

Vegetables

Noodles/pasta if desired

Stock

If the vegetables are fresh you will need to cook them in the stock before adding other ingredients. Use Chicken stock with leftover chicken or turkey. Beef stock with leftover Beef. For leftover Pork, you can use either or combine both. Vegetable stock is also good for all meats. For a cream soup, add milk and thickener of choice at the end of the cooking time. My favorite thickener is leftover mashed potatoes.

Varieties

Mexican – Go wild with your spices, use some taco seasoning. Use a tomato or vegetable stock. Good vegetables in this are corn, green beans, pork and beans, pinto, lima or kidney beans. Left over pasta sauce, marinara, sloppy joes works well.

Oriental – Try adding Ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, soy sauce to the meal. This works well with leftover chicken. Add in oriental vegetables.

Beef Stew. Great when you have leftover beef on any kind. You can even make hamburger stew. Add stew vegetables and use mashed potatoes to thicken the stock.

Stone Chili – Left over Meatloaf, hamburgers, sloppy joe, ect. Add regular chili seasonings, some canned tomato soup and beans.

Try your own variations.

This also works with non leftovers. Just add ingredients until it tastes the way you want.

If you really want a group experience, have everyone (at least 4 people) bring a soup ingredient. Combine all at a Stone Soup party.

Yummy Healthy Snack

My husband and I have been enjoying this snack lately, and it's healthy and easy to make. You'll need:

Apples – Type is up to you – we think Granny Smith tastes best for this. I also tried it with Gala apples which are good, but I don't recommend softer varieties like Red Delicious.

Peanut Butter – We highly recommend natural peanut butter – Smucker's makes some. It's a little more expensive than the standard variety like Skippy or Jif, but it contains only peanuts and a little salt – none of that other junk like hydrogenated oils, sugar, and who-knows-what-else. The taste of real peanut butter is amazingly better than the junky kind too!

Grape Nuts Cereal

Basically, you just slice the apples, cover them with peanut butter (less if you're watching your fat intake), and sprinkle with Grape Nuts – it's really good! And it's great for a snack or light lunch for diabetics also because the protein in the peanut butter lowers blood sugar that might be elevated from the apples and cereal. If you decide to try it, let me know what you think in the comments section!

Felony Franks

Last weekend, while in Chicagoland headlining at the Horeshoe Casino, Regis Philbin did NOT partake of the deep-dish Chicago

pizza. He apparently likes thin crust. He did make a stop at a West Side hot dog stand. [Felony Franks](#) is unusual in that it hires only former felons after they have served their time behind bars and are out looking for a job.

The menu is centered on crime: misdemeanor weiner, custody dog, probation burgers, etc. No mention of [justj's](#) mentioned Chicago style dog.. is that a crime? A stand in Chicago that does not feature the Chicago-style version?

What do you think about the new stand? I would say that I would be hesitant to purchase a hot dog from a former child molester or murderer. And apparently, the press has been rather heated on the venue.

Telephone Operators On Skates?

Last Friday, I watched one of last year's most talked about movies (at least in my circles). I must say that the Clint Eastwood helmed/Angelina Jolie-starring film *Changeling* was well worth the months I have been endeavoring to watch it. The story itself was harrowing made even more dramatic by the fact that is factually based.

Since [taylhis](#) has already given an excellent synop, I will mention the pains taken in the creating of late 1920-early 1930s Los Angeles. Costuming, set design, the music, everything put you right there. The only building that is still standing in the greater LA locale is the City Hall itself which has been seen in numerous television series and movies (I can think of two immediately: *The Naked Gun* and the watchable if laughable updated *Dragnet* starring Tom Hanks and

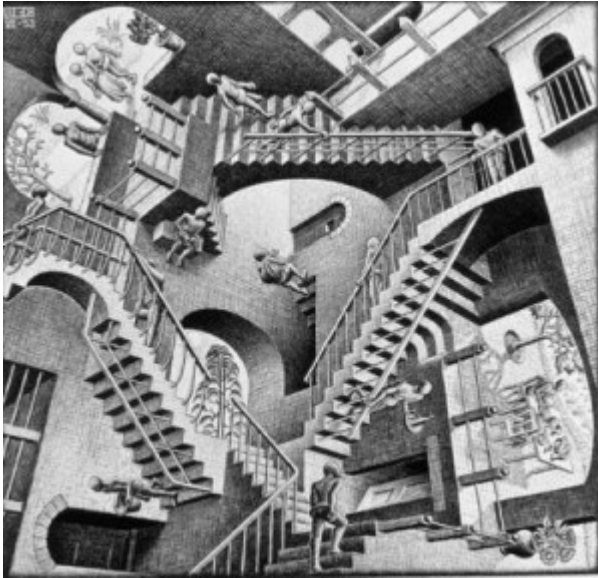
Dan Aykroyd). Eastwood even resurrected the LA streetcar (which have been out of service since 1961). The multi-talented director also composed the musical score for the film which he has done in many of his efforts... primarily with his passion for jazz. The costume design was totally period. Did telephone switchboard operators really move along on roller skates... complete with key?

And here is my extreme geek topic of the day. The fact that *(The) Changeling* is a title of a TOS episode was not lost on me. In fact, some theatres received the film under the name *Nomad* which was the name of the space probe from the 1967 season two episode. Not a total geek, I had to cheat on the year the episode premiered.

A truly memorable viewing experience. Again, totally robbed at Oscar time (and Clint was not even nominated).

3D Escher

Have you ever heard of the Dutch artist M.C. Escher? His famous works depicted impossible realities, often based upon mathematical and spatial challenges. Case in point, one of Escher's most famous works, titled *Relativity*:



Let me guess, even if you've never heard of M.C. Escher, you've seen the above picture, right? But have you ever seen it in 3D? Seems people have been recreating Escher's art in Lego form, which I think is pretty cool!



How about more of Escher's most famous works, done in 3D Lego style?



Conserva-pups

I had a little laugh out of these videos. Now let's all forget about that dog-training stuff we all have read about or seen on Animal Planet and the like, and just imagine these dogs are as conservative as their humans. ☐

Okay, I tried to get you to suspend disbelief for a moment- did it work? Anyway, one of these videos has a definite giveaway on the training- can you find it? The other one I'm guessing is happening off-camera unless I missed it.