

A Quick “Break-a-Leg” for my Friends

I have several friends and fellow tangent-heads opening in shows tonight. Jamy, Mary, Travis, and others are in two productions – one in Bryan and one in Hicksville. BREAK A LEG GUYS! I hope you have a great time and that the audience give you a wonderful response.

A Sequel to Broadway's Longest Running Musical

A few months ago, a fellow [tangenteer](#) posted about the upcoming continuation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*, a musical that first hit the London stage 23 years ago... today on October 9, 1986...WOW! Since then, it has been translated into 15 languages, seen in over 25 different countries by over 100 million people, and has won over 50 major theatrical awards worldwide... we will just mention the movie version in passing. Yesterday, the Lord held a press conference in which he announced (once again) that *Love Never Dies* will be given its West End premiere on March 9, 2010 and in New York in November 2010. What happened to the triple opening New Year's Eve gala of 2009? He began working on a story 15 years ago coming up short. I guess it takes years to come up with a show when you haven't produced anything even remotely original and successful (did anyone see *Woman in White*? I didn't either and apparently no one else did either).

From what I gather the plot will find the characters (Raoul,

Christine, and the Phantom, himself) at Coney Island ten years following the events in Phantom. The Phantom has traveled to America and is billed as the top draw at the amusement park while still pining for his true love. Christine accepts the invitation of an impresario to perform in the States. Not much there. Time will tell if love will never die or if it will be buried like all of the most recent Lloyd Webber works.

But you can check out the press release, listen to the overture of the new show, as well as a new Phantom song ("Til I Hear You Sing"...it's no "Music of the Night") by visiting the official [website](#). I wonder... if a show has an official site, does this mean that it is going to be produced or is it just another red herring?

P.S. If any of my readers are in or around the London area or plan to visit, there is already a site which is offering [travel packages](#) for the show. Maybe that is another sure sign.

Why I Loathe Fundraisers – 2009 Edition

If you're wondering why my blog post title sounds familiar, look no further than this – a blog post I wrote about the same subject almost 13 months ago, the original [Why I Loathe Fundraisers](#). Consider this part two of an ongoing, once-a-year series, I guess. And the inspiration for part two? Again, my oldest daughter brought home a school fund-raising catalog, except there were two differences this year: 1) they seem to have waited longer than the second day of school to hand it out. I don't recall exactly when it was given out,

but I think it was a little later this year, so that's good.
2) I did not go out and ask everyone I know about ordering stuff this year. I sent an email to the closest family asking if they wanted to order, and then our family decided to order a little something this year – I do want to be supportive of the school.

Let me back up a little bit. If you've read part I of my Loathing Series, then you know that I treated myself to a subscription of US News and World Report, which I can now say turned out to be a bust. First, the magazine comes at odd times (and it's STILL coming!) – it came weekly for a few weeks, then I forgot about it cuz it didn't come for a month or more, then it started coming every *few* weeks... I gave up trying to figure out the pattern. Especially because after 3 or 4 issues, I realized that this is not the magazine for me. I thought it would be about current events, but it turns out that US News and World Report chooses the most boring news topics to write about – especially politics. I am a current events / news junkie, but when it comes to politics, it's difficult for even breaking news to catch my attention. During the whole Bush-Gore undecided election story of 2000, throughout the counting of votes, the analyzing of dangling chads, missing chads, dimpled chads, and the entire chad movement, my husband was glued to the news while I could barely force myself to take notice. So anyway, after realizing that I was not a fan of this magazine (anyone want me to save you some US News and World Reports? I won't think you're boring, honest!), I realized that I had gotten a magazine appetite whet. So, for my daughter's fundraiser this year, we decided to try People magazine for me. I've always enjoyed People; I used to buy it before long flights (back when I used to fly), and sometimes friends and relatives give me their old issues to peruse. So the other day, we received our fundraiser order in the mail. Well, this was a nice change of pace – apparently the days are over of spending an hour on a Saturday in a crowded gym picking up fundraiser

orders – thanks to the internet. Instead of an issue of People for me, there was a voucher in the box. I just had to choose my magazine (thought I already chose?) and send it in. Tangent for a minor complaint – if you don't have internet, you'd have to pay an additional \$.44 to send in your voucher without the company even warning you first! Would it really be that difficult to make it postage paid, I mean, come on! And now for the major complaint – People magazine was not on the list of choices! Sure, I could have a subscription to People En Español (my Spanish isn't THAT good!) or People Style Watch, but I am so not into style AT ALL! I could not care less. I barely care about the celebrity gossip in People; I 'm mostly entertained by their inspirational stories of every day heroes or just quirky things (they once had an article about a lady who turned an airplane into a house for her to live in! Now that is some cool news and worthy of my leisure time), so what the heck would I want with People Stlye Watch? Yech. I feel like they tried to scam me. I wish I had kept that catalog! Well, I emailed the company, so hopefully they'll fix the problem. If not, stay tuned for Why I Loathe Fundraisers – Part 3!

Final Dress

Yes, tonight was the final dress rehearsal for [You Have the Right to Remain Dead](#). We had a few snags but nothing that will prevent us from having an AWESOME opening night tomorrow. We were instructed to come home, get a good night's sleep, relax tomorrow (glad I have the day off), and look over our lines. Very sound advice from a first time director who has done a sensational job! I love directors who just let the actors do their thing and offer critiques when they are needed AFTER the rehearsal is completed. Just another fantastic

experience!

NOW my little pitch: to all of you readers who are planning to attend [Little Shop of Horrors](#) PLEASE do so. My request is this: the show I am in runs THIS WEEKEND ONLY (four shows, one Friday, two Saturday shows, and one Sunday matinee). *Little Shop* has a total of 7 performances over two weekends (one of which I WILL BE attending... three good friends in the cast notwithstanding). So you have ample opportunity to enjoy both because they are both excellent shows. Ok.. plug over.

After tonight's rehearsal, I came home and watched an EXCELLENT movie. I can only say this without giving away the whole movie because there is sooooo much to tell. *Inside Man* in a nutshell features a powerhouse cast of two Academy Award winners (Denzel Washington and Jodie Foster) plus the talented Clive Owen and Christopher Plummer. Of the plot, I will say that it concerns the perfect bank heist. Never boring and has many layers and intricacies. I find that cooling down from the excitement of the evening before a show opens is best spent indulging in not so ordinary things. I will watch the shows I have DVRed(?) at a later date.

Once again, I have had the pleasure of working with new cast members (I have now worked with TWO Heffelfinger guys) and once again ventured out into another fantastic venue! Thanks everyone.

And now in time for the Holidays...

[PRICE WARS!!!](#)

It appears that major toy resellers are trying very hard to get your holiday dollars. With hard economic times, we all need a break or two, so this could be a benefit to those out shopping for children they know.

According to the article Toys-R-Us is going to open mini shops just in time for Christmas. These may or may not have good deals, but they will give some out of work people short term jobs for the holidays.

Wal-Mart has a \$10 toy sale, so that again may or may not be a good deal. It all depends on the toy.

I heard that Target was having some Christmas event with the Toy department too, but I have not found any news story online to back it up.

Or you could do what I plan on doing... Dig a hole in your backyard and hide until the Christmas shopping season is over...
□ Oops, I can't do that, I'm in a play. Oh yeah, that is like hiding until something is over. I won't have time for anything else.

New TV!

Last night, my husband and I decided to visit an old friend we haven't seen in some time – The Redbox. You all know the Redbox – the dvd rental machine that sits like a swollen ATM at many Walmarts, Meijers, Walgreens and the like. Dvd rental at the Redbox is \$1 per night, and one of the perks of the Redbox is lack of selection. Yes, I said **lack** of selection. In this day and age of rushing from here to there, who has time to actually make an extra stop to go into a video store and browse hundreds of selections? We really enjoyed our

Redbox summer, renting a movie almost every night and exhausting pretty much the entire Redbox collection. Now the kids have been in school for a few months already, and time has gone by without us having time to think about our long-lost Redbox bud. So anyway, last night, with the cold wind howling outside, we thought it to be the perfect night to stay up a little too late with a random Redbox horror movie. It was [Seventh Moon](#), and it seemed to actually be pretty scary, except that it is a 'dark and shaky' type horror movie – the camera moves around a lot, and the entire movie takes place in the dark. We turned off our lights in the house, but we still couldn't really see. Remembering what a repairman had told him once, my husband suggested we take the front panel off the tv and dust a little mirror inside – supposedly we would get a brighter picture. Thinking it sounded easy (?), I agreed and we began to unscrew our tv. We get the panel loosened and discover that there isn't any dust on the screen! And, you'd be surprised at how much empty space there is in a big tv! But anyway, we started to put it back together when CRACK! Uh, oh. Here's a hint – if you ever decide to tackle a home improvement project on the suggestion of someone else, no matter how small the project, always remember *who* told you to do *what* so that person can be held accountable!

So we are trying to put the tv back together, and we were thinking that at this point, we would just like to go back to our movie, however dark it might be, we just want to be able to WATCH the movie on a working tv. But then my husband sees the small mirror at the bottom that is FULL of dust! I rigged a paper towel rod with a dust cloth, and reached in there and dusted off that little mirror. We tried again to put the tv back together, encouraged and excited by the fact that we might have actually been able to fix it. We put the tv back together, but we had cracked something, so it's not really properly lined up and is now missing a few screws, oopsie. BUT... the picture is SO much brighter! Not only were we able

to see the rest of the movie (which was a nice 'n suspenseful creature feature), but now we can actually watch tv during the day! Oh, if only we had discovered our new tv during those bright summer days months ago when the Chicago Cubs were still invited to play baseball...

Wow the wind has picked up

Another very windy night. I'm hearing branches and various nuts hit the house and roof. I'm sure there will be a couple of trees down somewhere with this storm. Guess I will have to leave for work early, just in case something falls over the lane.

Anyway, now is not the time to be running around in the woods, but that is exactly what one little dog wanted to do. I guess when you got to go, you got to go. Being so close to the ground, he is out of most of the wind. He didn't stay out too long, I guess the falling acorns bothered him.

I'm not sure if I will get any sleep with this wind. After seeing one huge tree on the ground this week, I guess I'm just expecting another to fall. Nothing nearly as big as the fallen oak, but there are a few a bit closer to the house, like within 10 feet.

I don't recall many fall days with heavy winds like this. To have so many in a week seems to be really out of the ordinary, but I'm not sure. I usually think of late spring and early summer as the heavy wind days.

I was just thinking about the last time a big tree blew down near the house. We were all in the house that evening, and we were having another big wind storm. There was a loud crash and

the house shook, but we could not see what fell. The next morning we saw that the big ash behind our house fell directly away from the house. That was about 18 years ago. My youngest was home and on a breathing monitor. We lost power, and I remember being on a list for a quick restore. Funny how that came to my mind this evening.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...

There is one problem with being involved in the theater. When you plan a holiday show, the rehearsals start well before the actual holiday season. And since our Christmas show starts at the beginning of December, the rehearsal is also earlier. I don't like to do Christmas until after Thanksgiving.

Anyway, it will my job to bring Santa Clause to life in "Miracle on 34th Street". Ok, so I'm not playing Kris Kringle/Santa Clause, but I am playing 2 different Santa Clauses. And some other part I cannot remember right now.

For those of you who do know the show, the first Santa I play is the drunk Santa that loses his job because he was trying to stay warm on the float. One little drinks never hurt, does it?

To make the show even better for me, I get to act with one of my daughters again. This is always a thrill for me. Should be fun.

Geez, You Can't Even Put Your Kid In A Box For A Ride On Top Of The Car Anymore

Often I write about laws and regulations that are intended to help parents decide what is right for their child because sometimes these laws overstep boundaries. There was a story a while ago about a woman who was arrested for leaving her sleeping toddler in the car while she walked with her other daughter to donate change to a Salvation Army bell-ringer less than 50 feet away. I, like many others, couldn't help but wonder if perhaps the police overstepped their boundaries in that case – it was probably traumatic for all those kids to have to watch their mother getting taken away by the police in handcuffs. I wish that parents nowadays could just be trusted to do what is best for their children – but then there are people like this woman from Alabama:

ALBERTVILLE, Ala. (AP) – An Alabama woman has been charged with endangering the welfare of a child after police say she let her daughter ride in a cardboard box on top of their van. Albertville Police spokesman Sgt. Jamie Smith said the 37-year-old woman was arrested Sunday after police received a call about a minivan on a state highway with a child riding on top.

Smith said the woman told police the box was too big to go inside the van, and that her daughter was inside the box to hold it down.

Smith said the mother told officers it was safe because she had the box secured to the van with a clothes hanger.

The 13-year-old daughter wasn't harmed and was turned over to a relative. A jail worker said the mother was out on bond Monday.

Thank goodness the child was not physically hurt.

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.