

# 17 Days 5 1/2 Hours And Counting...

and still actors still have their scripts on stage! Ok... so I'm one of them but it is more of a crutch than anything else. Besides, as I said there are still 17 days until the curtain goes up and the "NO BOOK" deadline is set for Friday. I think tonight I will go completely off book. I don't need it! There are just a few of those incidental phrases that throw me off every time during the rehearsal process.

This is kind of a different role for me. One reason being, I have the opening line of the show. Nothing can start until I say so! I can hold the audience, my fellow thespians, the directors, everyone in the palm of my hand! MWAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA! I may have had the opening line for *School House Rock* but that was recorded.

Oh, yes... I received some fliers at last night's rehearsal which I took around town to display along with some Oktoberfest announcements. So come one come all to the [Huber theatre](#) October 9-11 and solve the mystery of whodunwhat to whom.

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## 3-0! And No Vultures Circling

I don't know of anyone else who can claim that ranking in our annual WCCT Family Fun Day softball game but since neither of my other compatriots here at tangents can, I will gloat just a bit... not that it was entirely my doing... never underestimate the underdog and I'm not speaking of the canine do-gooder I just really enjoy another excuse to get together on any day

with some of the best friends one could have... even if some were missing.

I will try not to report on too much that has been mentioned before. I did arrive a bit earlier than everyone else which gave me the chance to listen to most of the remaining first stanza of the Ohio State/Toledo football game. By the end of the first quarter, the Buckeyes were up 14-0 at the home of the Browns in Cleveland. Just a bit of interstate competition at a neutral site... or maybe a chance to get an Ohio team there who would win a game... this seemed likely since both teams are from Ohio. I remember going to Cleveland my senior year in high school to watch the Bucks play. The day after the sousaphone incident. I must say that Mr. Tressel loosened his vest a bit instead of playing it conservative which has led to many a big game letdown... the USC game a weekend or two ago comes to mind as well as a few past bowl games.

Back to the Fun Day. As usual, it was a very enjoyable event although there were only 8 of us (plus an all-time pitcher) who took part in the actual game. Prior to the main event, we tossed a football and then I really showed by prowess on the basketball court. Thank goodness for the granny shot or I would have reached "h-o-r-s-e" long before I did. As I have said before, I know where my talent lies.

Prior to the big game, Megan and I warmed up a bit tossing the softball back and forth. WHAT... no batting practice?! I played shag in the outfield and was kept bust chasing flies until the final inning when it seemed one side got a bit more winded than the other. I am pleased to say that I hit the ball every time I was up... ok, so maybe one at bat took about seven pitches for me to do so... we will blame the pitcher. But what a ball! One of the events I hope to look forward to for years to come.

The game ended long enough for us to return to the pavilion to chat a bit before I had to leave and song lead at mass. But

once again a great afternoon with friends.

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## **YEEOWWW!!!**

Darn it, I am sick of this! Some time last week, I came down with a nasty canker sore. I don't remember what day it was, but I remember that by Friday, I was already sick of it. We took the kids to the county fair and the demolition derby on Friday, which was great fun, but I was in a lot of pain and couldn't enjoy the fair food in the slightest. In fact, the location and intensity of the pain has kept me from enjoying many of my favorite activities since last week – talking, singing, eating, drinking, even smiling... THIS SUCKS! I've never had a canker sore this painful! I feel like that big grumpy bear with a toothache from some old cartoon. It's really hard to think about anything else, and since I can't really do anything in daily life without aggravating it and causing more pain, I think I've been kind of crabby. I've been looking up remedies incessantly on the internet (and no, I didn't find any cases of fatal canker sores, which is why I vowed to stop looking up medical stuff on the internet after we scared ourselves silly about my husband's stomachache), and none of the remedies I've tried help. Since I can't really eat anything, I've been living on water and Tylenol for the past week! The Tylenol barely works, so I finally went to Walmart yesterday and got myself some Benzocaine stuff to put on it. It works wonderfully; my entire mouth goes numb, and there is a substantial amount of drooling and slurring of words, but no pain. The only problem is that it only lasts for about 25 minutes. But for those 25 minutes, I am so high on my own endorphins from finally not feeling intense pain that it's wonderful. But then the pain returns, and it's almost worse than before I took the medicine because I

actually got to experience life pain-free, even for just a few minutes. I think I'm going to have my husband hide the benzocaine from me before I become addicted – it's really hard to stop putting it on there when I've had constant pain for a week! But I read that if you use too much benzocaine, you could develop a serious condition called Methemoglobinemia, among other things, so I'm really trying to limit that. I've read a lot of things about canker sores, but like I said, nothing has really helped. Experts are not even entirely sure what causes the darn things, but stress is the top suspect. That makes sense; I've had a ton of stress lately between family stuff (Sammie is back in a phase among other things) and just being so busy all the time, and I don't always handle stress in the best way. Guess I need to find better ways to deal with stress than to internalize it, but I can't deal with learning that right now – everything is hard to do with all this **pain!!!**

I can't help but think what a great diet this is though – it hurts to eat anything, and I'm really surprised certain Hollywood types haven't paid someone to discover how to give them canker sores just so they can't eat. People are crazy that way; I used to work at a frozen yogurt shop in an upscale suburb of Chicago, and these rich housewives would come in with their jaws wired shut wondering what kind of fat-free yogurt they could still get into their mouths. Not that any of them were terribly overweight to begin with... But anyway, I hate this! I guess there's not much more to write about it, but I have to say that it feels good to be able to "talk" without the pain increasing... Time to take more meds! YEOWWW!!! ☐

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# When did it get so late?

I was checking out [ThinkGeek](#) and was surprised to see that the time just flew by. I thought for sure it was only 11:00, and it is really 12:30. I guess I found a few things I liked.

USB turntable for old vinyl records  
thinking putty (silly putty with an attitude)  
USB cell phone booster (oops out of stock)  
Crayola Pen (looks like a crayon but is a pen)  
R2D2 USB hub (I have a daughter who would like that)  
USB rocket launcher  
RC cars  
RC helicopters  
RC robots  
Laser Pointers  
and Astronaut Ice Cream!

And the list goes on and on. How much of this do I need? Not much. The most useful item seemed to be the USB cell phone booster. That may be nice for out in the country, but \$100 nice? I'm not sure.

Oh well it is past 12:30 now, and I should get some sleep...

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## A Weight Lifted

The last game night I shared with my dear friends was a very special one especially as the night turned into the wee hours of the morning. 09-12-08. How fitting that Emily's passing would occur 7 years after the country picked itself up a day after what will undoubtedly be seen as one of the worst (if not the worst) tragedies to befall this country. 09-12-01,

Emily spearheaded a campaign to send supplies overseas to our men and women. A campaign which is still going on today. Shortly after midnight on 09-12-09, I mentioned that this was the anniversary of my mentor's passing. I felt a heavy weight upon my shoulders. [Lisa](#) told Megan, [Chris](#), and I to form a circle around the kitchen island and join hands. Chris then said a short word of prayer that lifted the weight right off my shoulders. My three best friends.

Strangely on Tuesday, word had spread that Patrick Swayze had lost his battle with cancer. This fell on the anniversary of Emily's burial. Oddly enough, I was never a huge fan of Mr. Swayze's work. Having a younger sister who enjoyed nothing more than to watch *Dirty Dancing* ad nauseum kind of turned me off of his acting ability. The first time I watched the movie, I actually kind of enjoyed it, but it got old really fast. I did, however, enjoy *Ghost* (Yes, I admit it... I'm a softie). However, anyone who can bravely battle a terminal disease under the limelight and battle constant tabloid bombardment is worthy of some praise.

Thanks again ☐

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## Meet Me AAAAAAT The Fair

The Monday following Labor Day is the annual Fair Day for kids in Williams County, Ohio. This day all the little ones get another day away from the classroom. This year, kids in most of the districts had a four day weekend as Friday was canceled due to fog. Monday morning, I had the honor of sitting for a five and three-year-old. By 11AM, they were getting rambunctious so I decided to take them to the fair. Grandma gave me \$20 to use between the two of them for snacks and to

bring their mother back a bag of delicious roasted peanuts (one of the stands I frequent yearly). As we arrived, Sydney (the three-year old) saw a ride that seemed to peak her attention... or maybe it was the flag on top. It was a ride that took passengers slowly straight up in the air; then, it suddenly dropped and returned to earth. Up close, my young niece thought against the ride.

We found a ticket stand at which I purchased two wristbands for the girls. And we went on our way. First stop, the carousel at which I was needed to ride with Sydney on the non-mobile bench and Alyssa also wanted no part of riding on a horse... BOY are these **MY** nieces? There was also a train that both of them enjoyed and a Strawberry ride that resembled the teacup ride at Disney Parks around the world. Sydney did not want to ride the school bus attraction until she watched her big sister brave it. There were a few rides that I would have gone on: the bumper cars which probably would not have been a good idea. I had the feeling that Alyssa would still be a bit short to drive a car herself and I don't think three in one is allowed. However, I did get tickets to ride the Tilt-A-Whirl which little Syd did not like at all.

As for the snacks, that was the highlight of the day. Another of my must stops is the Dairy Association's milkshake stand. Every year, I eagerly await the arrival of the fair if only to indulge in one of the tasty treats. Unfortunately, the girls were not too big on them. I made the mistake of getting them both one. Actually, one wanted chocolate while the other wanted vanilla (I don't know why but... a vanilla shake? I do know that some of my other relatives prefer vanilla over chocolate so I'm not that surprised). They each took one sip of their respective shake and immediately said YUCK! **WHAT?!** Ah, well... it wasn't my money being wasted.

Before we left, I asked them what they wanted for their snack. Sydney wanted a bag of salt water taffy... yum, yum. Alyssa adamantly stated that she wanted a **CANDY** apple. So we

went to the stand operated by friends of our family. We got Syd's taffy then I asked Alyssa if she really wanted a CANDY apple. At least three times she said yes... a CANDY apple. She got her candy apple, began to lick the hard, CINNAMON candy and said... "I don't like this." I knew it. Not only did I know that she does not like cinnamon candy, I had a feeling that she would not be able to bite into it. After 5 minutes of pouting, the apple ended up on the ground then in the garbage. Once again, not a big deal to me... not my money. Sydney was sweet enough to share a few pieces of taffy.

I found it strange that neither girl wanted to see the animals until we were across the race track headed back to the car. It was nearing 4 and I had to get back for rehearsal so we had to miss the big bike giveaway at 5... must be present to win of course. Ironically, the next day I learned that a grandson of one of my co-workers was the winner of one of the two bikes. I think they still give two away.

All in all not a bad time, except for a few moments, but what can ya do?

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## **HE'S BAAAAACK! Anyone Up for Some Parkour?!**

YES... it has been a mere 8 days since I have been able to access the internet. Our connection via Verizon went down for the umpteenth time so my very Trekkie er... techie brother recommended that we make the switch to Time Warner high speed. So, for a week I have been getting phone calls from ardent fans asking if I have been abducted by aliens, fallen off the face of the earth, or just kidnapped by our friend

from you-know-where. Actually, I have gotten a bit accomplished in the past few days: watching the Yankees slip a game or two, memorizing some lines, checking out the county fair, playing some softball (now 3-0, thank you very much), reading a 600+ page book of which I have less than 200 to read, and song lead in church. I did manage however to go out one day last week to borrow my brother's computer to read my 81 emails and read a few posts from my [co-tangenteers](#). Minutes ago, I read another 81 emails (ironic) and am anxious to see how far I have fallen behind in the ranks of tangents. Wonder if I get to read a take on the EXCELLENT season premiere of [The Office](#).

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## Chicago Bears: We Beat the Steelers!

It wasn't always pretty and I have to be honest, I am still not sure about this Bears team... BUT WE **BEAT THE STEELERS** and avoided going 0-2. 0-2 might not sound like too big of a deal to you baseball fans, but in NFL world and 0-2 start often means a long and painful season.

Bears new superstar QB, Jay Cutler, rebounded from his terrible 4-interception performance last week to have a very solid game. No interceptions and two touchdown passes!

The Bears defense looked soft at times but, in the end, was able to keep the Steelers to 14 points – thanks especially to Jeff Reed (the Steeler's kicker) missing 2 “easy” field goals.

It was an exciting game and a Bears win. Have I mentioned how much fun the NFL is? Next week, the Seattle Seahawks... A team I personally hate. Don't know why, but I do! Hoping to be

2-1 after next Sunday – a winning record would be awesome after that putrid start against Green Bay.

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## **And the rain comes down**

As I sit here and type this blog, it seems that there is a bit of rain falling. I can hear it hit the windows, roof and echo on the metal chimney. To me, this is a comforting sound. As long as the wind isn't too strong, or the lightning too intense, I enjoy hearing it rain at night. I'm warm and dry in my house, and I know that we are receiving needed water.

It also brings back memories of walking in a warm summer rain with my wife. Not really worrying about getting wet or cold. Feeling relief from the summer's heat. And feeling the warmth of our relationship.

I also remember hurrying from building to building of our local zoo when the cold spring or fall rains hit during one of our many excursions. Maybe stopping for a warm drink at the cafe or spending extra time in the warm tropical exhibits. And finally getting back to the van and putting the heat on.

Or back at the zoo during the Christmas Lights exhibit during those bitter winter rains. We actually enjoyed those evenings more, since the crowds would be much thinner. We would be dressed and ready for the rain with waterproof or repellent outerwear and umbrellas. We would look at the lights and the raindrops falling would reflect a variety of color. Of course the evening would include hot chocolate, coffee or tea.

And of course there are always those first spring rains that bring the green back to the area after the long grey and white winters. Memories of fun, love, laughter and light remind me

that even during the coldest times, the hope of spring and new life can be found in the same rains.....

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## **A tale of two gatherings...**

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... (Sorry Mr. Dickens)

But then again it was. This weekend families gathered to mark similar yet different events.

On Saturday, my nephew celebrated his birthday. He has reached his teen years, and is more interested in the presents, food and television than the actual gathering. I do believe he 'suffered' through the gathering just to make sure he got his presents. Nothing really wrong with that, I'm sure most young people of his age do exactly the same thing. The gatherings, unless totally oriented toward the youth, are for the adults. We ate, talked, laughed and remembered many of these events during the day. This is what, through the ages, kept families together. We share common bonds and we celebrate those bonds. Be they birthdays, anniversaries, or holidays, times with family and friends keep our bonds alive.

On Sunday, another gathering was held. This was a memorial of the birth and death day of my grandson. He received no physical presents, and he won't be living into his teen years to complain about the attention he is or isn't getting. This was a day to support those who will miss his presence in the world. It was a time for family and friends to gather and support one another. We ate, talked, laughed and remember many events, but we also shared a tear or two. Coming together in the hard times is another thing that keeps families together. Death, sickness and other troubles are also something we all

share. Another common bond. Another way to show support and love.

While on the surface, I wish that all we ever had to do was share the happy occasions, I realize that it is the difficult situations that are the true measure of what we mean to each other. These hard times can show the best humanity has to offer.

So this weekend was the best of times and the worst of times, with the best of times far outshining the worst. Those closest to the sadness may not feel this for quite some time, but in looking back they will eventually remember "The Best of Times."