

Countdown to Saturday

My youngest is heading off to College this Saturday. This week we are getting things together to make sure she has everything she needs to start the new year.

My daughter needs some special equipment for her college career. The non-special equipment/clothing became special because my daughter is small. The small/petite scrubs have to be hemmed to fit. We went all over the place to find a coverall that even came close to fitting. Rubber boots, same thing. You may ask what she is going into with scrubs, coveralls and boots. Her chosen field is Vet-Tech. So with the current clothing and equipment it looks like she will spend a part of the semester in a barn or two. The hoof pick she needed kind of gave that away.

We are also picking up a few things so she can set up house keeping in her new apartment. It is a furnished apartment shared with 3 other young ladies. This is my first daughter to live on campus during college. I may go through some empty nest feelings later, but for now I am just excited for my daughter. More on all of this later in the week.

I Am Playing The Part Of The Plant

000PS... wrong show... or is it?. Tonight was the read-through for my latest on-stage endeavor. I will say that reading the script with the actors (*sans* one) was an absolute RIOT! *You Have the Right to Remain Dead* is much more than an audience-participatory murder mystery, it almost plays like a

melodrama. I believe I alluded to the fact that this is a play-within-a-play with the actors portraying actors on stage as well as the characters within a very Tennessee Williams-esque production. It will be quite a challenge to keep under control as the hilarity ensues throughout. All of the actors are on stage throughout the entire show. Among the colorful cast of characters are the actors within the local community theatre, the director, the teenage backstage manager, and an inept detective who I believe will be very reminiscent of Columbo (rumpled trenchcoat, tattered notepad, and all).

The fun begins when one of the "actors" is murdered. Each of the remaining thespians (on and off stage) and the audience itself is suspect. Everyone has a different motive for doing the poor sap in and it is up to Officer Bainbridge to discover whodunit, how, and why. Nothing is as it seems, the clues pile up at a hilarious rate, until the guilty party is revealed. In order to find out who did what to whom and with what it was done to whom be sure to come to the Huber Theatre October 9-11. A double show on October 10. Judging from the read-through this will be yet another memorably great production but aren't they all memorable...good or bad?

A Note To Add To That Last Post...

I will be one of those frantic parents in the Walmart checkout line on the first day of school. I've never been there to witness them myself, but I know they exist; I'll find out for sure tomorrow when I join them. Yes, I planned ahead well enough to buy the necessary school supplies, but what I failed to do was to supervise the middle-schooler who was excitedly

stuffing her new backpack, apparently ignoring the direction to “pack what’s on your list”. Not really her fault – like I said, I should have been supervising her more carefully. But as a result, our 4th grader now has a locker full of 4th grade school supplies AND Kindergarten school supplies (she brought them to school last Friday during orientation), while our Kindergartner has an empty backpack.

We could follow our oldest daughter into her new middle school tomorrow to repo her sister’s school supplies, but I’m pretty sure being the only student whose parents follow her into school (especially with little brother and sisters in tow) could cause her emotional damage beyond repair. I’ll take my chances at Walmart.

Back To School!

Well, summer is officially over – school starts **tomorrow!** I could be like everyone else and say “where did the summer go?”, but for me, it actually didn’t go as fast as I would have thought. We were so busy; though it was good-busy; not like so-much-work-to-do-busy. But much fun was had and I enjoyed every minute! Last week was spent at school open houses and orientations, as well as a training event at our church to allow us to volunteer with our church’s student ministries. That was an interesting evening – it began with us volunteers breaking off into groups of about 15 and making lines. We were given a spoon tied to a string which was wound around a “spool” ie, an empty tube of toilet paper. The first person in the line (me) was to put the spoon down their shirt and pants and give it to the next person who was supposed to put it *up* their pants and shirt, then to the next person who was supposed to put it down the shirt and pants, effectively

“threading” the line of people together. Kind of strange, I thought, but what’s going to happen once we’re all “wearing” the string??? It was a little scary, but luckily, the threading was the entire ice-breaking activity, and the rest of the evening was pleasantly spent listening to a guest speaker while munching on all kinds of orange snacks (orange was the theme for the evening – I never really thought about how many party snacks are orange before!).

Today we had so many activities and volunteering planned for church that we were on the go from 8:30 in the morning until about 3:30 in the afternoon. Busy, but it was time well-spent, especially since we finished up the day with Kidstuff (a cute show with a wonderful message for the kids) and then a carnival with LOTS of treats and fun for the kids; they had a blast. Good thing too – we need to get settled down early tonight in order to get our oldest to school by **7:30 in the morning!!!** She is starting middle school, and yes, to those of you who have asked – she will be switching classes, kind of like the “block” style they had when I was in middle school. My daughter has a homeroom, but then she switches for language arts and math and perhaps other subjects as well. And they do gym class strangely – there are 4 classes: gym, music, technology (typing, etc.), and art, and they take one of these 4 classes every day for 9 weeks and then switch to another. That sounds pretty cool to me! I would have LOVED it if I only had to worry about gym for 9 weeks of the year! But, being in middle school also means that she has to change for gym class, poor thing – I remember that aspect of middle school making a lot of kids really nervous. And at orientation last week, the principal gave us parents a talk about making sure we wash the gym clothes – the kids are getting to “that age”, she said, which prompted me to whisper to my friend nearby, “I’m not ready!” But my daughter IS ready for middle school, and she seems to be making her way from tween to teen in no time – UGH! Poor thing got her first pimple just in time for the first day of middle school,

but she doesn't seem to mind too much, so we're not making it a big deal. It's not like we're publishing it on the internet for the entire world to read or anything... But what are moms for? She can thank me when she's older and finds this through some sort of google search or something.

Our second oldest is starting Kindergarten. This is our "difficult" child; our strong-willed one. Samantha has a mind of her own, and some of the things she says leave us in stitches – others leave us shaking our heads, but we'll stick to the positives here. It seems that Samantha has the same Kindergarten teacher that her sister had a few years ago, and my husband and I are chuckling to ourselves about the unintentional "joke" we're about to play on our local school system. We are wondering how many years it will take for word to spread amongst the teachers in town about how much of a... well, *difference* there is between Samantha and her big sister... No need to go off about it here, like I said, we need to call it an early night, but it will suffice to say that any teacher of Taylor's who gets Samantha 4 years later will probably be surprised ☐

I was going to write about the younger two as well, but it's bedtime already and this post is long enough – that's what I get for not blogging regularly, I guess, an über-post!

Did I post about this before?

If so, consider this an update. A few months ago I found out about a talented Japanese boy named Yuto Miyazawa on the Ellen show (found out via the 'net of course- I don't watch shows like Ellen). This boy at just nine years of age plays a mean guitar. Here is the clip of him on the aforementioned show:


Too unfortunate he chooses someone like Ozzy Osbourne to imitate, but I suppose they can't all choose more godly heavy metal like [Disciple](#), [Kutless](#), or [Red](#). ☐) The update, if this is one, is that Ozzy just had Yuto as a guest at a concert the other night he did for Blizzcon 2009. Here's a clip:

Put me on the crazy train, but I think Yuto did a better job singing the song on the Ellen show than Ozzy did at Blizzcon! Okay, to be fair Ozzy had just finished a set, and to put this politely he ain't getting any younger. I did have to cringe though when he dropped the f-bomb right in front of Yuto, twice. So what do you all think?

Greetings Starfighter!

You have been recruited by the Star League to defend the frontier against Xur and the Ko-Dan armada.

Thus begins Alex Rogan's adventures. In the beginning of *The Last Starfighter*, the teenager who dreams of escaping the dismal world of the Starlight Starbright trailer park finds freedom in the Starfighter video game. Little does he realize that the game is much more than your average quarter muncher. After breaking the high score on the box, a mysterious, fast talking man drives up in a futuristic car and whisks Alex off to the stars to play the game for real. So much for thinking escape meant going anywhere but city college.

Has it really been 25 years since I sat in a Dallas, Texas multiplex with my brother to watch this extremely cool movie? I have been searching for a long time for this lost gem from 1984 and until Tuesday have met with disappointment. I received an email announcing the release of a [25th Anniversary](#) edition but nothing on a regular DVD (ok, so it is available on [DVD](#), just was not at the store I was in). Last night, I introduced my niece and nephew to one of my childhood favorites (ok, so I was in double digits when it was released). Noah and Elizabeth really enjoyed it. Noah totally ignored his still playing Nintendo DS. At first, Elizabeth

wanted to watch *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, but I convinced her that this is much better.

The space battle scenes look just like those of an 80's video game which is part of the movie's charm. Although the story of the young man longing for something more closely resembles that of Luke Skywalker, *The Last Starfighter* does not try to become the next great sci-fi franchise (this was a year following the release of *Return of the Jedi*).. No huge name actors and none that I can think of that became everyday names: Lance Guest? Catherine Mary Stewart? The only name that is immediately recognizable (to me, anyway) is Robert Preston who plays the brilliant Centauri. Of course when I was 11 years old, I had no idea that he originated the role of Professor Harold Hill. I still would rather watch him in this even if the roles are similar in most respects: smooth talking traveling salesmen. Plus, the musical score for the movie is just great as any good sci-fi movie must have. A big, brassy fanfare plus heroic moments full of romance that get the adrenaline flowing.

I would say this is very family-friendly except for a few expletives spouted off by Alex's younger brother Louis. And it looks and sounds even better on Blu-Ray. I had to look to find that another lowlight of Lance Guest's career was *Jaws: The Revenge*. Not one I will be looking for anytime soon.

Requiem And Return

On November 12, 1992, the world's greatest superhero lost his life in an epic battle literally on the streets of Metropolis right in front of the Daily Planet building. The comic series leading up to the end of Superman and the events following are

all chronicled in the novelization *The Death and Life of Superman*. The story begins as a monster (no better way to describe it) of unknown origin and power begins his ravaging of the Earth. Members of the Justice League, including Green Lantern and other characters I am not very familiar with, are incapable of stopping the beast which became known as Doomsday. Eventually, the Man of Steel himself joined the battle which stretched from ironically, the village of Bluffton, Ohio (a mere 90 minute drive from my hometown... WOW to think) eastward. Not sure if this was a tip of the hat to the hero's creative team of Siegel and Shuster who grew up in Cleveland. The first part of the novel ends with the Man of Tomorrow's demise.

The last two sections detail the aftermath and the rise of the Supermen: four individuals all but one of whom claim to be the real deal miraculously brought back from the great beyond. There is the Last Son of Krypton, The Man of Steel, a Superboy (but don't call him, Boy) and a Cyborg Superman. But, is one of these the real Kal-El or are they each cheap imitations? They each have most or all of his power but all claim to have only bits and pieces of his memory. Some of the personalities exhibited by the four are less than the true blue, Boy Scout image portrayed by the original. However, by the novel's end, the real McCoy (HEHE) is revealed as well as the identities of the others.

I really liked the nods to past characters of the legacy and other small bits tossed in. Inspector Henderson from the Adventures of Superman tv series has a role. Landmarks and locations are given names calling to mind past Superman related people: Collyer Boulevard (for [Bud Collyer](#) who was the original voice of Superman in radio serials way before I was thought of) and many others. Fun to pick those out!

Overall, I think this was the best incarnation of the Death and Return saga. It started as the comic series that lasted an entire year. Then, the novel which was just so much fun to

read. Finally a few years ago, an animated feature was made that left too much out to be really enjoyable. Thanks Chris and Lisa!

I'm not dead

Just haven't felt much like posting, though I did make an attempt to do a post yesterday, like fellow blogger [JustJ did the other day](#), after playing around with Vista's voice recognition software. Incredible in comparison to Dragon Dictate from several years ago, though I suppose if that software is still around it is at least as good as Vista's. Of course, knowing Microsoft their software may very well *be* Dragon Dictate, or some other commercial package bought by them. They started off that way back when when they bought a DOS from someone, relabeled it MSDOS, and licensed it to IBM way back when, so why not these days with voice recognition?

Anyway, I still don't have much to say, so I leave you with this hilarious video mentioned on [Majorgeeks](#) in today's news:

Grief, a state of mind

In early March of 2004, I was introduced to the terminology 'grief monster'. This was a term used by other widows and widowers to indicate their feelings after loss. Using the words grief monster seemed to indicate a battle needed to be fought with grief. I didn't think that was the case then and I don't think it is the case now.

With a new loss, feelings of grief are again merging with my life. I think that the feelings of grief are there for a reason. Grief is a coping mechanism. While grief isn't a comfortable feeling, it should be welcomed. We need time to deal with sadness and loss.

The intensity and duration of our feelings of grief indicate where we are in our grief journey. Since people are different, the length and duration of our journeys are also different. The only way we know how far we've come is to look at how we feel grief.

In these difficult times of loss, I've seen grief as a friend. Not always a friend I want around, but as a needed friend. Tears, anger, frustration are all tools to handle our loss. To fight these feelings, as if fighting a monster, would be counterproductive to help they can bring.

Grief can and will come at unexpected times. These times may be inconvenient or embarrassing, but they need to be accepted. As an adult male, I have been taught to harness my feelings. I found that after my wife's death, I no longer do this. If tears are needed, tears will be shed. I no longer shy away from my emotions. It has helped with my healing.

There has been new loss in my life. Another grief journey has

begun. The road is the same, but different. It is a journey not taken alone, but with the help of others.

A journey begins with one step; a good journey begins with one step reaching for another's hand.

I Hate Long Waits

WOW! This has to rank amongst the quickest audition results I have ever gotten. Monday morning at 10AM (mere hours after I auditioned), I got a phone call from the assistant director of *You Have the Right to Remain Dead* and was asked if I would like to accept the coveted, intrigal part of Harnell Chesterton. I'm not sure how much he's involved but from what I read, he has a LOT to say and a hilarious bit. Looks like yet another great role!

Unlike another show I know that has been cast for a month and a half and has less than 8 weeks to curtain, rehearsals for this begin next Monday with a read-through. The costume matron (the same as for *Meet Me in St. Louis*) wants to get started immediately with her excellent ideas. If anyone saw MMiSL, you surely remember the wonderful costumes created/hunted down for that show... including the menagerie of hats worn by Grandpa Prophater. I can't wait to be back onstage in general but to be back on the Huber stage will be a treat!

AHHHH... show dates are October 9-11 with a matinee and evening show on Saturday. So those of you cast in *Little Shop* have no excuse for not seeing it.