

Another Night Of Horrors

Tonight was the second and final night of Little Shop auditions. Tonight, I did not travel from E-town alone. A friend commented on my Facebook space that she would like to go and put her foot in the door of the world of community theatre. If you are frequent guest of my blog, you know that one of my 50 high school classmates has been cast in a B-horror movie. Peg told me that she would like to try auditioning for a live stage show. Never having been on film (aside from a certain television news broadcast a year or two ago), I could only say how much I adore the smell of the greasepaint and the roar of the crowd.

I thought Peg did fine her first time out. She just lacks the confidence that only repeated auditions and experience will bring. She has a lovely voice but just needs to project her voice more so that it can be heard. When she read scenes from the script, I could see a bit of the 'tude necessary for one of the trio of Skid Row gals come through.

Another newbie (well... someone who was not available to attend yesterday's round) continued to amaze me. Chris may have been running on fumes but his excerpt of "Love Changes Everything" was brilliant. He asked me to keep him awake if we were ever called down to read together... never happened. Dunno... too much talent to put on stage at once? His plant voice was tremendous and brought a tear to my eye from laughter. I did catch him dozing in his seat a time or two, but his stage presence still rocks!

I once again read mainly for Mushnik, a bit for Orin, and once for the voice of the plant, Audrey II. I would be happy with either of the roles. However, I think the part of the florist would be a hoot. I was tempted to ask to read for Seymour but I thought why when I had already read for two of the supporting roles who have ample opportunity to shine. I'm

just not sure that I could do justice to the plant. A bit of off the wall reading was asked of the men when we were asked to read a few lines as women. Weird, to say the least.

Well, we were informed that we would learn of our sentencing tomorrow. I have waited longer than that to find out the results of show casting (one I will not mention). So... good luck to all and once again... great job, Peg. Hope to see you again!

My Game Night Wish List (which will probably lead to another banished game)

After auditions tonight, I came across a new game show that in a game night format would probably have me banned from playing. "[The Money List](#)" seems to be a update on the classic show 21 (scandals galore) in which two teams compete. The teams are made up of two complete strangers who are placed into sound proof rooms. The object of the game is to outbid the other team to complete the given list. For instance, the category is: "Scrabble Tiles That Are Worth More Than 1 Point."

To begin, one team bids on the number they can correctly guess. Then, the other team's booth is unlocked and they either bid higher or allow the other team to fill in the list. The first team to win two rounds is the winner and goes on for a chance to win \$50,000!!! by completing yet another list.

Other lists: "Number One Beatles' Singles," "U.S. Presidents

Prior to 1900 (first and last names had to be given)," "Elvis Presley Songs That Were On Billboard's Top 40 (unfortunately, the very first answer given ("That's Alright, Mama") was wrong because Billboard was not around when the song was recorded)," and "The 100 Most Populous Cities (a team actually got the bidding up to 30 but misspoke NEW Delhi, Delhi itself would have been correct)."

gsn.com has an online version of the game that I think I may peruse (perused and wish I had not).

Oh, boy, oh BOY, OH BOY... I've reached 500 !!!!
YEAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Little Shop Of Which?

Tonight began auditions for WCCT's newest venture: *Little Shop of Horrors*. I knew of at least two others who would be joining me. [Mare](#) and Travis from my stint with the Village Players in *Meet Me in St. Louis*. However, I began to wonder if they were going to show as Mary promised that they would be early. Early turned out to be about 7.05 PM. There was a wide range of talent... some young high schoolers to twenty somethings to the older set (30ish).

To break the ice, we all went around and introduced ourselves (including the director and asst. director). We then sang our selected audition piece. SOMEONE so kindly volunteered me to go second. So, I handed my excerpt to piano man/producer. I thought I did well. Honestly, there were a few who I could barely hear singing. Apprehension, nerves, but there were some who barely opened their mouths. Some sang with the MIDI track from the show provided by the director. Only two others bothered to bring music that was not "canned." I have to

mention Tim who sang something called "Ladies Choice" (I have no idea where the song comes from), but the performer was flamboyant to say the least. So much so, that he was asked to perform the song again. This time with his hands in his pockets and not moving so much across the stage.

The role of Seymour (after night one of tryouts) seems to be down to two. If it were up to me, Travis would have had it from the start. In my eyes, the poor sap should have a whiney voice, totally lacking from self-confidence, and shy. Travis not only had the voice, but the mannerisms. He projected well while maintaining the meek, humble character.

As expected, Mary totally rocked as one of the pivotal doo-wop girls. Her stage presence and "ghetto tude" was exceptional. Until the director asked the girls on stage to develop a Spanish(?) accent. Thankfully, that request was quickly abolished.

We also had a lot of readings done for Orin Scrivello, D.D.S. Tim once again brought some chuckles from the audience. I attempted to be sly, slippery, and sadistic, as I led Seymour to the chair ("Say, AHHHHH"). Squirmy put a southern twang into his performance. I'm just not sure that I could do justice to the dentist's songs.

Only two were asked to read for the voice of Audrey II. Tim put his own spin on the voice. There was a young high schooler who seemed to have the voice. For his audition piece, he sang with the vocal track for "Feed Me/You Can Do It."

I was asked to read a segment of Mr. Mushnik's lines. After my first reading, I was told to be more Jewish. After my second and third, I heard no comments. Maybe I will rewatch some of Vincent Gardenia in the movie version before going back tomorrow night. No one else was asked to read the role... no one else old enough, apparently. Guess I am too old for

Seymour... did not get asked to read for the role. But, I think Mushnik would be a fun challenge... he gets eaten, anyway.

I don't remember too many reading the role of Audrey. Dunno, maybe tomorrow night.

So... if anyone else is interested, round two tomorrow night at 7.

VIPs For A Day (part one of more parts)

On Thursday, my husband's brilliant ability to find awesome entertainment deals on the internet paid off once again. He booked us a VIP tour at [King's Island \(click for a view of the rides and attractions!\)](#) near Cincinnati Ohio, and we spent the entire day at this awesome amusement park! The VIP tour included our own personal guide; a park employee who followed us around all day leading us up the exits of every ride so that we got to bypass the line and ride without waiting – *in the seat of our own choosing*. We also got to wear lanyards with VIP passes on them (think of the movie Wayne's World when Wayne and Garth get backstage passes to see Alice Cooper. They wear them around their necks and proudly display their lanyards, flashing them into the faces of nearly everyone they encounter, hilarious!) – and tempting to reenact, but there were some people in line who were upset that we got to board without waiting in line; I wouldn't want to rub it in. But I would recommend the VIP tour to anyone who wants to go to King's Island – it includes a guide (you can even make him do things, like hold your stuff and go on rides, haha!), no lines (sometimes a minimal 5 minute wait at the gate while the ride

operators find a place to stick you in, not really an issue at all – there is plenty to watch for those 5 minutes), an all-you-can-eat buffet for lunch, unlimited fountain drinks throughout the day, ice cream, a backstage tour of The Beast (the longest wooden roller coaster in the world!), and 2 ride pictures. A great deal, especially if you want to sit through my following narrative to see if it's a place you'd want to visit:

The lady on the phone told us to get to the park at 8:30 am, so we were actually early and had to wait in a car line to get in. When we got to the park, we got shuffled around and had to wait a bit more – it seems that this part of the tour could be tweaked a little bit. We didn't get our guide and get on rides until about 9:45. Still early (park opens to the general public at 10), but we had about an extra hour of doing nothing at the park (could have slept an hour longer!), so perhaps they should tweak this part of the tour to make it run more smoothly for the guest – everything else about the tour is really great though! So anyway, our guide comes to meet us, and we gave him our list of rides and follow him around the park. Actually, since it was before 10, only the park's brand new showcase ride and The Beast were open. So we began with the Diamondback – which I had named as the ride that scared me the most on the way over. But I loved it! It was so smooth and all those fast drops were so fun in the cool open air. The Beast was another story. I liked it, but it was very rattly and jerky. Going back on The Beast later in the day and sitting in the front row changed the experience for me, however, and we ended up riding it a lot! Once we discovered the front car of The Beast and I switched sides of the train with hubby, I enjoyed the ride immensely. It's a **4 minute, 50 second** ride through the forest on a wooden roller coaster at speeds of over 60 mph. The subtle sound of chirping birds accompanied by the naturalistic scents of the surrounding forest and the wooden tunnels where the coaster whizzes is indescribable. A comment on themeparkinsider.com

says about The Beast, *"Running through the thick forest at 65 mph on an intense wooden coaster...about as close to riding a real beast as you can get. Classic ride that always delivers."* – I have to agree. They built another wooden coaster at King's Island called Son of the Beast, but it closed in June when people complained it was too rough. From the printed King's Island info, I learned that Son of the Beast was a *looping* wooden coaster – interesting. Oh well, maybe it'll open some day for me to try. But back to the backstage tour of The Beast – very cool. We watched some trains descend the first large drop which actually leads directly underground into a tunnel. We walked further into the forest (noticed some long-gone riders' possessions along the way: broken sunglasses, coins, hats, etc. Didn't see any cell phones, but then again, we saw the lost cell phone display they have in the Diamondback area – a big clear box FULL of cell phones, ipods, Blackberries, PDAs, etc.), and we learned some interesting facts while watching riders fly past us – and boy, were they surprised to see us walking around back there in the forest!! As for the facts – the entire coaster was built from scratch on site; unlike many of today's coasters which are shipped into the parks in segments. The Beast was built around and including the existing rolling terrain of the Miami River valley in lower Ohio, and as I mentioned, it goes underground. It has speed monitors built into parts of the track, so if a train is going too fast, it will automatically break to slow itself down. I gratefully noticed this while riding, and it helped calm my concerns of flying off the track. This coaster goes so fast into those tunnels – WOW! For all these reasons and more, it's a coaster like NO other! Here's a pic – looks like something I'll have to try in the fall; the forest looks beautiful during peak season for color-changing leaves:



Ironically, the exact opposite thing happened with the Diamondback – I loved it the first time, and then I tried the front row which was absolutely terrifying! I won't be riding the front of the Diamondback again. Careening down that first 74° drop (!) practically face-down at over 80 mph with only a red thing between my legs to keep me from plummeting to the earth made me feel like I was going to die for sure.



And not in a good way, which is ironically enough sometimes the reason why lots of crazy people like to ride coasters. Being in the front seat on Diamondback makes it look like the track disappears beneath you, then before you know it, you're flying in the air getting lift out of your seat and you have nothing on either side nor in front of you – yikes! I've grown too old to feel invincible, so I put a cap on my thrill-seeking. I enjoy a good coaster, but I also have my limits. If you are a thrill-seeker roller coaster enthusiast who just can't get enough, try the front car on Diamondback! And a side note, the guy who gave us the behind the scenes tour of The Beast is the guy who thought of the name for Diamondback; it was an interesting experience to have something like that

come up during a conversation.

I think I'll stop there for now... it was a big day, and I'd like to write up more and get more pictures up – and yes, I do have those free ride pictures we got of Chris and I on The Beast and Diamondback. Am I willing to post them on the internet? Maybe you'll have to read my other King's Island posts to find out!

Up on the roof

I spent some time at my eldest's house on the 3rd of July. With my two youngest daughters, and the youngest son-in-law we (and a few others) climbed on the roof to get a better view of Maumee's Fireworks. It was a wonderful location. A bit far to get the full effect of the detonations, but close enough to have a full view of the fireworks. It was a good evening.

It started out with food, drink, conversation, music and friends. I met a few more of my daughter's friends, and sometimes I wonder and then I wonder some more. A very diverse group met for the evening.

Our early evening fireworks started off with a few brats burning on the grill. Yes, in the things going on during the party the grill was left unattended for a bit too long. There was still plenty to go around, so all was good.

At the end of the evening, when the group started to break up, I bade my own farewells to get some rest for what was going to be a busy 4th. More on that later...

Work And Fun On The 4th

As with last year, I had to work on Independence Day. I usually flip-flop Fridays and Saturdays with a co-worker. This was SUPPOSED to be my Saturday off so I did not feel the need to ask for it off. Sure enough, I was informed that I was going to be closing. Funny thing is, I was told that the worker I alternate days with told the boss that it was indeed her Saturday off...hmmm. When I got to work, I was delighted to discover that we were closing at 7 instead of the 8PM I was scheduled until. However by the time 6PM rolled around, my co-worker and I agreed that we should have closed then. At 6:45, one of our regular customers came in and grabbed a cart. At 7, I locked the door and we waited in the office until the couple was finished.

After finally getting out of the store, I ventured to pick up some friends to check out some AMAZING fireworks. Getting to the site was a great adventure. I was armed with my mapquest directions and Megan had "Vera" with her, so we were sure to arrive with little problems. Before getting out of town, the adventure began. I misjudged the city limits and began to accelerate maybe a mile before acceptable. We did see the state patrolman as we made our way along. He pulled out of his parking location, began to follow us, and I don't know why it took soooo long but he turned on his lights and pulled us over. Megan had brought along some beverages but we were all of legal age and none were open, so we were safe there. The officer asked why I was going so fast and I "innocently" explained that I was not sure where the limits were. We were mere feet from it. However, the generous officer asked when my last violation was (about three years ago) and he sent us on our way.

As we approached our destination, my companions informed me that they had to visit the facilities and to stop at the next available location. We passed a rest area and then came up to a nice, clean port-a-potty (thankfully, there were no planes in the area in danger of crashing into it). OOPS... did I say that I would not mention this?

After we finally found our friends (which was not too far from the location at which we found the restroom. We watched some GREAT fireworks. I saw something I don't believe I have before. Some began as if a machine gun was being fired, rapidly spurting out in a back-and-forth motion. Really cool.

Around 2AM, it was time to drive back. Coming home was an adventure as well as some fog had developed (pretty thick in spots) but I don't think it added a great deal to our return trip. So about 3.30, I got to bed in preparation for work at 9. But definitely worth a few hours lost.

Hope everyone had a fun and safe holiday weekend.

I'm Still Alive!

Don't count me out! I know I haven't been blogging as much as I used to; it's because I've been all over the place this summer! I am just swamped, but in a great way! The girls were with their Grandma for the past week, so I used the opportunity to finish up some old blog drafts and post them. I haven't really had the chance to sit down and write up my many recent adventures, so hopefully time will allow for that in the next few weeks – it's been totally awesome, and I can't wait to share everything with you! But until I have time for more blogging, please bear with me and check back often for updates! I hope everyone had an awesome 4th of July weekend –

happy birthday America! THANKS FOR READING!

Secrets Of Traveling With Kids

I'm smack dab in the middle (of the beginning) of raising 4 kids of all different (under 10) ages, and also their friends are around a lot, so we are constantly surrounded by young-ins! Of my many observations and trials and errors in trying to keep them all simultaneously calm and content, I have discovered a few secrets, *golden* secrets – so considered because of their miraculous success rates, at least in the under 10 set. Give me a few years (especially when the kids reach their teens), and I may have enough golden kid-contenting secrets to write a book, let's hope I learn some more anyway...

1. If you trace the roots of every kid tantrum and meltdown, you will find that most are derived from feelings of hunger, followed closely by fatigue and thirst; the latter two can be interchanged, it depends upon the kid. But the #1 reason is usually hunger. Keeping small, energy-boosting (and likable!) snacks on hand at all times can do wonders for the mood of the group.

2. Never underestimate the power of blankie. I keep those really thin blankies in my car – the ones they give you at the hospital when you're having a baby. They fold up so small, it's really not a big deal for me to keep a bag with 4 of them (1 per kid is important!) folded up and stashed under the front passenger seat. When we are returning home on a long drive or even when we're in the middle of a long day out,

a sleepy (and full-stomached, see hint #1) kid can often be comforted and most often put to sleep by a blankie. Even the thin ones work like a miracle; I've seen it work for multiple ages, genders, and personalities. It's difficult for me to get used to, but I keep offering my son little stuffed animals to play with. I had 3 girl babies before him, and they all loved stuffed animals. My son could care less, unless the stuffed animal still has its tag for him to rip off. But the blankie secret is effective even with him – he'll pull it up against his cheek and instantly get sleepy! If you don't have enough of the hospital blankies for each kid (and it's important they each have their own), I highly suggest you purchase other thin blankies for the car since they're inexpensive, especially when you consider how helpful they are. They come in packs of 4 or 5 for under \$10, I think... A key to helping this secret be effective is to make sure **you** retain control of the blankies – don't let the kids keep them in the back of the van or like anything else, the novelty will wear off, rendering the blankie ineffective. My kids know that the car blankies are just for “blankie emergencies”, and that policy helps to make sure I can keep them somewhat clean and stashed and ready for use.

So just remember, snacks and blankies can usually get you out of most kid-pinches, sometimes even calming kids who pinch, ha. At the very least, if you find yourself in charge of some crazy kids, plan ahead and do some light packing – these hints will buy you some time to think of a better plan!

Talking maps

After the wonderful drive back from Florida, I went out and purchased a GPS system. My good friends take theirs with them

everywhere they go (just about) and use it to find hotels, restaurants, and other fun places. Further adventures with “Jill” can be found [here](#). I haven’t used mine long enough yet for the voice to be accepted, but right now she is called Samantha. That’s the name the voice came with, but I do find it slightly annoying (the voice, not the name).

My daughter and son-in-law (one of three pairs, take your guess), took me to a place called [The Blarney](#). It was a great little place. I’m not sure how authentic it keeps to real pubs in Ireland, but it was a fun time. I had hoped my talking map would get me there, but we didn’t have the address, and it wasn’t in the restaurant list, we made our best guess. Lucky for us there was no ball game, the Blarney is just a short walk away from the Mudhens stadium. This is going to be on my list of places to go. I’m not a bar scene person but this was a lot of fun. The Bangers and Mash was fantastic. I have to add this place to my talking map.

I’m hoping I can find some downloads for places like this on the GPS site. I’m wondering now if there are other Irish or English pubs in the area. Or maybe a coffee shop or two? Other places I may want to see. Who knows.

The funny thing is, I picked the GPS up because I wanted to make a side trip on my way back from Florida. I didn’t have a map, and I didn’t use Google Maps or Mapquest to plan my trip back. By the time I got an Atlas, I was passed any good way of getting to where I wanted to be. That may have been a blessing, since my truck battery decided to give out, but that was the cause of me getting more tech stuff. Really, it wasn’t because I wanted another toy. I’m a very good map reader, and I like plotting my own course. I’ve tested the GPS already and it mapped the same travel routes that I did. So do I think like a computer? You don’t have to answer that one.

So be on the lookout for more adventures with my talking map. I hope I don’t get sent directions to turn into a lake... ☐

Jubilant Jubilee Time

Once a year, like many around the nation, our small town has a festival complete with carnival rides, games, and fried foods galore. Upon seeing how quickly our money disappears year after year, we vow to never return to our town's festival, called the Jubilee. But somehow, we find ourselves back there year after year, and the kids always do have a great time, despite the fact that a family could go broke because of this thing.

This year's Jubilee was great. My girls were looking forward to it for an entire week. Once they began to pull up the trailers and set up the rides come Sunday, the kids' excitement was unstoppable. And because we formulated a careful budget plan regarding the Jubilee this year, Mom and Dad were happy to see the little ones so excited. But there was one problem we did not foresee nor did we warn the kids about – the possibility of rain. And you know what I'm talking about – these traveling amusement companies are not going to refund your money just because it rained a little and they had to shut down some rides. It was quite a gamble – dash the hopes of the little ones or take our chances with the rain (and judging by the radar, we could tell it was probably going to rain all night). We decided to take our chances with the rain, especially since we were assured that they would keep the rides open unless there was lightening. Luckily for us, the gamble paid off, and we were all able to enjoy many (wet) hours riding the rides, sampling the food (including my favorite Jubilee treat, Root Beer Float flavored Dippin' Dots), and mingling with friends we bumped into along the way.

The kids had a great time, and so did my husband and I, even though we rode ourselves sick. A ride called the Hurricane

(boats that fly in a circle) was the one that did in my hubby, while the Orbiter made me feel like I suddenly aged a decade or two. Immediately following the Orbiter, with my head spinning, I made the unwise decision to get on a ride called Rock O Plane which is essentially a Ferris Wheel with circular cages instead of benches – and as the large wheel turns, the small cages with the passengers in them spin around independently, going upside down and sometimes trapping the riders facing head-first for what seems like forever... fun, but the combination of all those rides made my head spin for the rest of the night!

We returned to the Jubilee with my parents when they came to visit on Saturday when there were live bands to listen to, and it was just a nice atmosphere. The kids each got to ride a few more rides, and they were satisfied until next year...