

Were We Off To See The Wizard Or To St. Louis?

I'm not entirely sure but after the final curtain fell, I began to wonder. While we were striking the set, the tornado siren sounded not once... not twice... but three times (a lady). We all piled into the catacombs of the Huber and enjoyed pizza, cake, cookies, and other goodies. I'm so glad the warning did not sound until AFTER the show was over. But everything the theatre took in I believe today at least if not part of last night's take was all profit. Good for the joint venture of the Village Players and Huber Opera House. I just cannot express enough how great it was to be involved in this production in the beautiful theatre. There are stories I have heard about the building only a short 20 years ago that would not be appropriate for this blog.

I just find it amazing every time a set is taken down. All the time and hard work that went into the creation of such a beautiful picture and down in less than half that time. This was even harder because this was ONLY a three day event as opposed to the seven show run of the [WCCT](#). However, no matter the outcome, there is always something memorable to take away from every show... yes, even Grease had a few fantastic things come out of it and anyone who reads my blog KNOWS what that is.

But, once again, thank you to all involved in *Meet Me in St. Louis* to the Village Players and to the Huber Opera House. Hicksville Ohio has a wonderful venue that harkens back to an era long ago. I look forward to auditioning again.

A video teaching weekend



Being that it's been five days since my last post, I would suppose it's time to write something again. But what? I suppose I can write about this weekend. This post will actually go back a bit though, since earlier events pertain to this weekend. For the most part the weekend was quite ordinary. 4th/5th grade ministry on Saturday night and Sunday morning, the service I went to at ~~8:00~~, er I mean 9:00 (sure felt like the earlier time for some reason... You *did* set your clocks forward, right?), dodge-ball for gametime, yep- quite ordinary. So let's focus on the other stuff.

First off, back in January we started something which should have become regular. As I make a video every year for my cabin at summer camp, I was asked to make some short videos for the regular service every few weeks. Well, they handed me a camera back then to record the kids at various moments during the services I was there. Another filled in for me at the third service. Mission part one accomplished. Part two would be editing, and that became the big problem. They have a Mac set up at the church where they do their own editing using iMovie. Now, if I had a job at the church this wouldn't be a problem as I would just use this computer, but I don't, so I could easily use mine instead. Not so easy in fact. First off, my computer is not a Mac (though I have experimented a bit with [OSx86](#) to turn my computer into what's known as a hackintosh by installing OSX to my external hard drive). I quickly found out that the Firewire port on a Mac is not the same as an IEEE-1394 port on an HP (two names for the same thing, only "Firewire" is copyrighted by Apple) so the firewire cable they had didn't work. We tried a USB cable for the camera, but that required drivers my computer didn't have, and I couldn't find one on the web. A few weeks went by, and we experimented in saving the videos on their Mac then

transferring them to my computer. Let's just say slow and awkward. The default format on the Mac of saving video is a format with the extension .dv. I could save each video as .mp4 or try to find a program on my computer to convert the native .dv files. Yeah, too much work. So they look to get the right cable to go to my computer. They find one at Radio Shack for \$20 and one online for 50¢. Which would you go with? Well, they bought both, hoping to be able to return the overpriced Radio Shack one should the cheap one not work. Last Wednesday, fingers crossed, we tried the cable. Worked like a charm. We finally got the video from the camera to my computer in a format my computer liked, mpeg-2. So, Friday night I worked for a few hours to get that first 4-minute video done, and brought it with me Saturday night. Popped in on the computer from my flash drive, which held both .wmv and .mpg versions of the video, and we were ready to go. Not so fast. No audio cable from the computer to the sound board. Sigh. Well, I just played it in silence since the worship team was practicing anyway. We left a message for the tech director to leave us the proper cable, and come Sunday morning they had one waiting. Then, we had the computer taken away and replace with a different one because they needed the one elsewhere. The one they gave us was not turned on and literally took 20 minutes to boot up, log in, and finish loading Windows. Good thing I had the .wmv version as there was no way this computer would be able to handle MPEG-2. In any event, mission completely accomplished. Hopefully next time we will record a new video and do it again, minus the mishaps. Ideally I will transfer the videos before I leave for the day.

This weekend was also a time I got to teach again, finally. I last taught in December. I taught a lesson on stuff. No, I am not being general. The theme of the year is living like a Christian, so this week was about having and wanting stuff, whatever that stuff is to you being video games, stuffed animals, trading cards, or whatever. The start of James

chapter 5 tells us a bit of God's feeling on this topic:

1Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. 4Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

(James 5:1-6 ESV)

Stuff- not so bad. Love of stuff- watch out. It is not wrong to be rich of course, but if your heart is with your money or things, then that's a problem. After all, Jesus Himself said you can't serve two masters. If you serve money, you will not be able to serve God at the same time. I showed them some pictures of way overdoing collecting stuff ([here](#) and [here](#) for example), and I acted out a person on the phone trying to get something no matter what it took, even hurting someone to get it. I thought my teaching went fairly well, though still a few minutes long. There was a video at the start (not the one I put together) that I should have ended earlier than I did.

Meet Me In St. Louis

I've certainly heard of the musical Meet Me In St. Louis, especially being a fan of the late great Judy Garland, but I had never before seen it until last night. A great friend played the role of Grandpa, and we were delighted to have the opportunity to watch him age some 40 years and to be able to

return to the stage.

First, I'll begin with the venue. The play was performed in a historical building in Hicksville, Ohio called the Huber Opera House. As I learned in the director's introduction before the show, the Huber was originally built by a wealthy man who wanted a place to stage-test his plays between Chicago and New York; I'm thinking some time in the late 1800's; not exactly sure on that. I do know that one of their stage curtains was created right around the time *Meet Me in St. Louis* takes place – 1903-04, and the gorgeous curtain depicting angels in a boat was hanging last night in all it's glory. The Huber is simply gorgeous. I especially enjoyed seeing the pictures of it from the 1990's and how far it's come since then. The owner of it at that time decided to trash the place when he found out he was going to lose it, and trash it he did. The place was an utter disaster; they even went so far as to rip one of the opera balconies from the wall. Apparently downtown Hicksville was not a place you wanted to be after dark at that time (coming from the 'burbs of Chicago, that's particularly amusing to me – I mean, Hicksville Ohio dangerous? Yeah right!), and the city wanted the Huber torn down. Some very dedicated individuals earned a lot of money and worked their butts off to restore it and give us back the beautiful theater it is today – and I was lucky enough to be able to see a show in it.

As for the show itself, I will say that *Meet Me in St. Louis* will never be one of my favorite musicals. The cast and crew of this particular production did a wonderful job, but I just can't identify with a cast of characters who randomly break into song at the strangest moments and whose greatest conflicts in life include relocating and deciding who to take to the local dance. That being said, I still had a great time. I really enjoyed being transported back in time, and it was both interesting and refreshing to see how much respect children had for their elders back then. My friend Jamy was

awesome as Grandpa, and I don't think I'm being biased. He definitely stood out as one of the better singers, and I was even surprised to see that Grandpa Smith is a much better dancer than Morat Notboratnichkov – one of the other characters I've seen Jamy portray on stage. The little girls in the play were simply adorable, and adding to the fun of the evening was bumping into a couple of friends whom we didn't know were going to be there. Overall, a fun evening out away from the kids, and I even learned a thing or two, which I'll share below. Congratulations Jamy on a job well done!

Random Meet Me in St. Louis Trivia

– Ice cream cones and cotton candy were introduced at the 1904 World's Fair which was in St. Louis. I thought it was really neat that they chose to serve these as intermission refreshments last night at the Huber.

– The 1944 movie Meet Me in St. Louis starred Judy Garland, but at first she refused the role because she was tired of taking childish roles. After a talk with director Vincente Minnelli, she was convinced to take the role of Esther Smith, and it became one of the favorites of her career. Judy and Vincente got married and had a daughter, Liza Minnelli, who went on to become an award winning actress and singer; earning an Oscar, a lifetime achievement Grammy, two Tonys, and an Emmy award throughout her career.

– Two single recordings from the movie Meet Me in St. Louis became hits by Judy Garland before the movie was even released: The Trolley Song and Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.

– During the shooting of the large dinner scene (where one of the older sisters receives a long distance call from her beau in New York), Margaret O'Brien caused mischief on the set. She would change the cutlery around and put two napkin rings beside a plate. The prop man would say, "Please, Maggie

dear," when he would liked to have shaken her.

And Speaking Of This Horrible Economy...

A thought occurred to me the other night – didn't Barack Obama promise to bring the troops home from the dangerous Middle East if he became President? Well, it's been more than 6 weeks since he's taken office, and I haven't even heard any talk whatsoever about troops coming home. I realize these things take time, but like I said, it doesn't even seem to be in the planning stages as of yet.

And then I was thinking, what happens when they DO come home, and now we have thousands of able-bodied Americans who just served our country only to come home to find out that there are NO JOBS for them? What will that do to the unemployment rate? And pardon my ignorance, but when do people in the military get paid? Are they receiving paychecks right now while they're serving, or do they get paid when they come home or both? If they get paid from the government when they come home, that will complicate matters also since the government will suddenly be responsible for paying thousands of soldiers.

I'm not saying that the President is keeping the troops overseas to procrastinate the employment problem. But the fact remains that he *promised* he'd get them home and ASAP. And there is also the fact that the job opportunities are shrinking at a rapid rate. I normally don't get too political, but I haven't heard any of the analysts on tv talk about what to do with the troops for employment should they return to the United States, so I thought I'd throw it out

there.

And it needs to be said how incredibly thankful I am to not be personally affected by the struggling economy. My husband is self-employed and successful, and I haven't even thought about going back to work myself yet since my kids are still very little. My family and friends seem relatively unscathed as well; although I did see my former neighbors in the newspaper the other day for foreclosure. What a shame; they were nice people. Here's to hoping the economy improves – and fast!

Raindrops On Ceilings And Wrinkles On Grandpa

Amidst the pounding rain on the ceiling of the Huber, the cast gave another fine performance of *Meet Me in St. Louis*. This time, I had a larger fan base in attendance. Family and very great friends (two of which I had no idea were coming) were there. Backstage, some cast members were curious whether the weather would play havoc on the sound, but from audience reaction, it must not have. A funny thing happened during the entre'acte (big French work...the music played prior to the opening of Act 2), the keyboard seemed to be accompanied by a back beat or a metronome, but it was a very curious sound.

Following the performance, I was greeted by most of my fan base. I saw my niece and nephew who came with their mother. Then Sharon congratulated me (I DID NOT KNOW THAT SHE AND AL WERE COMING!!! WHAT A SURPRISE) Chris and Lisa were all proud as always. C even commented on my dancing ability. I dunno... I must just make it LOOK good, right?!

Before the show started, one of the Village Players asked if I

had been fully stolen from the WCCT. I told her “Not on your life.” I told her that I am planning on trying out for WCCT’s production of *Little Shop of Horrors* in October (but never say never about trying out for future shows... I love the Huber stage!!!). “Katie” was very interested in trying out for it, as well. “Lon” also voiced an interest in auditioning as well. So, it seems that we might actually have more some more theatre crossing going on which can only mean good things for everyone. Chris even voiced an interest in auditioning for shows with the Village Players (hopefully, his busy schedule will allow that to happen).

It seems that I need to have a class in theatre etiquette for some of the other members of my group. I totally understand that the hour was late and we have the time change tonight so I will forgive this once, but remember IF YOU REALLY ENJOY A PERFORMANCE, the thing to do is to congratulate those in the cast before walking out the door. Otherwise, the cast member(s) who thought you were supposed to be in the audience might think you did not come at all. But thanks all the same for coming and feel free to comment on the performance. □

Springing Ahead

Tonight is the night we change our clocks for Daylight Savings Time. I guess we’re ending Daylight Savings – or maybe we’re starting it. I don’t know and I don’t really care. All I know is that I will be losing an hour of sleep. Ok, it’s not THAT bad; I do like when the sun stays out later, although there is no sun in the weather forecast for the next few days... But I loathe the idea of losing a precious hour of sleep. If I remember correctly, the time change throws the kids into a tizzy for a few days every year until their bodies

readjust – something else to look forward to.

So anyway, this should serve as your reminder to change those clocks – no excuses about being late to church or theater meetings tomorrow! And yes, you must flip the clocks forward, not backward. Remember, it's SPRING ahead, FALL back. And try not to fret about losing that hour of sleep. As Jay Leno said last night referring to this horrible economy that only seems to be getting worse:

“After losing your job, your 401K, and your house, losing an hour of sleep seems like nothing!”

Another Century Post

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Have No Fear, Polyp Man Is Here!

You ~~heard~~ read me right – I did say Polyp Man. Found this amusing picture in the newspaper the other day and I couldn't resist posting it:



It's a little goofy, but hey, whatever works to raise awareness to help people detect and combat colon cancer. If Polyp Man saves lives, more power to him. I do have a little sympathy for the guy in the Polyp Man suit though; he looks like he feels ridiculous. Is being Polyp Man a resumé builder I wonder?

Ice Cream, Cotton Candy, Lions, And Trolleys

Tonight was opening night for Meet Me in St. Louis (Louis) and it went remarkably well from the stage, anyway. The director presented us each with a carnation and told us that we were the best cast she has ever had (and she has been involved with the theatre since 1974). Prior to the show, she gave a short speech on the historical significance of not only the show but also the Huber theatre itself.

But for anyone who has never had the opportunity to be inside the [Huber](#), you owe it to yourself to visit it. It is really amazing and has a large history to it... some good... some best left forgotten, but all part of history. I vaguely remember

when the building was known as Tremors and eventually fell into ill repute until a group went in and cleaned it up. It really is a gorgeous site in which to see a [show](#) and even better, to perform.

During intermission, refreshments were sold. These were also a nice addition to the historical effect. Ice cream cones and cotton candy were both introduced at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. The break lasted a bit longer than the typical 15 minutes. The ice cream was still hard and people were standing outside the building to get some. Carol, bless her heart, jumped in to help scoop ice cream.

During curtain call, I watched John Truitt, who stood to my right, to bow. Unfortunately, he was bowing all over the place at the wrong time. Finally, I just watched the center of the line for our mass bow. A wonderful show with a very responsive audience.

Following the performance, I went out to greet the public. Megan actually got me a totally unnecessary gift. Just her and Carol's presence in the audience was the only present I needed. There were a few other audience members I knew and had to chat with, lots of cool compliments for Grandpa. I even considered going out to McDonalds across the street in full dress and makeup, but decided against it.

This weekend seems to be jam-packed with theatrical productions. We have *Meet Me in St. Louis* at one theatre. *Lion in Winter* at another (hope it went well, [j](#). *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown* being presented at a nearby high school as well as a high school production of *Les Miserables*. Lots of good stuff happening if only I had time to see it all.

Just a quick note – Opening Night

Nerves, nerves.... Yes, I found out I have them. I've known about them before, but only before a show. Will I forget all my lines? Will I stumble on stage? Will I remember the blocking? Will I miss an entrance? Will I have ALL of my costume? Will my fly be zipped? Oh yeah, I don't have to worry about that one in this show. Will my tights stay up? That's better...

I guess I can't think of anything else that could go wrong for me. But the same things could happen to anyone else on stage. Live theater don't you love it?

Just a few more hours remain until the curtain comes up. The butterflies are floating in my stomach, and that is a good sign. Energy levels will be up, and we get to feed off the audience tonight. Most of the theater folk I know are just big hams. We crave, want or desire to be in front of people. We like the applause and laughter. I don't even mind criticism every now and again. This night is the night when all the hard work and long hours finally pay off.

Come watch a show. We are just waiting to entertain you.