

Long, long day

Double tech... Dreaded words for most community theater actors in this area. The day to get the whole show down to an audience ready production. Lights, props, backstage crew, sound and of course the actors. Two complete runs of the show. The first usually is all tech driven. Make sure the props are on stage, make sure the lighting is what is desired, make sure scene changes go well. In some shows food is cooked and served. In others some sort of beverage made. This day is hard all involved.

In our little theater, we used to have an even worse day. We used to do two shows on one of the Sunday. When I first started we had two Sunday shows on the last Sunday, and then we tore down the set after that last show. It was not a fun day, very tiring and very long. That day has now been replaced by double tech. Very long, and very tiring.

The good news is that it looks like we have a show. Three more chances to polish it up. Polish the lighting, polish the scene changes, polish the makeup and of course polish up the line and acting.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:

News and stories

Yesterday, on my way home from Toledo, I heard that Paul Harvey died at the age of ninety. His news broadcasts were my first foray into news of any type. I remember sitting next to my Dad at noon on Saturday to listen to Paul Harvey News. When

Dad was home during the week, he would listen to those newscasts too. I would occasionally go to work with him, and he had a radio to listen there too.

When I had my first job after college, my Dad and I would share a ride to and from work. We started listen to “The Rest of the Story”. Paul Harvey was sort of a father and son bonding time. It went on for a few years. A small way to connect.

I’ve since lost my Father, but I never stopped listening to Paul Harvey when I could. Work didn’t always let me tune in during the week. Prior commitments sometimes took me away from the radio in the evening. Listening to Paul Harvey news or “The Rest of the Story” brought back many memories.

I’ve lost another connection to my past. Sad day.

Disney’s Intervention

It’s no secret that our formally sweet daughter Disney is in the throes of the ‘terrible twos’ right now. One minute she’ll be snuggling... But the next minute, she’ll be spitting, pinching, hitting, pulling hair, or one of the other horrible behaviors that define the ‘terrible twos’. So the other night, we had some friends over for a game night – a bunch of adults sitting around the table snacking, talking and playing games, and the kids were kind of hyper. Attempting to calm them down, I suggested putting a movie on the big tv and letting them watch it downstairs, and so our two oldest laid down to watch it peacefully. Their baby brother went to bed without fuss, and all was well until Disney decided to wreak havoc upon her unsuspecting sisters. As they were laying down trying to watch the movie, she began sitting on them –

spitting on them, pinching them, and basically just trying to do her best to make their lives miserable for the moment. We separated the kids, and Disney came over to the adult's table to finish her special treat of root beer – and that's when it hit me – she was on a sugar high! Sure enough, after she chugged down her root beer, she began going for (and at a record pace) the gumballs from her Strawberry Shortcake gumball machine she had gotten for Valentine's Day. Some game night friends noticed this, and Cathy distracted her while John passed the gumball machine to Jamy, who passed it to me. I hid it under my shirt and stealthily (or so I thought) left the room with Dis at my heels...

I made it to the bathroom where I was able to stash the gumball machine without her noticing, and although she did ask about it, we were able to avoid fueling the two-year-old fire any further, and within an hour, she fell asleep. It only took 4 adults to stage a sugar intervention for our two-year-old, and thank goodness they did because too much sugar+terrible two's = horror for everyone!

So thanks everyone, for staging Disney's intervention – we all know it was for her and OUR own good!

Doling Out Some Justice With A Little BAM!

The next time a group of would be house robbers decide to go looting someone's home, they will think twice when reading about Ellen Basinski of the suburban Cleveland community of Elyria, Ohio. Mrs. Basinski was on the phone with her husband, Judge David Basinski, when a group of four young men entered

her home and started by emptying the contents of her purse. Mrs. Basinski sprang into overdrive and grabbed her Emeril Lagasse saucepan and whacked one of the the boys with it. hilariously, the perpetrator stared in stunned disbelief and asked, "What did you do that for?" The 70 year-old whacked him again. You can read the full details of the not so frail woman by following the [link](#). By the way, the chef has personally guaranteed Mrs. Basinski that he would replace the saucepan and probably cook her a special meal besides.

I Will Survive

Here's a cute video that was a popular email forward in the infancy age of email forwards. I saw this one years ago, and it popped into my head today for some reason, so here you go... oh yeah, make sure you watch the whole thing!

Web-Swinging On Broadway?

If I recall, I posted on the POSSIBILITY of the world's favorite web-slinging superhero making his Broadway debut. The creative genius behind The Lion King's transformation from screen to stage is teaming with the creative genius of U2 to bring us [Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark](#). I'm sorry, but this seems destined for failure. Julie Taymor took a well established Disney animated feature and brilliantly brought it to the stage. Bono and the Edge have had multiple hits for probably 2 decades. I know that the Last Son of Krypton made the leap to Broadway in the 60s in [It's a Bird... It's a Plane... It's Superman](#) but I'm just not sure that I would want a return to pure camp which I see this ending up becoming. If not, I will happily beg for a retraction. But for now, I'm not feeling greatly optimistic about this one.

Where is my lion?

In trying to get last minute additions to our set, I was trying to decorate some torch holders with the lion from the Crest of Henry II. Very intricate lion for me to cut out.

I've never had good sissors skills. To top it off, I'm trying to make it about 5.5 to 7 inches long. Hmm that's not going to work for me.

So what did I do? I passed this project on to my youngest daughter. She must have passed the scissors portion of art in Kindergarten. Since I never went to Kindergarten, I missed that class entirely.

Final projects, line and character touch ups, clean up for the theater are all things we do the week before the play begins.

We need a few additions to our costumes (shoes). Maybe an additional knife or two (yes, sharp, pointy, dangerous things).

And of course a heavy helping of vitamins, cold remedies and anything else you can think of so that the cast remains healthy and able for the entire production.

Crunch week is here, and all I want to know is: "Where are my lions?"

[GO TO A SHOW!!!](#)

The day is gray

I'm not sure how it started out, it was still dark when I arrived at work. I'm not sure how the day look all day, I have no windows where I work. But the day was gray anyway.

For this reason or that. Human error and computer malfunction played havoc on the day today. All morning seemed to be a rush to get nothing accomplished. Everytime something was tried it, for some reason, failed. The day was gray.

This type of day is very draining.

But even with all of that, there was humor in the day. That little bit of silver lining, perhaps?

Coffee just wasn't doing it this morning. Even though I enjoy my cup of joe in the morning, it just didn't hit the spot like normal. When this occurs, as it does from time to time, I go to a cup of tea or two. After heating my water, I went back to my desk for a nice cup. A few minutes later, I was drinking my brew thinking it was very weak. Then I noticed,

the dry teabag was still sitting next to the cup. I was drinking a cup of hot water. Now at that point, I knew the day was going all wrong. I'm lucky it got better in the afternoon.

So, how was your day?

And Your Favorite Muppet Is?

Recently I came across an interesting article about everyone's favorite comedians, the Muppets! I grew up watching the Muppets; whether it was on the various incarnations of their tv shows (The Muppet Show, Muppets Tonight, etc.), their feature films, Sesame Street, or even in their hilarious Muppets 3D attraction at Disney's Hollywood (formerly MGM) Studios in Florida. Here are some fun facts about 20 of the Muppets that you might not know:

1. Cookie Monster: Jim Henson drew some monsters eating various snacks for a General Foods commercial in 1966. The commercial was never used, but Henson recycled one of the monsters (the "Wheel-Stealer") for an IBM training video in 1967 and again for a Fritos commercial in 1969. By that time, he had started working on Sesame Street and decided this monster would have a home there.
2. Elmo: The way it's described by a Sesame Street writer, apparently this extra red puppet was just lying around. People would try to do something with him, but nothing really panned out. In 1984, puppeteer Kevin Clash picked up the red puppet and started doing the voice and the personality and it clicked – thus, Elmo was born.
3. Telly Monster was originally the Television Monster when he

debuted in 1979. He was obsessed with TV and his eyes would whirl around as if hypnotized whenever he was in front of a set. After a while, producers started worrying about his influence on youngsters, so they changed him to make him the chronic worrier he is now.

4. Count von Count made his first appearance in 1972 and was made out of an Anything Muppet pattern – a blank Muppet head that could have features added to it to make various characters. He used to be more sinister – he was able to hypnotize and stun people and he laughed in typical scary-villain-type fashion after completing a count of something and thunder and lightning would occur. He was quickly made more appealing to little kids, though. He is apparently quite the ladies' man – he has been linked to Countess von Backward, who loves to count backward; Countess Dahling von Dahling and Lady Two.

5. Kermit was “born” in 1955 and first showed up on “Sam and Friends,” a five-minute puppet show by Jim Henson. The first Kermit was made out of Henson's mom's coat and some ping pong balls. At the time, he was more lizard-like than frog-like. By the time he showed up on Sesame Street in 1969, though, he had made the transition to frog. There are rumors that he got the name Kermit from a childhood friend of Henson's or a puppeteer from the early days of the Muppets, but Henson always refuted both of those rumors. Mental Floss: 15 reasons Mr. Rogers was the best neighbor ever

6. Real Swedish Chef Lars “Kuprik” Bäckman claims he was the inspiration for the Swedish Chef. He was on “Good Morning America,” he says, and caught Jim Henson's eye. Henson supposedly bought the rights to the show's recording and created the Swedish Chef (who DOES have a real name, but it's not understandable). One of the Muppet writers, Jerry Juhl, says that in all of the years of working with Jim Henson on the Swedish Chef, he never heard that the character was based on a real person.

7. Animal: The Who's Keith Moon may have inspired everyone's favorite member of Dr. Teeth and the Electric Mayhem. This is speculation, but people who support the theory will point out that Jim Henson named one of the Fraggle Rock characters "Wembley," which is the town where Moon was born.

8. Miss Piggy is apparently from Iowa. She started as a minor character on "The Muppet Show," but anyone who knows Miss Piggy can see that she wouldn't settle for anything "minor." Her first TV appearance was actually on an Herb Alpert special. It wasn't until 1976, when "The Muppet Show" premiered, that she became the glamorous blonde with a penchant for frog that we know and love today. Frank Oz once said that Miss Piggy grew up in Iowa; her dad died when she was young and her mother was mean. She had to enter beauty contests to make money.

9. Rowlf the Dog, surprise, surprise, was first made in 1962 for a series of Purina Dog Chow commercials. He went on to claim fame as Jimmy Dean's sidekick on The Jimmy Dean Show and was on every single episode from 1963 to 1966. Jimmy Dean said Rowlf got about 2,000 letters from fans every week. He was considered for Sesame Street but ended up becoming a regular on "The Muppet Show" in 1976. Mental Floss: Commercials from a late-80s airing of 'A Muppet Family Christmas'

10. Oscar the Grouch is performed by the same guy who does Big Bird, Carroll Spinney. Spinney said he based Oscar's cranky voice on a particular New York cab driver he once had the pleasure of riding with. He was originally an alarming shade of orange. In Pakistan, his name is Akhtar and he lives in an oil barrel. In Turkey, he is Kirpik and lives in a basket. And in Israel, it's not Oscar at all – it's his cousin, Moishe Oofnik, who lives in an old car.

11. Gonzo: What exactly is Gonzo? Nobody knows. Even Jim Henson had no particular species in mind. Over the course of "The Muppet Show," "Muppet Babies" and various Muppet movies,

Gonzo has been referred to as a “Whatever”, a “Weirdo” and an alien. Whatever he is, he first appeared on the scene in 1970’s The Great Santa Claus Switch. His name was Snarl the Cigar Box Frackle. In 1974, he showed up on a TV special for Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass. He became Gonzo the Great by the first season of The Muppet Show and developed his thing for Camilla the Chicken almost accidentally: During one episode where chickens were auditioning for the show, puppeteer Dave Goelz ad-libbed, “Don’t call us, we’ll call you... nice legs, though!” It was decided then and there that Gonzo would have a bizarre romantic interest in chickens.

12. You have to love Statler and Waldorf. I couldn’t find much on their particular inspiration, but I can tell you that they’ve been around since the 1975 “Muppet Show” pilot. They are named after popular New York City hotels (the Statler Hotel was renamed the Hotel Pennsylvania in 1992.) Guess what Waldorf’s wife name is? Yep... Astoria (she looks startlingly like Statler.) FYI, Waldorf is the one with the mustache and white hair. Statler has the grey hair. Apparently Waldorf has had a pacemaker for more than 30 years.

13. Beaker: I always thought of Beaker and his buddy Bunsen Honeydew as characters that came along later in the Muppet timeline, but they have been around since the “The Muppet Show.” Although Beaker usually says things along the lines of, “Mee-mee-mee-mee!”, he has had a few actual lines: “Sadly temporary,” “Bye-Bye” and “Make-up ready!” Despite being word-challenged, he manages to do a pretty convincing Little Richard impression and, surprisingly, had mad beatbox skills. Beaker is one of the only Muppets that was never recycled from some other purpose – he was created solely for “The Muppet Show.”

14. Fozzie Bear. Poor Fozzie. He’s the perpetual target of Statler and Waldorf because of his horrible jokes and puns. It actually created a bit of a problem during the first season of The Muppet Show, because when Fozzie got heckled, he got very

upset and sometimes cried. Viewers didn't feel sympathy; they felt embarrassed. The problem was solved by making Fozzie an optimist so that even when he got heckled he was good-natured about it. It's often thought that he was named after Frank Oz, who was his puppeteer, but Frank said it's just a variant of "fuzzy bear." Yet another story says he was named for his builder, Faz Fazakas. Wocka wocka!!

15. Bert and Ernie are the Muppet version of Felix and Oscar ("The Odd Couple," for you young'uns). Lots of people think Bert and Ernie were named for some minor characters in *It's A Wonderful Life*, but according to the Henson company, that's just a rumor. Jim Henson always maintained that it was just a coincidence – the names just went well together and seemed to fit the characters. Jerry Juhl, one of the head writers, corroborated this and said that Jim Henson had no memory for details like that and would have never remembered the name of the cop and the taxi cab driver in the old Jimmy Stewart movie. Other rumors to clear up: Bert and Ernie aren't gay and neither one of them are dead. Now that we've got that straightened out, here are a few more tidbits: the original Ernie used to have a gravelly voice similar to Rowlf the Dog's. Frank Oz was Bert's puppeteer and hated him at the beginning. He thought Bert was ridiculously boring, but then realized that he could have a lot of fun with being boring. Jim Henson once said, "I remember trying Bert and Frank tried Ernie for a while. I can't imagine doing Bert now, because Bert has become so much of a part of Frank."

16. Grover: Everyone's favorite "cute, furry little monster" made his TV debut on the "Ed Sullivan Show" in 1967. At the time, he was known as "Gleep" and was a monster in Santa's Workshop. He then appeared on the first season of *Sesame Street*, but sported green fur and a reddish-orange nose. He didn't have a name then, but by the second season he transformed into the Grover we know today, more or less – electric blue fur and a pink nose. The original green Grover

was reincarnated as Grover's Mommy for a few episodes. In Latin America and Puerto Rico Grover is known as Archibaldo, in Spain he is Coco, in Portugal he is Gualter and in Norway he is Gunnar.

17. Sweetums is one of a handful of full-body Muppets. He showed up in 1971 on the TV special "The Frog Prince." This is where he got his name – when Sir Robin the Brave is about to defeat the ogre, a witch shows up and changes him into a frog (who later becomes Robin, Kermit's nephew). Apparently smitten with the ogre, the witch tells her darling "Sweetums" that he can have the frog for breakfast. Bigger fame awaited Sweetums, though – in 1975, he appeared on Cher's variety show to do a duet with her to "That Old Black Magic". He officially joined "The Muppet Show" cast in 1976.

18. Rizzo the Rat might sound familiar to you, especially if you've seen "Midnight Cowboy" – he is named for Dustin Hoffman's character, Ratso Rizzo. He was created after puppeteer Steve Whitmire was inspired by rat puppets made from bottles. He first showed up on "The Muppet Show" as one of a group of rats following Christopher Reeve around – he's easy to spot because he hams it up more than any of the other rats. He occasionally performs with Dr. Teeth and the Electric Mayhem.

19. Pepe the King Prawn's full name is Pepino Rodrigo Serrano Gonzales. I heart Pepe. He was a chef in Madrid before going Hollywood on "Muppets Tonight" in 1996. He was paired with Seymour the Elephant (Pepe was originally going to be a mouse) on the show, but Seymour never developed quite the same following and was only in two episodes. He rarely gets names right – some of his mispronunciations include "muffins" instead of Muppets, "Kermin" instead of Kermit and "Scooper" instead of Scooter. He's quite full of himself – in addition to thinking that he's quite the ladies' man, he also fully expects to win several Oscars.

20. Herry Monster from Sesame Street was the Big Bad Wolf in his original incarnation, which you can kind of tell by looking at his fur. It's pretty wolf-like (if wolves were blue, I mean). He became a Sesame monster in 1970 to replace the Beautiful Day Monster, who looked kind of like Sam the Eagle and existed to cause destruction wherever he went, thus ruining the beautiful day people had been having before he showed up. Herry used to have a furry nose but got upgraded to his non-furry, purple nose in 1971.

The preceding article was written by Stacy Conradt and was published on cnn.com

[poll id="9"]

And for your enjoyment (and so you can get this song stuck in your head for days on end), here is the Muppets catchy performance of Mahna Mahna – it's a really fun video to watch!

Some REALLY Last Minute Choreography

I guess it could be worse. Tonight, the Smith family octet blocked the movements for “Whenever I’m With You.” With only three rehearsals to go (Sunday’s tech rehearsal is that alone... a day for tech... getting light and sound cues, rented costumes distributed and hoping they fit, etc. no run through Sunday), the routine is going to be fun... if IT KILLS ME and even easy... coming from a certifiable Redwood.. But it is a good thing we got it blocked because without the choreographer, we were just ambling around the stage looking lost. I think the choreographer has been at a total of 2 rehearsals (tonight being the second). But somehow, the other choreographed numbers are going really well and look good. The dance guru also commented on one of my many costumes. She was jealous and I told her that it would be hard to put away after the show’s run. We also saw a copy of another press release from Hicksville’s hometown newspaper. There is a website, but it has not been updated to include this week’s headlines. I’ll keep checking and post a link. I also realized once again tonight how much I LOVE to sing. Guess that is a good thing since I am in a musical?