

# Official?

Well, I saw it on facebook. Doesn't that make it true? OK, you don't believe that line, good. Not every thing you see on Facebook is true or, real. Same goes for most of the Internet. I like to make sure I let people know important things face to face or at least on the phone.

Important news should be delivered to those it affects. As you go farther from the center the news does not need to be direct, but where and when does Facebook become an acceptable way of spreading the news.

I've delivered some important news to those that needed to know. After that the news was placed on Facebook. Yes, I guess that made it official. I never thought that I would be placing important information on any social network. I never dreamt of putting it in this type of information in my blog.

I guess important news can be shared in this type of format if that is the only way it can be shared.

I just noticed that I spent a good portion of this post writing about important news. I have shared that news (slightly) in an earlier post, but in my own obtuse way. People who know me, knew what I was talking about. I guess I should, at some point, I should state this in a bit more extensive format. Then again, I won't be doing that now.

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# A Shower In Indigo

Today was an extremely busy fun day I had to run to Btown for my monthly poke and got a call this afternoon informing me that all is well and they'll see me in another 4 weeks. From there, I set off to find decorations for a small baby shower, Lutz and I were preparing. Around 4:30, I went to the shelter house to decorate. I hope the guest of honor was a LITTLE surprised?! Fun while I was there briefly, as always. I had to bolt shortly after the festivities began as my siblings and I were set to compete in our hometown festival's version of Family Feud.

The set left something to be desired. Our oldest commented that he could have done a much better job... I would have to agree. Have you ever played Family "Fued?" I don't think I would want to. Our revered mayor played host. He did a fine job but could have slowed the pace a bit. We were done in 20 minutes. I was going to ask if he was going to kiss the girls on the teams, but decided against it.

The Shaf siblings took on the team of Main Stop. We were relentless. We won each of the three rounds. "Name a place where you meet obnoxious people." "Name an expression with the word HEAVEN." "Name an activity teenagers engage in when they should be studying."

After some debate, Jeff and I played Fast Money. Since I went last, I was driven around the grounds in a cart so I couldn't hear the questions and answers. It would not have hurt too much to hear the answers since the smart one only got 81 of the 200 points needed.

- Name a vehicle named after an animal. J: Mustang; Me: Cougar (number 1)
- Name any color of the rainbow. J: INDIGO?!; Me: Red (number 1)

- Name a College that generally has a good basketball team. J: Ohio State; Me: Notre Dame (first thing that came into my head)
- Name a Cable Network beginning with the letter "C." J: CNN; Me: C-SPAN
- Which President has the most streets named after him. J: Washington; Me: Lincoln (tied for top answer).

Indigo may be a color of the rainbow but apparently not a very popular color of the rainbow. In fact, I think I read that it had been downgraded. In the end, we totaled 211 points and move on to round two! The rest of round one begins tomorrow at 1PM. Six other teams play (3 games total) before we take the stage sometime between 3 and 4 o'clock! Would be nice to see some Jamiahsh fans come and cheer us on!

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## **There's No Place Like The Merry Old Land Of Oz**

Yesterday was quite the busy day. It began around 9AM as I went to the area chamber of commerce office to sell tickets for FCF's production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Quite an experience (fun but at times busy). Answering phones, waiting on the line of theatergoers, marking charts, getting the tickets, running credit cards, and attempting to keep an accurate count of sold tickets was fun. Of course there were down times, but by 5PM, each of the 4 performances were really close to 300 with Friday night just one ticket shy of 400. I found it amazing that Thursday night's opening is the second strongest. Sunday afternoon is a typical slow day but Saturday night?! Ah well... it was only Tuesday.

After selling tickets, I had a few hours before I needed to be

at the Arts and Ed building to sit and review said show. I must say that it was much easier to review Oz since it remains one of my perennial favorites than it was my first time doing a review for (Cr)OKLAHOMA! It certainly took less time... or maybe last night's show ended sooner. I must apologize for any omissions to the cast as I attempted to include everyone including the adorable Toto. At review time, the programs had not yet arrived and a full cast list was unavailable.

However, most of it was available on the theatrical group's [website](#). So after completing my task, and forwarding it on to the President, my second review will soon be on the printed page, if not on the screens of cyberspace. Hopefully, it will appear before the show completes its one weekend schedule.

### There's No Place Like The Merry Old Land Of Oz

by Jamy Shaffer

In 1900, Lyman Frank Baum published the novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* having no idea the impact that the little children's book would have on the world. Twelve sequel novels, stage plays, and silent movies followed. However, it was the 1939 beloved classic motion picture starring Judy Garland that would catapult the tale to atmospheric proportions. This weekend only, under the very capable direction of Beth Schweitzer, Fountain City Festival presents the most faithful stage adaptation of the cherished film.

McKenzie Frazier leads the cast as Dorothy Gale, the young naïve farm girl who dreams of going "Over the Rainbow" and escaping the dull, lifeless Kansas prairie. Miss Frazer who is in her late teens does a fine job of portraying the young dreamer by use of subtle body gestures and a childlike voice that give Dorothy just the right mix of naivete and, at times, fear.

As in the movie, the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion each are characters from Dorothy's Kansas life recreated in

more colorful, dramatic fashion. Brian Coon is exceptional as Hunk who, in Oz, becomes the man of straw with no brains. Coon's agility on stage is phenomenal as he falls down, picks himself up, and puts the stuffing back in.

Casey Wood delivers a dramatic Hickory/Tin Man. Even for a character with no heart, Wood does a fine job of portraying the emotions he lacks. His stiff movements on stage are wonderful as he stands as if posing for his statue.

The third friend Dorothy encounters along the Yellow Brick Road is hilarious slapstick at its finest. Adam Coon is brilliant as the Cowardly Lion. Even as Zeke, Coon is remarkable as he runs away in the face of danger. Once in the costume of the fearful king of the forest, he goes all out with his perfect comedic timing and fabulous stage presence.

Amy Vondeylen is hideously delicious as Miss Gulch/Wicked Witch of the West. Her over the top, extremely melodramatic, villainous portrayal is sure to draw hisses and catcalls from the audience.

Caprianna Parrish brings a delightful, airy quality in her portrayal of Glinda, the Good With of the North. Her costume, like many of the other characters' is almost a direct replica of the original film version.

The Great and Powerful Wizard of Oz himself is brought to fine life by Tom Schweitzer. His showman approach to the character is just the thing needed to portray the humbug who is a good man but a very bad wizard. Hopefully, this comes as no surprise to anyone.

Anyone who has ever seen Keith Day in action knows what a fine character actor he is. Mr. Day displays a great sense of warmth but befuddlement as Uncle Henry along side Sarah Schaper as Auntie Em. Later, he brings the same greatness to his role as the Guard at the Gates of the Emerald City.

What is Oz without the adorable munchkins? There will sure to be a collective sigh and laughter as Marlee Yoder, Katherine Seaman, Vivien Ewing, Hannah Goodrich, Kayla Arnold, Veronica Nichols, and Lizzy Canield portray the female variety. Austin Damrod, Cory Yosick, Jesse Short, Seth Short, Milo McRobbie, Logan Psurny, Mason Frazer, Mason Bassett, Wyatt Short, Keegan McCashen, and Micah McCashen play their male counterparts.

The three apple trees who seemed to have a larger on stage role than in the movie are played by Jeremy Scott, Jared Wigent, and Thomas Vandal.

Some of the Witch's Winkie guards ("O E O Yo Ah") are played by Cameron Lyons, Austin Teegarden, Mason Bassett, Wyatt Short, Evan Raub, and Jeremy Scott.

Other Emerald City Ozians are played by FCF stalwarts Ron and Linda Jinks, Noelle Goodson, Sara Yosick, Nanci Frazer, Briana Gearhart, Megan Fry, Maddi Heisler, Kathleen Walsh, Remy Cousino, Emma McCashen, Chloe McCashen, Heather Teegarden, Edwina Phillips, Sandy Bowers, and Faith Stambaugh.

So... take your own journey along the Yellow Brick Road and go Over the Rainbow as FCF presents *The Wizard of Oz*. Thursday July 28<sup>th</sup> – Saturday July 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm and Sunday July 31<sup>st</sup> at 2PM. Unlike years past, the show runs only one weekend at the Bryan Arts and Education Building. Tickets are \$10 each and may be purchased at the Bryan Chamber office or by calling 419-636-2247. Don't miss this cherished family-friendly show!

*(Jamy Shaffer is a veteran community theater performer who has been involved in more shows in the Northwest Ohio region on and off stage than even he can count.)*

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# **I'm Thinking... I'm Thinking...**

Some comic relief in the title of this post to distract me from quite an overwhelming day today:

Received some devastating news (for us, but don't worry – it's great news for some friends of ours) prayed about it, and examined the possibilities that may arise from it. There's also been several intriguing and exciting doors being revealed to us lately, and we are praying on, thinking about, and waiting to see which ones will open and where they might lead. We've been contemplating a huge decision in the past few months regarding our family, and it's time to finalize that decision. We spent some time with friends today gathering information and establishing a support system for this possible lifestyle change. I'm excited but for the lack of sleep wearing me down and making me feel overwhelmed – it's all a lot to process. I will write more in a bit – as you can see, I have a new keyboard. I have a whole July manifest half-written that's kept me busy – I want the kids to be able to read about our family's stellar July 2011 on my blog someday, so I'd better get around to it. Same thing with my chronicle of the Florida trip we took in January that still has the last part missing 6 months later – oops. I don't know what my problem is – the only thing that distracts me from blogging is doing homework for my Bible study class – and the fact that I found my Zoo Tycoon game; that's really distracting from productivity. And oh yeah – the 4 kids running around the house because it's been too hot to play outside; that can make blogging a bit difficult.

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## May I Return...

What a day! I took two of my nieces to Journey Oz as the cast and crew prepared for what is sure to be a [WONDERFUL](#) production next weekend. I once again will be playing reviewer Tuesday night. Today, the cast and crew provided an on and back stage experience tailored to the entire family.

Munchkins, Winkies, the Wizard, Wicked Witch, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, Tin Man, and Dorothy were on hand for photo ops and previews... and "her little dog, too." Alyssa and Sydney were both quietly excited at the site.

After, Megan texted me and asked if I would like to accompany her to an area production of [Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat](#) which starred two thespians I have had the honor of performing with previously. So after grabbing a bite to eat and dragging her to church as I had to sing, we headed out. Tim has really grown as an actor and delivered a FINE performance. Crystal as always was stellar as one of the trio of narrators. This is the first time I have known of a production utilizing more than one narrator and it worked nicely. The entire cast looked like they were having such an outstanding time. In every show, it is important to believe that the people on stage are actually enjoying what they are doing. Joseph perhaps a bit more than any other because it can easily slip into "cheese." The gentleman portraying "Levi" is the husband of a friend of mine who I have known since my pre-school days. Could not find him after the show to congratulate him. Just one of many shows that never gets old for me either watching or performing in. Nine months is a long time. But soon I will be on stage delivering the list of songs I have been perfecting.

A very fun day spent with loved ones doing things I love to do.



Sydney and Alyssa with the  
Cowardly Lion

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# Bathing a dog

If you've met Colin, my little corgi, you will know that he can be a grumpy little dog. He is older and set in his ways. If he doesn't like it, he will grump, growl and grumble until you are done. I was sure that would be the ordeal I would face when I gave him a bath this morning. He has been shedding a lot during this last hot spell, so I thought getting his undercoat cleaned up and thatched would help him be a little cooler. And of course I wanted him neat and clean when he goes on his vacation this week.

Well I was a bit surprised after I got him wet. He grumbled on his way there, he grumbled as the water ran, but when I started scrubbing him down, he just relaxed. I think getting all that fur wet helped cool the little guy down. After the bath was finished, I was 'allowed' to give him a good brushing. He even rolled over and got a good belly rub. That hasn't happened in a few years or more. "Check Paws" or "Rub the belly" were commands used to have him roll on his back. The thought was to make it easier for general grooming. After my dear wife died, those commands seemed to mean hide behind the couch. Today, rub the belly got the expected result. Hmm, maybe he needs more bath, or not...

All said and done, it was a good way to start my day.

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# Packing for a trip...

I'm almost ready to go on a vacation. I've done as much laundry as possible. I have things ready to go. A few odds and ends to take care of, but I guess I'm ready.

Of course it won't be a good trip unless I forget something. For some reason I always forget an item or two, but that makes the trip right. It has happened for almost every trip as long as I can remember planning them. It adds to the excitement and adventure.

In just a few short days, I will be holding my newest granddaughter. I will be showering the other grandkids with hugs and love. I get to spend time with the family I see the least. That sounds like a good time doesn't it?

And yet, as with most of these trips, there is a little darkness in a corner. There are those I leave behind to be missed. There are those who will never experience this greeting of new life and missed family. I will admit that the feelings of joy and happiness out weigh those little gray clouds; the cloud still seem to linger.

I guess that is life. Ever moving forward, and onward. Only momentary glimpses into the past. Dwelling on past events and futures that might or could have been are left for other times. Looking forward to good times...

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## **Expanding on a thought**

Just a few weeks ago, I wrote about knowing if it is love. One response, and further conversation pushed me to write more on the subject.

I'm really only going to expand on the romantic love. Love of friends, parents, children seems to be easier to define and feel. I will also leave off the agape or spiritual love off this expansion. While that is an interesting subject, it is beyond the scope of my interest at present.

What I was curious about was a very simple statement that you “just knew” you had a true love. While I have most certainly felt that way in the past, I was surprised when what I thought was true love just sort of ended. In my “old” age, I’m a bit more pragmatic. It is love, true love, as long as the people involved keep working at it.

Yes, I did just say work at it. A little bit of work on a relationship goes a very long way. What kind of work? Normally just little things that you would do for someone you care about. Sharing chore duties, without being asked. A neck massage after someone has a hard day. An offer of a cold drink on a hot day. Little things to reaffirm the feelings that you share.

Do you think of your partner first? Does doing something just for them make you feel good? Does your partner consider themselves spoiled, or one of the luckiest people alive? If so, you are well on your way to doing the work needed.

The feelings involved will be many and complex. When two people get together in a romantic love, there should be some physical chemistry. This chemistry can and often does lead to intimate expressions of love. Where this goes beyond lust and falls into love is up for debate, but it does happen. It may be something you “just know”, or you may make a more deliberate decision. I don’t know if I have enough knowledge to speak on that subject as much as it really deserves.

Then there are the feelings of caring. You feel a need or desire for the well being of another. Their health is important to you. When does this occur? Who knows.

One more thing that I think is very important, is a feeling of connection. You feel better with a person. You feel better if you know you will see them in a short time. Knowing that you are being thought of can also raise your spirits. I won’t say it is a completion, I feel that was an overworked phrase from

a common place movie, but more like an extension or addition. You become more, because you work together.

So, I've rambled on a bit. Rehashing thoughts I've written before. More for my benefit than anything else. But I will leave you with another thought. How can you know you are in love, if the feelings and emotions involved are something you've never experienced. I've been there, I know (as far as a person can) what love should and can be. But over the years I've forgotten what it was like not to "know". I based my feelings on my limited experience and what I observed in others. If I had no good examples, if my experience was less than what it was, how could I ever "know". I never really thought about it in that way before. But I guess I'm thinking of it now...

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## All Is Well


It is OVER! The phenomenon that began in 1997 with the British publication of a little book entitled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and continued through 7 books and now 8 big screen adventures has reached its climax. All I ask is that it ends here. To go back or to move forward would cheapen what has come before. I cannot recall a pop culture phenomenon that has endured, captivated, and caught the world's (for better or for worse) attention. Millions of children (and adults as well) began reading the novels of "the boy who lived." These same children grew up with each page turn, every movie frame as the core cast of the films remained the same throughout the octology. I found it enthralling to follow Daniel, Rupert, Emma, Matthew, Tom, and the other young actors progress from naive 10-11 year olds into 20-something year old seasoned performers aided by a cadre of many of the

finest British thespians.

I dare say that never before (and very likely never will again) has the world experienced the likes of such a series.

Midnight book/movie releases; a game invented from the pages; a theme park; college classes; and I'm sure a myriad of other items devoted to the world have appeared.

I was (as I'm sure millions of other fans were) a bit nervous about what to expect from the printed pages being transferred to movie screens. Apparently, the worry was for naught as *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* has vanquished several box office records in its path in the first 5 days of release. This afternoon, I spent the extra money to attend my first IMAX 3D experience. I was blown away by the pre-movie graphics and announcement to say nothing of the main feature itself. There were moments that I could tell that were filmed traditionally and transferred but the total experience was breathtakingly immersive. I would have enjoyed the film itself on a regular screen but after investing the last decade plus in the characters, I felt that the farewell needed to be experienced on a grand scale. Thrilling, wondrous, emotional (any fan who isn't moved... well...) action packed. The best of the series? Definitely... YES! However, I like to think of the movies as a whole. Things that were left out in the transfer to the movies... most notable in the Half-Blood Prince.

 Goodbye, friend of Hagrid! It has been a magical adventure.

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## Change happens

The very pulse of our lives is change. It doesn't matter if we want to accept it or not, change will happen in our lives.

Some of the change is good, some really isn't good. I think what really matters is how we accept the change when it happens.

We live and we experience birth, growth and death. We have children, parents, friends, lovers come into our lives. Those people often leave our lives too. We change jobs, churches, homes.

I'm sure I wrote something similar in the past, but again, I am experiencing some significant changes in my life. New life was brought into this world in the form of a new granddaughter. I hope to see this new little one very soon. I can not begin to express the joy I feel.

My youngest has graduated from school, moved out and got a job this year. I am both proud and feeling very old that my youngest is old enough to be starting her own life. But wait, I was planning on her being out of the house two years earlier than this, but she decided to go to school instead. Hmm. It is time that this little one spreads her wings to take on the world.

The other two daughters have had some changes in their lives too. This affects their father too. While I can't do everything I would like to for them, they are in my heart always. More to come on this as time passes. They are in the very midst of change.

And finally there are some drastic changes going on with my life. I would have never thought that I would be where I am. In 1984 I never thought that I would be a widower by 2003. I never thought that I would need to build another relationship in my 50s. Change that happened many years ago diverted the path I had planned. I won't say that this path is better or worse than the one planned, but so far it is a good path. I feel more content with life than I have been. I find more comfort in the little things. In fact, you could say I am

happy. And the hermit in me has taken a back seat again. Someone special has entered my life, or should I say that we chose to let our lives merge. I must say that I'm looking forward to see what turns this path will take.

I'm not just stopping to smell the roses, I want to count each rose, each petal and each thorn. To do so is to experience all life can give you.