

Free Fridays

One of the great things about the Nook (of which there are many) is "Free Fridays." Most of the titles offered every Friday by Barnes and Noble interest me not at all, but occasionally one piques my interest. Last Friday's offering, *Stupid History* by Leland Gregory, is a compilation of "Stupidity, Strangeness, and Mythoconceptions." The truth about Paul Revere's famous ride; the trial of Lizzie Borden; the Battle of Bunker Hill; and countless other tidbits.

Ironically, earlier tonight I was playing a game in which one of these tidbits would have come in handily. In the game "Malarky," the reader reads the question on the card and either reads the correct answer or makes up a load of malarky.

The other players determine whether or not the reader is giving the correct answer or feeding them a line.

One of the questions had to do with sardines which everyone knows is purchased in a small can. I cannot remember the actual question but the answer had something to do with the fact that there is no such fish as the sardine. They are usually pilchard or small herring packed into the can like... well... sardines. I came home tonight and read that fact and had a good laugh. Imagine how funny it would have been if I had read that tidbit BEFORE the game.

Perhaps this is in bad form, but did you know that Arnold had competition for the role of The Terminator? Apparently, O.J. Simpson is "too nice to be taken seriously as a killer."

All of these are but a few of the (at times humorous) moments in *Stupid History*. I may regret this post as the number of trivia games seems to be dwindling at game nights. However, how much useless trivia do I actually retain? Ok... perhaps this Free Friday was an attempt to encourage readers to pay for the humorists other books as this was published in 2007.

But still a fun read.

How To Succeed At The Tonys

Tonight (or last night) was the 65th presentation of The Antoinette Perry Award for Excellence in Theatre. Once again, Neil Patrick Harris shined as the host as he poked fun at himself, Spider-Man (30 seconds of jokes about the troubled musical), and battled with Hugh Jackman to see who would be the better host. Really in his element as an entertainer. Since I had to work until 9, I had to watch via the DVR an hour late.

Honestly, I was not overly impressed with the excerpts from the NEW musicals. Two based on movies ([Catch Me If You Can](#)... never saw the Hanks/Decrapio movie; and [Sister Act](#)... which surprisingly did not translate that well to the stage). [The Scottsboro Boys](#) is the now closed and soon to hit the road swan song of Kander and Ebb (who created *Cabaret* and *Chicago*).

The winner of Best Musical, [The Book of Mormon](#), was co-created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone (known primarily for bringing "South Park" into our lives).

I was much more impressed by the two shows battling it out for Best Revival of a Musical. Daniel and company were very fun while performing "Brotherhood of Man" from *How to Succeed*... Congrats to John Larroquette on his win for Best Featured Role by an Actor in a Musical. Sutton Foster and her cast of the classic *Anything Goes* was the odds on favorite to snag the revival award and it did not disappoint. I am still amazed that Radcliffe was not nominated for his role. It does not make sense to blame Harry Potter itself when Jackman won for *The Boy from Oz* while he was still riding high as Wolverine in the *X Men* films.

Memorable moments:

- *Spider-Man* excerpt did not do a thing to endear it to me. Re-opens Tuesday. Julie Taymor is suing for royalties due to her after she was fired from the director's gig.
- I found bits of *The Book Of Mormon's* song, "I Believe," to sound like a mockery of "I Have Confidence" from *The Sound of Music*. What can we expect from the co-creators of "South Park?"
- Brooke Shields (soon to join the cast of *The Addam's Family*) got a big long BLEEEEEEEEEEP (or was it a long mute)
- Christie Brinkley (yet another to soon revolve into the endless cast of *Chicago*) looked like a deranged Barbie doll and sounded like a munchkin.
- "No audience members have been injured during a performance... YET!" (30 seconds of Spider-Man jabs)
- Whatever the (what can only be best described as) **THING** was that Whoopi had on her head.

So... while the year's crop of NEW musical highlights leave something lacking, the awards and revivals were entertaining.

And please...**KEEP THE SUPERHEROES WHERE THEY BELONG! IN THE COMICS, ANIMATED SERIES, OR MOVIES!**



Feelin' Groovy

I can honestly say that I AM feeling better today than I have for a while. I was able to stand throughout my entire voice lesson without feeling the need to sit. Maybe this thing is not going to take a year to fully heal after all. But if it does, I can deal with it. Someone asked when I was going to be in another show. It just dawned on me that I COULD have tried out for the role of FDR in *Annie*... no walking involved and he does get to sing and harmonize during the White House reprise of "Tomorrow." AH, well...

I am a step closer to replacing my blown Sunfire. "Big" John and Edy are in the process of looking for a new auto and they know I am in the market for a good, reliable mode of transportation. I went to their house this morning and checked out the '02 Honda SUV (a compact SUV). Definitely a car that has been well taken care of and very nice, full of bells and whistles. During my test drive, I commented to Big John that there was no "ka-chunk ka-chunk" as I approached a stop sign as there is in the car I currently drive. I have been told that it is "nothing to worry about" but somehow....

Back to my latest lesson... I am thinking my list of songs I have been working on is about to be edited. There are some songs which I do not think I am going to have performance ready anytime soon and there are others that I have been looking at which will take no time at all... one of which we ran today. Plus, by the end of my first song, I was on my feet! Much better than sitting on the chair.

Potter Fever

While watching a documentary on the making of the Harry Potter movies, I felt the anticipation and excitement of the approaching climactic cinematic experience building. What is it that has made this series of first books and now motion pictures so phenomenal cannot be answered simply. There are layers and layers of brilliant creative aspects created by J.K. Rowling that you can not name one. But I do have a favorite aspect of the series. Character development is so integral to the world. Not only MUST the big three of Harry, Ron, and Hermione develop and grow but it is so amazing how even secondary characters are almost as important as the core trio. How many other series contain so many wonderful characters that even the actors profess to being surprised at their growth and the challenge that growth created.

One of my favorite characters, Neville Longbottom, has grown tremendously since his introduction. In the first 3-4 movies, poor Neville had trouble with even the most elementary of spells. Who can forget the scene in *The Chamber of Secrets* in which he is suspended from a chandelier by two cornish pixies ("Why is it always me?")? By the end of *The Order of the Phoenix*, Neville has nearly come into his own by joining Dumbledore's Army and proving his worth. Hopefully, we will see him grow even more in the final film.

The youngest red-headed Weasley child, Ginevra, has developed from the bashful 10 year old who watched Harry, Ron, and Hermione being carried away on the Hogwart's Express. During her first year at the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Ginny was possessed by the 16 year old Tom Riddle... not a good way to begin one's education. As Neville has, Miss Weasley has become more vocal, more active, even so far as to come to the defense of her hero, Harry, on the quidditch pitch.

What would a post from me on Harry be without a mention of my

favorite character, one of the most mysterious creations I have ever encountered, Professor Severus Snape. At the start of term festivities in *The Sorcerer's Stone*, the glance that Harry and the teacher share is filled with so much meaning that its implications will progress through the entire series.

The loathing seen in Snape's eyes will not fully come to light until the final film. Not only did Harry feel a burning in his scar, it made me tingle.

So... three characters... three SUPPORTING characters who are as instrumental in the World of Harry Potter as the title character himself. Just the tip of the wand in the marvelous creation of J.K. Rowling. 37 days and counting! A Potter movie fest (non ABC Family fest with commercials) will be a fun way to build up to July 15! Yes... Even *The Half-Blood Prince*.

I WAS Gonna Blog More This Summer, But...

I am enjoying some of the freedom that the summer affords me: no youth group on Wednesday nights, no teaching Sunday school, no having to drop the kids off or pick them up at school – well, the kids will be out of school in 2 days, so I haven't had a taste of that yet, but I'm looking forward to trying for my afternoon nap without time constraints – if only Terrible-Two-Dude will stop yelling my name during these nap attempts.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoy all of these activities, but there is something liberating about not being tied down to them for an entire summer. As much as I absolutely loved teaching 1st

graders on Sunday mornings, it was really great last Sunday to not have to get up at 8am and get 4 crabby kids ready for what amounted to a double church service for them – one while Mom and Dad teach and one while Mom and Dad go to worship. Our family rolled out of bed by 10, got ready, and left the house around 10:40, getting to church in time to relax with friends before the service with plenty of time to spare. I enjoyed Wednesday nights with my 6th grade girls, but there was a lot of emotionally exhausting drama there at the end, and I so needed a break. Besides, it's nice to have Wednesdays free. But wait, I don't have Wednesdays free! Hubby and I signed up to organize and facilitate a class at church called Changing Hearts, Changing Lives – a personal ministry class that utilizes a DVD series by Paul Tripp and small group discussion to lead Christians to be able to effectively counsel others in a God-loving and caring way. We've had two weeks of this class so far, and it's going great! So I can't really say that I miss my free Wednesday nights. I never got a taste of a free Wednesday night anyway; what's that like?

I also signed up for a women's Bible study series (Beth Moore for those of you that know her work) that meets on Monday mornings. I hesitated with this one because it meets ALL summer – beginning today before school is out and going right through to August after the kids go back to school. But there is child care there, so if my 4 kids haven't killed each other by the time Mondays roll around, this will get us out of the house once a week. Also, my oldest daughter gets to help with the child care with other 'big kids' her age, so that will be good for her too. I enjoyed my first class today, but I have to note the intensity of this class – 5 nights of homework per week! Pre-Christian Taylhis 1.0 would have panicked and said 'I don't have time for this!!', but Taylhis 2.0 feels pretty good about it. I'm excited to immerse myself more fully in God's word, and the structure of the class will have me getting to know better other women at my church. I can find time for my homework; after all, isn't more butt-time for the

pregnant lady just what the doctor ordered? I'm not sure about that, but it's definitely on MY want-list because these days my feet (legs, thighs, etc) are killing me, and I have a lot more growing to do!! Problem is, I'm going to spend that butt-time in front of my Bible and my class workbook rather than my blog, so there goes my plan of blogging more... oh well, who said blogging more was a good plan for me anyway?



Counting down

It is June already and it looks like warm weather is finally here to stay. Two weeks ago we somberly said goodbye to the 5th graders, sending them off in a prayer as we laid hands on them. They finished not only the 4th/5th grade ministry, but moved out of children's ministry altogether to student ministries where they will spend the next seven years. This weekend, the third grade room remained dark, as it will for the next two months or so as we welcomed them as the new fourth grade. At our church 3rd grade and up get bumped in June for camp reasons, but the younger kids have to wait until August. I guess it is a little strange, the first weekend or so in June, to be called a fourth-grader (for example) when many have not yet finished third grade at school.

We also kicked off our summer series, Transformers. Yes, we are borrowing off of a popular movie theme (yes it was a cartoon first, but seeing as how many of their *parents* weren't even grown up at the time, let alone their own existence...). However, the name is where similarities begin and end.

Unfortunately our worship band moved up with the old 5th-grade or out (the college-bound ones) so we are working on replacing them. Hmm. Actually, it was the Saturday night band that is gone, but we still did the song videos instead of the normal worship at 11:15 even though those band members were still present- I wonder why?

Saturday night I think we need guy leaders now in a big way. I was the only one there, along with two gal leaders. I know one will be coming back in a few weeks, but we could use more. My "small" group was twenty-some boys- ideally, groups should be about six or so. So anyway, the lesson was one on being rooted in Christ, and not comparing ourselves to one another. As Paul wrote to the Phillipians, he had much call to call himself better than others as he was a "Hebrew of Hebrews," a Pharisee, and zealous for his religion. Instead, he counted it as loss, rubbish compared with his identity in Christ. As His, we are equal no matter our station, our jobs, our finances, etc.

Moving on, did I mention camp? Oh, yes I did. Less than two weeks, and I am making trip #7 out there with an all new group! There is much to be excited about, but one thing tops all others. Every year we get something new. In the past additions have included a lodge building, a zipline, pontoon boats, and a waterslide (thankfully I started there the year *after* they got permanent showers...). Well, this year apparently we got something a bit different. Raise your hand if you ever wanted to be a hamster after watching them roll around in their hamster balls. That's right, our new addition to camp is in the form of two giant inflatable ~~hamster~~, err- *people* balls called Zorbs. Here is a random video found on youtube:

and from the inside:

Now **that** looks exciting. I hope they don't roll it down too steep of a hill though. Imagine what would happen if one got sick in one of those... Or, best not to imagine.

Anyway, a new year at church, a new post. I hope you enjoyed it. ☐

I really will try to post at least once more before Camp 2011. I mean it. That I will try, that is. ☐

Who Knew In NW0?

Tonight, I joined Megs to partake in a concert performed by The Black Swamp Strings of which CC is a cellist. I remember learning a month or so ago that the concert was this weekend but I was not sure of the date, thank heaven my friend invited me to come on my SATURDAY OFF!

The music was phenomenal! It ranged from Bach's *Jesu. Joy of Man's Desiring* (one of the most beautiful pieces EVER written) to more contemporary fare such as theme from *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Schindler's List*, and "All I Ask of You" from *The Phantom of the Opera*. Another favorite of mine... Brahms's *Hungarian Dance No. 5* was also presented. I know that almost everyone has heard this piece somewhere.

I was particularly impressed with the age range of the musicians. There were several who had just or were about to graduate high school who started with the group at age 14 back in its "garage days." There were also the seasoned veterans.

I don't know how long it takes to become even close to being proficient enough on a stringed instrument to perform with a group of this talent, but it seems like you would have to start at birth!

One of our neighboring audience members has a nephew who was a member of the group who is now a professional musician. He will soon be heard on the scores of two of this summer's sure-fire hits: Steven Spielberg's *Super 8* and *Cars 2*. He is also in the Santa Barbara Orchestra. I guess it is possible to achieve a life-long dream no matter where you grow up. The audience member told me to congratulate "my wife" on a great job! Sorry, she only plays my wife on stage. ☐

THANKS MEGS...Had lots of fun! And great job, wife ☐ Until next time.

Here is Brahm's Hungarian Dance for those of you who think they have never hear it!

20,000 Leagues to Dearborn, MI

Give or take a few leagues.

Last weekend, Sunday to be exact, I was attending my first Steampunk convention. To explain what this is, I tried to come up with all sorts of analogies. The best I could come up with is to think of Disney's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. From the time they board the Nautilus, the movie turns to what is now known as steampunk. Other movies of this genre are League of Extraordinary Gentlemen and Frankenstein. All of the Victorian era clothing, marked by advanced inventions powered by steam or clockworks.

I was thrilled to spend the day with my oldest daughter, her husband and my lovely step-granddaughter. I was able to pick up some steampunk garb and blend into the convention a little more than my jeans and t-shirt allowed. I know I will wear the coat more when the weather is appropriate.

Now, I have been asked why I would want to do anything of this sort. Easy answer, it was a lot of fun. Going to the events themselves is an eye opening experience, going in "garb" makes it a total immersion. I know I will never get to the point of digging local garage sales and flea markets for pieces of brass, but the theater nut in me will complete at least one set of clothing to wear next year.

It was a step out of my usual comfort zone. And I enjoyed myself that day. Maybe next year a comic book convention. I always wanted to be a super hero, or villain.

Evil Animals



Every once in awhile, time.com has interesting countdown-style articles. The other day, this one caught my eye:

[Top 10 Evil Animals](#)

Beyond the expected varieties of insects, you'll be surprised to learn which mammals are featured (I know I was shocked by a few of the species the authors felt worthy of being on the evil animal list), and it's interesting to read about the characteristics of all the creatures included in this article. I was going to include a shortened version of the list so you didn't have to flip through the slide show, but some are so entertaining that I'm going to let you flip through for yourself – click the link above.

Yo, Adrian! NO, ADRIAN!

I KNOW that there have been VERY few musicals that have not been based on other source material. Even in the Golden Age of Broadway, creators such as Rodgers and Hammerstein, Lerner

and Loewe, and their contemporaries found inspiration from other works in order to bring “the classics” to the stage. *The King and I*, *South Pacific*, *My Fair Lady*, and *Camelot* were all based on well established works that came before. Although I was not around when these masterpieces were first produced, it seems to me that they all made some sense and were meant to transcend artistic genres.

That being said, there are times when (it seems to me) that things are better left alone. While it is only in the developmental stages, [*Rocky: The Musical*](#) is well on its way to becoming a full-blown reality. The collaborators of such shows as *Annie*, *Seussical*, and *Hairspray* along with Sylvester Stallone himself have already tabled a reading of the work (8 years in the making at Sly’s request) with plans of mounting a production in Germany next year and a possible NYC debut as early as Spring 2013.

While the original series of movies do contain some musical elements (the brilliant original theme, “Eye of the Tiger,” and the seemingly endless montages of *Rocky IV*), most of the music seems to have been placed in them for nothing more than selling a few albums and doing nothing to advance the plot. I suppose that the streetcorner crooners in the slums of Philadelphia could have a place in a musicalfied version.

However, I cannot see two men in a boxing ring beating the tar out of each other while singing and being taken relatively seriously. Suspension of disbelief **MUST** have its limits although a musical of *Rocky Balboa* would seem to ask you to do just that.