

# Another Opening Another Show

This evening being opening night for *Little Women*, you never know what kind of crowd you will get: the size of the audience as well as their reactions can be varied. Let us just say that we could not have a better crowd than we had tonight. However, it did not sound like it when we first got to the theatre. During our pre-show warmup and pep rally, we were told we had a total of 30 audience members. wow-wee. By the time we were finished with our warmup, the number had increased to over 50. At 7:50, people were still coming in off the street. We had already filled every seat in the house (just over 80) and the rest of the chairs were at our neighboring theatre. If we had had the opportunity to bring additional chairs, it would have been even more difficult for performers to make some of their entrances (including yours truly) because they come through the side aisles.

The size of the audience was phenomenal but the response from the people during the show was spectacular. Loud laughter, applause, everything one hopes for from a great audience was present. Following the performance, the patrons came down to the basement to congratulate the wonderful cast and to share in the celebration of our director's 25 years in theatre.

With any luck, the remaining 5 performances will have audiences like tonight or maybe even better. Of course, you have to watch out for those Sunday matinee groups... full of blue-haired ladies just coming from lunch after church who are ready for a nap. Sometimes you can hear a pin drop in the audience during a Sunday afternoon performance. We will have to wait and see. But what a great way to start the run. ☐

So, if you are planning on attending one of the remaining performances, I urge you to call now and make reservations while you can.



---

# Still working on the HPX page

So... take a break with this hilarious video titled *The Great Office War*. I'll see if I can dig up some others.

So **this** is the secret of teaching success!

[teachertube]https://www.teachertube.com/view\_video.php?viewkey=9c69fa9c4bdede203c1e[/teachertube]

In case the embedded teachertube video above isn't working (didn't work for me) here's the link, along with a couple just for fun:

[How to succeed as a teacher](#)

[Hamster Dance](#)

[Untitled but Funny](#)

---

## Windy City Classic

Back in the days when it didn't count, there was only one yearly face-off between the Chicago cross-town rivals, the Cubs and the White Sox. It was called a number of things, but when I was younger, I remember it being referred to as the Windy City Classic. No matter which side you cheer for, these games are important to every sports fan in Chicago. I even remember cutting school one year to attend...

But now that there is something known as inter-league play, there are 6 of these games a year, and they do count. Today was the opening game of one such series, and I am suffering through it. One of the rare Cubs games I've actually gotten to watch on tv this year, it has to be broadcast by Sox announcers, even though the game is being played at Wrigley Field and the Cubs are the home team. I cannot stand the Sox announcers. Not only do they stink as announcers (I would be rich if I got paid for every time they've said "south-paw" – some diversity in your subject matter, guys, please?), but they are on *their* side. So every time the White Sox make a

play, even though the crowd is booing, the announcers get excited. And I won't even waste much time complaining about the shouts of "Put it on the Board!" I'm subjected to every time the Sox score runs.

There's a lot at stake for this series – both teams are in first place in their respective divisions, even though it must be noted that the Cubs have a much better record – but I'm not really minding the errands I have to run that will take me away from today's game. Watching the Cubs lose to the Sox is one thing if that happens, but hearing these horrible announcers rub in every homerun or lucky play the Sox make is a new brand of torture of which I'm glad to be relieved!

---

## From Stage To Screen

Last night's final dress rehearsal contained a small, intimate audience including two of my best friends who really enjoyed the performance (even if I am killed by a girl... not my fault that is how it is written). But I was really pleased with the entire evening. The length of the performance actually was about 10-15 minutes shorter than what we had been anticipating most of the week. I even got a crash course in spotlight use to substitute for the irreplaceable light woman who was still ill.

Today, while sitting at my brother's house waiting for a package that was to be delivered, I found the 1994 movie version of *Little Women* on television. Like most works that have more than one form, there were some differences between the stage and movie versions. I believe that both versions contain at heart the same theme: Do not be afraid to be true to yourself. Do not allow society to impact that which you

truly feel you are meant to do.

I also was able to dig deeper into some of the characters while watching the movie. I often wondered why Grandfather Lawrence (John Neville) was at first portrayed as a crotchety old man and then have a change of heart by his interactions with Beth. Like Captain Von Trapp in the *Sound of Music*, Mr. Lawrence lost someone close to him which left an emptiness. Hearing Beth (Claire Danes) play the piano filled that void, lifted his spirits, and melted his heart... AWWWWW.

Mr. Lawrence's grandson Laurie ([Christian Bale](#)) is also given more depth in the movie. After his marriage proposal to Jo ([Winona Ryder](#)) is rejected, Laurie runs off to Europe and becomes a womanizing drunk until he encounters Amy ([Kirsten Dunst](#)) painting at school. At first, I believe that Laurie was in love with the idea of becoming a true member of the March family. However, I do believe that through the courtship he did fall in love with Amy.

Nowhere is the central core of both pieces more substantial than in Jo's venture from Concord to New York where she meets Professor Bhear ([Gabriel Byrne](#)). Although they are both headstrong and stubborn, the professor encourages Jo to write that which is pleasing to her and not to the publishers who keep rejecting her stories. This path may not lead to a great financial career but will in time please her on a personal level.

Another important part of both versions are the wild, imaginative plays the girls perform. In a scene from the movie, Meg attends a party given in honor of Annie Moffett's coming of age. Annie decides to turn Meg into something she is not and Meg foolishly agrees to "play" along by wearing a corset showing off her figure, and experimenting with drinking (Trini Alvarado). Laurie catches her and she immediately hides in a corner, full of shame.

So while both versions are basically true to each other, there are moments in each which enhance both.



---

## Another Infamous List

I mentioned my infamous listing a few blog posts ago – I make lists of everything; including (rarely) lists of lists to make!

This list is for physical things, rather than everything that will change with the addition of a boy. Obviously, things like potty-training, long car rides, and even every meal time will be different while taking a boy's eating habits into consideration in our household full of girls.

### ***Things That Will Change When We Add a Boy to Our Household***

*No need for baby-sized headbands or barrettes*

*Boys need only 1 pair of shoes. Girls love shoes, so they need at the bare minimum, a pair of sandals, a pair of gym shoes, and a pair of dress shoes PER GIRL – our 20-month-old daughter already likes to try on shoes – just for fun!*

*Accessories like hats, socks, belts are all different between boys and girls things*

*Pillowcases, bedsheets, pillows, blankets*

Hmm, so far I only have wardrobe changes listed... I'm sure there will be a lot more differences and I will start another list so I can compare while I'm actually living with the differences every day!

---

# Little Women

We were privileged to get to spend an evening without kids to take in a local community theater's production of Little Women, the Musical.

I must be honest – the music in this musical is not my favorite. It has nothing to do with how it was performed or who sang it; it just seemed to me to be words set to random music. But I don't know much about singing, music composition, or even good theater for that matter. That being said, I will say that it's definitely a production worth seeing. The costumes and set were great, and the large cast of talented actors and singers seemed very cohesive and never crowded on the stage. The play took me back into civil war times, and I do like to see stories from this time period played out live. I was pleasantly surprised by a few of the characters' performances since they were people I've worked with before so I thought I knew what to expect – but a few of their performances were much better than I even expected, and yes, two of those people read or are closely related to people who are regular readers of this blog ☐

But I'm not being biased... I really was impressed. A few of the new people – performers who haven't done much or anything for this particular theater group – were surprisingly talented also, though I have to say at least one was not. And I might even say that the beautiful wigs almost deserve a curtain call of their own... but don't let the wigs steal your thunder, cast, because you can expect standing ovations from your audiences throughout the run of the show, I think. Overall, it was a nice evening out – the show part of the dinner and show anyway. I was so disappointed in my lack of a good meal last night that I composed this little ditty:

## RIP – Maywood Restaurant in Montpelier, Ohio

They sold the restaurant but kept the name,  
The tables and chairs are all that's the same.  
The food quality's gone,  
Bob's recipes too  
It's a shame that my dinner  
Tasted like old shoe.

It was once premium food  
But now it's soured my mood.  
Advice I would give:  
Eat here if you dare  
Since I traded gourmet  
For mere Sysco fare.

The ditty tells the story – basically we had this awesome restaurant nearby with **very** high quality food that was always cooked by the chef-owner personally. I understand that people have to retire, but it is almost a crime that they still use the same name for the restaurant. I mean, with a food quality drop this severe, it's their duty to warn people before they are tempted to eat there! Too bad dinner didn't work out, but if the theater keeps putting on shows like Little Women, it will be enough of a reason to drive across the county to see them.

---

## The Happening

We went to see the newest [M. Night Shyamalan](#) movie last night – The Happening starring [Mark Wahlberg](#) and [Zooey Deschanel](#). It's an end-of-the-world type movie, but what sets this one apart from the others is that neither the audience nor the characters in the movie know what is happening to the

population and why. People just start acting strange – it begins in parks, where crowds of people freeze in their tracks, and then they begin to slowly and methodically commit suicide. It's really creepy! I especially liked how little gore and there was and how tame the violence was, especially by today's standards and with all the death that was occurring in the movie. Before we went, I had read some bad reviews about it, but I didn't find it boring in the slightest as some of the reviews suggested. It was a gripping, intense, and interesting movie, not to mention effectively eerie. I don't want to give too much away, so all I will say is that I was hoping for more of a resolve and explanation at the end, but since I've seen other M. Night Shyamalan movies, I was also expecting even less closure than we received. He writes, directs, and produces his own movies; they are usually thought-provoking suspense films, often laced with twists – I recommend [The Village](#), [Unbreakable](#), and [The Sixth Sense](#) to try a few. Overall, I would say it was a really good doomsday-TYPE movie. Please don't think it compares to the movie called [Doomsday](#) – one of the most awful I've ever seen. But *The Happening* has an interesting premise, and it achieves fright without overdoing the gore, which is unusual for scary movies in this day and age. My one problem with the movie is Mark Wahlberg's acting – at times it's just awful! I don't know why he was cast in this movie, but at least he doesn't ruin it. Zoey Deschanel is good – didn't even see any glimpse of her character from [Elf](#) -and [John Leguizamo](#) has a strong performance as well. It is 90 minutes well-spent!

---

## About the Zoo...

Oops, I forgot to mention a few things about the [Potawatomi Zoo](#) in South Bend, Indiana in my post the other day. Even

though it was small and not very well taken care of from an aesthetic point of view, we had some of the best animal encounters there – can't believe I forgot to mention them.

First, they have a white tiger, and he was right up against the glass. We could see his beautiful eyes and everything.

The African lions at this zoo have a small exhibit (but didn't seem to be unhappy in the slightest), which means we were able to see them pretty close up also.

The red pandas were very active and we got to see them climbing around. This creature is so agile, he made climbing branches of trees look like he was climbing stair-steps.

They had a baby Amur Leopard who was born in Decemeber and had just been put on exhibit 2 days before our visit. He was so cute and curious. He climbed all the way up the cage wall and tried to get on the ceiling, then he had a little trouble getting down, but he was so excited when he did it, and mom scolded him a little bit – it was awesome to see that kind of interaction.

So overall, it was a great zoo experience. A cute little zoo, even if it could use some touch-ups.

---

## Coffee nerdiness

Yes, I'm a coffee nerd. I like good strong full bodied coffee. I of course have my favorite roasts, beans, blends, and coffee shops. But I really want to talk about the coffee shop experience. Today, a lot of people consider Starbucks to be the coffee shop of all coffee shops. They are almost everywhere. I will admit that their marketing is wonderful.

They've taken the country by storm. Their coffee is good, but by no means is it the peak of coffee perfection. Their shops are nice and clean, but they are missing a little bit of charm.

Now to go back a few years, about 11 or so, to when I knew nothing about coffee. If you called it coffee and it was hot, I would drink it. At that time, my youngest daughter was in Kindergarten, the oldest was 15. My wife and I needed someplace to go to start re-connecting with each other. The children were all growing up, and didn't need quite as much attention. We also had a built in babysitter. So we started to look around for something we could do together, but wouldn't break the bank. We found a little coffee shop. It was a charming little place where we could get a light lunch, or a desert, or just a cup of coffee or tea. We started going week after week, sometimes more than once a week. From that time on, we would even look for coffee shops on our vacations.

The local coffee shop (before Starbucks was a nationwide brand) was a place to find good coffee and good friends. It was a gathering place. In some places you would find little reading corners. Some shops would have music, some poetry readings. Some places to play chess or backgammon. But in everyone there was a place to meet people and talk. They was always a quite corner you could go to even when the place was busy at the early morning rush. They were places designed to slow down, smell the baked goods, and of course the coffee.

Then we get the fast food of coffee shops, the national brands. A hurry-up kind of place where people seem to be full of caffeine before they have their first cup of coffee. The coffee may be good, but the atmosphere suffers.

One of my daughter worked in 'our' little coffee shop, and it closed shortly after she graduated from college. Just two short years after my wife died. I still miss that atmosphere. There are other places to get coffee in the area. For a time

there was even a shop that had a bit of atmosphere. But in today's world those places seem to be few and far between. You can find them if you look, but you do have to look. It may not be a coffee shop, it may be a little restaurant, or donut shop, maybe even a candy shop, or an old soda fountain. There are places to find, where you can slow down to smell the coffee, or the roses, but always smell and experience the sweet breath of life itself.

---

## A Tragedy of Operatic Proportions

Yes, tonight was our final rehearsal for *Little Women* before we have an audience and any audience expects to be entertained and tonight while still good also had a few pitfalls. Huge gaps where a character forgot her entrances, fumbling backstage to move sets and props into place. Just little things that can and frequently do cause an audience to become distracted and lose interest. But overall, these were only minor things (admittedly the person who forgot her entrances was not so minor but I am sure that her professionalism will return and will be fine).

Also missing tonight was our assistant lighting person. When I returned from practice, I had a message informing me that Carol was really sick so I immediately called and talked to her daughter. I was really concerned because Carol is always so dependable (as well as a fun member of our game night gang who played my mother in our recent Murder Mystery night) and I was hoping most of the evening that nothing was seriously wrong. Thankfully, she was feeling better by the time I had called. This was on her birthday of all things to boot. So

Happy Birthday Carol and I hope you feel much better ☐ . And see you tomorrow night. I will also have to attend some of the Summer City Band concerts on Wednesday nights through the summer as Megan plays the trumpet in the band. She should have told me sooner. I started playing trumpet in 5th grade and by the time I was in high school moved to the tuba (many tales about Susie and I ☐ ) with some gentle nudging from a certain high school band director.

I almost forgot to mention that a certain well-admired writer from a newspaper was in attendance. Not to review as some feared, just to flash his camera and leave. Hopefully, he does not bring his book Friday night and have it out before the first scene is over.