

If Cats Ran The World

Because my family and friends know that I'm an animal lover, they're always sending me emails with pictures and articles about cute animal-related topics. All of them are adorable, but this one stands out as something to share – a man built an entire feline-sized village for homeless cats! Kind of sounds like something I'd like to do with some extra free time, money, and if only I didn't have the darn cat allergy that's always getting in the way...

Below are some pictures of his creation. For the entire story, [click here](#). And to visit the cat village online, The Caboodle Ranch, [click here](#).





Is it real?

I heard some bad news today. My first inclination was to see it as unbelievable. I've had this feeling many times in the past when I've heard similar news, I guess it is a natural reaction. At least it is for me.

I know that this time of year I tend to think about death a little more often. My parents died in early fall, and my wife died at the end of the year. Her cancer was found just before Thanksgiving. Today I heard that a friend lost his daughter. The thoughts went flying back in time. Was it back to 2000, 2001 or 2003? Yes those years and many other years past.

Last Saturday at the Weekenders' presentation of Mark Twain, Denver said something about loss being part of life. Mark Twain's words about loss in his life. Very fitting to almost everyone. In this time coming up for family, joy and celebration, some families feel loss. One less plate at the table, one less person to visit. I hope my friend can find peace in this season, but I know it will never be the same.

3D Or Not 3D

Last Easter prior to watching the first 3D movie I have seen since Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare (but of course it wasn't), I saw the trailer for part the first of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. As the summer swept by, I kept seeing television and movie ads proclaiming the same. About a month ago whenever a promo came on the air, I noticed something missing... no mention of the 3D concept. Finally, this morning, I did a bit of research. As I had feared, the penultimate chapter in the cinematic adventures of the wizarding world would only be shown in two dimension. I look at it this way: if the movie is going to suffer from a lackluster 3D experience, sacrifice the gimmick for quality of the overall experience. I have been for the most part, quite pleased with the transfer of the tale from the printed page to the big screen and cannot wait until Saturday afternoon to see the newest extravaganza. However, the article I came across promised that the climax would indeed be shown with the added dimension on July 15, 2011 (a few short days after someones celebrates their birthdays)

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*October 10th, 2010 by **Castina***

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Harry Potter and his pals won't be using magic to combat evil in 3D after all.

On Friday, Warner Bros. Studios announced that the first part of the film in the [blockbuster](#) Harry Pottter film franchise

will only be released to standard and IMAX theaters in 2D – not the eye-popping 3D technology as was originally planned.

Hollywood bosses say they simply don't have enough time to convert the film to 3D before its Nov. 19 release date. Warner Bros. had hoped to be able to transform the film into 3D format, but trashed the idea after taking inventory of their timetable.

"We will not have a completed 3D version of the film within our release date window," read a [press release](#) issued by The WB last week. "Despite everyone's best efforts, we were unable to convert the film in its entirety and meet the highest standards of quality. We do not want to disappoint fans who have long-anticipated the conclusion of this extraordinary journey."

"This decision, which we completely support, underscores the fact that Warner Bros. has always put quality first," says director David Yates.

At least there's one bright spot: The studio says [Harry Potter](#) and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 will still be released in both 2D and 3D on July 15, 2011.

Interestingly, the announcement was made a month ago. I am surprised that it has not been better publicized. Perhaps in order to not detract viewers who would rather see the 3D even if it is done in less than spectacular fashion. Wonder if the PTB will continue to perfect it in time for a re-release next summer.

An Evening at the Theater

I'm at a bit of a quandary. On one hand I could put this post in my personal blog. On the other hand I could put it in the theater blog. I guess I will write it up and see where it goes.

I just saw the WCCT's very own Denver Henderson give his performance as Samuel Clemens or as he is more commonly know as Mark Twain. Denver has performed a Mark Twain monologue many times, but this was my first chance to see it. I'm kicking myself for not having the drive to see it at the earlier performances. I missed out on a truly enjoyable time.

I've seen the Hal Holbrook version of Mark Twain on TV once or twice, and I've seen a PBS special on the life of Mark Twain. Denver has the mannerisms and timing of his subject down cold. Since I am a fan of Mark Twain's work, I have been exposed to most if not all of the material from tonights performance. There was nothing new. The wonderful thing about that is this. This was 100+ year old stuff. It was as fresh, timely and as humorous this evening as it must have been during Twain's life time.

My only complaint is that the show just wasn't long enough. I could have spent hours on end listening to the stories and watching an actor I know become Mark Twain. Until the question and answer period after the show, I wasn't watching my friend Denver on stage, I was watching Mark Twain. This show took me back to the time of river boats and crooked politicians (Oh wait, the politicians never left). I really want to go back.

I've been told that there will be another performance in the spring. I would strongly recommend that if you see it advertised, clear the date. This is one performance you should not miss. To paraphrase Mr Twain and Mr. Henderson, I just like to hear him speak.

Poor Paul The Psychic Octopus

No play on words necessary for this blog post – there really was a Psychic Octopus named Paul who lived in Germany, and he recently passed away at the ripe old age (for an octopus) of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years.

In his lifetime, however short it seems to us humans, [Paul made himself famous](#) with his uncanny ability to predict World Cup game winners correctly! Before games, Paul would receive 2 boxes of mussels, one each with a flag of the countries of the two teams who would be facing off in the World Cup. The country whose box was eaten out of by [Paul](#) first was declared Paul's pick as the winner of that match, and he predicted correctly an astounding 100% of the time (8/8) for his World Cup predictions, and 86% (12/14) overall.

RIP • Paul the Octopus • 2008-2010



Movie, book, nook review...

So, in my last post, I lamented about not posting movie, book or even my reviews of my e-reader, the nook. So here is an all in one post.

This summer [Barnes and Noble](#) offered free classic e-book collections every week. While I had downloaded a lot of these from [Project Gutenberg](#) the books downloaded from Barnes and Noble seemed to have a little better e-book setup. My little [nook](#) now has over 300 books loaded and ready for reading at any time. I think that this has been one of my better electronic investments. I've been able to re-visit many of the books I read in my younger days, and I don't even have to remember to put in a bookmark. Also Barnes and Noble has a wonderful ongoing program of free book Fridays. Every Friday is a new book. These can be old classics, new books in a series, or just other books that are offered for free. As you can tell, I'm all about free. Many books to read, and I wonder if I can get to them all.

But on the book itself. I just finished reading "King Solomon's Mines" by H. Rider Haggard. The story was definitely dated. The treatment and understanding of non-white people was from the period the book was written, and it would not be tolerated in today's publishing climate. Getting that out of the way, the story held my interest (even if I knew how it turns out) and I enjoyed the escape from the every day it gave me. And that got me to think of some movies with one of the heroes of this story.

King Solomon's Mines has been made into a movie many times. Some were serious treatments of the book/story, while others were light-hearted romps. The narrator/hero of the story was

Allen Quartermain. He also showed up in a movie based on a graphic novel/comic book. It was "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen". I've already commented on that movie, so here is the one I remember.

Back in 1985 a movie came out called "King Solomon's Mine" and playing Mr Quartermain was Richard Chamberlain. This was the fun romp of a movie. Most people at the time did not see this as a spoof of the very successful "Raiders of the Lost Arc" but it was. Indiana Jones could have been seen as loosely based on the Allan Quartermain character, and the movie "King Solomon's Mine" definitely played on that connection. This movie even one-upped Indy, by having its hero dragged behind a moving vehicle, however it was a train. The movie also had daring escapes and of course dreaded Germans. WWI instead of WWII Germans, but they were still there (no mention of any German troops in the book).

I really enjoyed the fun time at this movie, and I'm again reminded of the wonderful company I had when watching it. I think it is time to watch that movie again.

I remember back when "The Last Crusade" came out that we thought it would have been fun to have another Allan Quartermain spoof. That didn't happen. Oh well.

Preschool or Politics? Bonus Episode

November Election Day 2010 – it's come and gone; everyone is ecstatic to be freed from being forced to absorb those scathing campaign ads. In the wake of Election Day, one Chicago 'burb emerged with a history-making result. Buffalo

Grove, Illinois citizens voted upon and passed a successful recall vote of a village trustee for the first time ever. You might have [read my previous post](#) about Lisa Stone, the *tenacious* (polite word) village trustee who helped make Buffalo Grove village council meetings look like too-good-to-be-real-for-reality-tv. She would do things like nit-pick, interrupt, refuse to take order; many times single-handedly being responsible for meetings lasting into the following morning! Lisa Stone and the Village President Elliott Hartstein would butt heads at every meeting until he was so frustrated he looked ready to burst. Well, the votes were counted, and Ms. Stone has to leave office. And if you think that Village President Hartstein was happy about this, check out this little video of him impersonating (complete with wig) the thorn, uh, Stone in his side:

Yes, it was a horrible political decision, and a public apology was issued promptly. A guy's gotta vent, but he should have known better. Just when we thought the reality show was canceled, a bonus episode appears. [For the whole story, click here.](#)

***It's come to my attention that the video is no longer available – bummmmer!! It was too funny! Well, there's nothing I can do about that, so here's the next best thing: pictures.

Ms. Lisa Stone herself:



And Village President Elliott Hartstein dressed as Lisa Stone:



Has it been that long?

I just noticed that I have not done a movie review in quite some time. They I started to wonder if I actually saw any movies recently. I think I did, there were a few shows I wanted to see, but did I ever get to any? Hmm, I'll need to try to remember.

I also noticed that it has been some time since I've done a book review too. I know I've been reading books. And I haven't talked about any fast food sandwiches recently either. On top of that, I have not reviewed any of the plays I've been to recently. Am I slipping? Yep, probably.

Other things happened and my time on the blog has been focusing on other thoughts. Oh well, there are a couple of new movies, soon to be released, that I'm sure i may write a thing or two about. And I heard McDonald's re-released the McRib. And I think I have a pie to make. I may wait a bit on the pie. Christmas maybe?

King of My Heart

Way, way back may centuries ago (ok... 1968, if memory serves) two young men composed a 15 minute cantata centering around Joseph, his 11 brothers, and the Amazing coat of many colors given to Joseph by his father, Jacob (aka Israel, or as his sons and their wives used to call him: Dad). Some 42 years later, [Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat](#) has grown into a full-blown musical extravaganza, a grab bag (if you will) of old time rock and roll, powerful ballad, country, calypso (my favorite piece), and other genres. It was the first to join the ranks of American Idol in that a televised

contest allowed the British television viewing public to assist in determining who would don the magnificent garment for the 2007 London revival.

For the newest incarnation, a new song was written for Pharoah, who if you are among the uninitiated, bears a slight resemblance to the king of rock and roll himself. If memory serves, Lord Webber even offered the role to Presley.

Here is a video of the new song. Comments please...

At the official website of the show, you can delve into a history of the show, clips, photos, and even try your luck at a quiz devote to the show. Questions range from the really simple to the outrageously difficult.

Halloween Fun (Was Had)

It's officially mid-November already, and Halloween is over. Because Halloween is one of our family's favorite holidays, we try to take advantage of doing every Halloween-related activity we can, which often stretches the season. We began on the Tuesday before Halloween at the mall. They held a weather-proof (good thing too, the weather on Tuesday was so awful our tornado sirens were activated) trick-or-treat event in the mall, with costumed kids going from store to store receiving candy. Our kids had a blast, and our little guy got the hang of trick-or-treating REALLY quickly! He would receive his candy, and his way of saying 'thank you' was to give a little wave – it was adorable – see for yourself! He's the one in the Blue's Clues costume:

At first he was afraid of some of the scary masks, but he was quickly over that too. The rest of the week stayed relatively Halloween-free, until Friday, when we had planned a Halloween-themed game night. We requested guests to wear costumes (any excuse to dress up in a costume for Halloween – I really like to participate as much as I can!!), and we had quite a variety: from an escaped inmate (Hubby) to Flo the Progressive Insurance nurse, a nerd, a couple of hippies, a professor, a zookeeper on safari (me) – even a few members of the “real” Mafia made an appearance (we frequently play a game called ‘Mafia’ at game night and it’s tons of fun! A few of the regular game nighters decided to dress up as Mafia as a shout-out to the game). Fun was had, and we were able to rest up for Saturday, which was the annual community Halloween party. My kids loved the hayride, complete with monsters that jump out of the brush and chase the wagon, and we rode 3 times. There are all kinds of things to do at the community party, and it’s all free: from gourmet slushes (best wild berry slush ever!), cotton candy, hot dogs, and popcorn to carnival games, bouncy castles, and a maze for the kids, it’s all so much fun!

After that was time for Trick or Treating, and we had fun even if Hubby wasn’t feeling so well (he is better now – thanks for your thoughts and prayers!). Let’s see... don’t think I mentioned the kids’ costumes: my oldest (almost 11 already!) was a cowgirl, 6-year-old Sammie was a princess, 4-year-old Disney was a witch at the mall who switched to Dora for Saturdays’ events, and 2-year-old Christopher was Blue from Blue’s Clues. We had fun Trick or Treating, and Hubby and I chose an old favorite movie of ours to watch afterward: The Uninvited – not totally scary (we usually try to watch a scary movie together on Halloween), but we both felt like a great thriller more than a horror movie this year. Here is my little boy dressed as Blue:



Sunday saw church, and we had a blast in Sunday school as usual – except that poor Hubby had to stay home. Also, we were very tired on Saturday after trick or treating, so we didn't get a chance to get our annual picture of the kids in their costumes sitting on the couch. But we got one of all 4 of them in the mall, so here it is:



Overall, a very fun 2010 Halloween, one that I can't believe came and went so quickly – SO quickly in fact, that it's already been over for weeks! Unbelievable!! Hope your Halloween was safe, fun, and happy, and that your Thanksgiving will be the same!!