

# Echos From The Earth And Beyond

Another feature of my small town scandal sheet (a steal at \$1.00 for eight pages) is the "Echos from the Earth" column which gives flashbacks from articles from 5 to 20 to 50 years ago. Two of the topics really took me back. Five years ago in the paper dated 8-25-2005, Ma2 was named Ohio American Legion Educator of the Year. An honor I know she cherished very fondly.

The second item that really caught my eye was dated 8-29-1980... **30 years ago, folks!**. It even was from the days when school opened in September. I was going into the first grade. My oldest brother was going into the 6th grade and the other one would be starting the 5th grade. We won't say how old my baby sister was!

Thirty years ago this year, my school system welcomed a new P.E. instructor/basketball coach (whom I remember very well from my elementary days), another teacher I cannot place because he was a high school instructor and was gone before I got there. Also welcomed was a certain teacher who "will assist music department head Bill Quackenbush whose primary responsibility would be to the junior high bands." (That is how the sentence read so the grammar is not my fault). I have been told that Emily was a student teacher at the high school where another [tangenteer](#) was enrolled.

(A tangent from one of my memorable moments with Mr. Q. Not only was he the high school band director back in the day but was also the tennis (?) coach. He was the instructor of the summer tennis program. We were volleying the ball back and forth. All of a sudden, I felt a ball SMACK into my eye! We rush into the school, get an ice pack, and a Mt. Dew. The next day, I woke up with a shiner. ☐ )

Emily was also the music instructor at the local Catholic school for a number of years. So she was the teacher of 5 Sh kids and two Sh grandkids. God must have helped there!

Emily also is having a hand in my song list for the evening of fun and music I am planning with some of my best friends and my new coach. We had been working on one of the selections for a great while and is now at the performance stage after a bit of polishing and tweaking.

A week or so ago, I was requested to find a good worship song to begin with. I cannot believe that it took me nearly four hours to come up with one. One of the last pieces Emily and I looked at was one of the most inspirational songs I have ever heard. Definitely will need a prayer to get through but she will be watching and I will be able to lean on her shoulder.

Not really gone as long as we remember.

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## **Life's stories**

I was taught, many years ago, that when writing, you should always have a well defined beginning, middle and end. This is especially true when writing stories. Without a good introduction to the characters and plot in the beginning, the story flounders. Without a good buildup in the middle, the reader will quickly lose interest. And if the end has no depth, and little conclusion the writer may fade into a reader's forgotten pile.

Life itself has at least one beginning, middle and end. The whole story includes everything from our birth to our death. That is the entirety of our story. But in our lives we live multiple stories. Our stories are intertwined with the stories

of others. There are many beginnings, just as many middles and a multitude of endings.

How does my life affect others? What part of their story am I? Where do they fit in my stories? Where am I in my story right now? Is there enough there to keep the participants in my life active, and engaged? Do I have a good story? When the final chapter is written, will my story be revisited?

This is where I am. I hope to make my story a good one...

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## **Kidstuf!!**

Four times per year, our church puts on a family program called Kidstuf. This time around, my two oldest daughters were chosen to be Kidstuf dancers, and they did a GREAT job!

Kidstuf is energetic and fun for adults and kids alike, so my husband and I were pleased to be offered the opportunity to direct the skit portion of the show. We accepted the position, and we enjoyed preparing and rehearsing over the past month or so. I can't say the actual show went off without a hitch since the tech crew missed a few cues and sound effects. But then again, we had only one rehearsal with the tech crew before the actual production. I'm not really sure if anyone noticed the technical gaffes, and I made sure to keep a big smile on my face for the nervous cast to see as a sign of encouragement throughout the show. And I should mention that this edition of Kidstuf was unprecedented in that families sat together in the audience. Normally we have kids up front, and parents with wee little ones sit in the back. But this time, there was a family activity to be done – each family was given poster board, colored note cards, and glue sticks. Throughout the skit, families were directed to write

different words on their note cards pertaining to either God or their loved ones. At the end, they were to paste their note cards to the poster boards in the shape of a flower. Being the first time we've attempted a family craft during Kidstuf, we didn't know what to expect... But the jubilant feeling I felt when I looked around and saw that the families had done the craft was indescribable. Not only did their flowers look great, but they had also together created something to take home that will remind them about how important familial and Godly relationships are in life. It was probably the most accomplished feeling a director can have, and that made the distraction of the tech problems disappear from my mind!

As I mentioned before, my kids were excellent Kidstuf dancers! They had rehearsed together every day before the production, had fun at their rehearsals, and then when performance time came, they were naturals on the stage! Here is a clip (my lovelies are the two on the left – my oldest is in green, and her little sis is in yellow behind her):

Kidstuf had something for everyone: a great Bible lesson (Philippians 4:8 complete with "not borin'" tips on how to memorize it), dancing, singing, a fun skit, comedy, and audience participation – Hubby was one of the adults that was called up to participate to be a "cow". From the show: "you know that cows are known to bounce around on the range..." We had six adults on the stage bouncing around on (child size) hippity-hops, 3 of whom got roped by the 'magic lasso' – it was classic! Here's a clip:

Actually never mind... while it was fun at the time, those adults might not appreciate being on the internet on their hippity hops, getting roped by the 'magic lasso', so I will just save that one for memory – hilarious, and the kids LOVED it!!

And I must add that our other audience participation scene went quite well also, but this one involved kids acting like a fire brigade. Things got crazy, and before the audience knew it, a real bucket of water was thrown upon a cast member. Before the production, much discussion was held on how not to mess up the stage (Kidstuf is performed in our Worship Center, so keeping things clean was of utmost importance), and thankfully we decided to remove one of the Worship Band's monitors from the stage before "Scottie's" dousing. Because we had never used actual water during rehearsal, the physics of the soaking was as much of a surprise to us directors and to the cast (especially poor "Scottie") as it was to the audience – "Tyler" got "Scottie" right down the front of her bib overalls, and the look on the actress' face was priceless!

All in all, we experienced an extremely fun and successful Kidstuf; we couldn't have asked for a better show! Afterward, there was a carnival with games, activities, and carnival food, and it was all free, which was great for many community families – hope we got a lot of new people to come check out our great church! I know many families had a fun-packed day, and I was very excited to be part of such a wonderful event.

I'm really glad that my Illinois family (most of them anyway) were able to join us, and I know it meant the world to my kids to have some fans in the audience, so thank you!!

For those who were not fortunate enough to be able to see the show, Philippians 4:8 reads:

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

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## Courage Under Fire

While waking up early this morning, I tuned into GMA and watched the story of a courageous 16-year old boy who like most children across the country are on the verge of starting a brand new school year full of learning, friends, and new experiences. Michael Brewer started out at a brand new school in which he will have to adjust following a horrific event that nearly turned tragic.

A day after his fifteen birthday in October 2009, Michael was attacked at his home by a group of his "friends" after an argument over a \$40 video game. After being doused with rubbing alcohol and set ablaze, the teen climbed over a fence and jumped into a nearby swimming pool but not before suffering second and third degree burns over 60% of his body.

Following near death moments and multiple surgeries for skin grafts, Michael is now on the long road to physical and emotional recovery. The GMA interview showed the teenager riding his skateboard nine months following the ordeal.

Doctors have stated that the young man stood a great chance of death from complications incurred by the event. However,

Michael's amazing will and fortitude and the prayers and support of family, real friends, and complete strangers have carried him this far.

Like many traumatic events, perhaps the most difficult healing will be the psychological recovery. Michael suffers regular nightmares which he does not remember after they end. However, his mother hears his screams in the dead of night. Showers are agonizingly painful for him to take... in fact, they are the hardest part of his recovery.

Michael's 15 year old attackers are being charged as adults in the travesty in which they each face up to 30 years in prison. Really... is \$40.00 worth losing 30 years of your life?

Michael's story will be a focus of ABC's NightLine tonight.

[Click Here](#) for a more detailed account of the story and a somewhat graphic photo gallery.



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## The flyer...

Just the flyer I said I would put up yesterday, a day late...

[Click to see flyer for musical](#)

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# Going on midnight...

I was watching a movie, but I fell asleep sometime while it played. I can't say when that was, since it was a movie I've seen before and I can 'remember' most of it. Anyway, I'm awake now and not quite ready for bed. (grumble, grumble).

On to the thoughts that are currently on my mind...

I've been thinking about privacy in the age of the internet. Back many, many moons ago when I was still young and reckless, the internet did not really exist. Oh there were a few things happening, but not the great connectivity of today. As with most young and reckless people, I did one or two foolish things (or more) that I really hoped would stay in the group I was with. Most did, I think the others were afraid of there foolish failings would get out there too. ☐

But now, it seems the foolish and reckless failings of people find there way onto the wonderful World Wide Web. Notice those first two words, World Wide. Doesn't that mean most of the world can see your foolish acts on You Tube? We can read about them in your blog. And then there is always FaceBook...

I make a water slide off my roof and miss the landing pool – You Tube...

Want to share something off color with my friends, post it to face book and all 600 of my closest friends see it. Oh, I forgot about my privacy settings, everyone can see it.

I don't like what someone did, I post that on facebook. Oops that someone sees it...

I blog about all sorts of things. Oh that is ok, I never use names, but others do.

Hard to hide in this wonderful webby world, but then again do you really want to? I'm not here to keep things hidden away, I

am here to share them. I hope I don't do anything to embarrass myself, but it may happen. It happens outside of the web, it can happen here.

Through the web, I've connected with new and old friends. I've shared thoughts and ideas with people who have shared similar experiences. I've learned from people who share my hobbies. As long as I remember that the internet isn't my whole life, things are good. Just one more way for me to know others and them to know me. That is the human experience.

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## Disney World Fairy Tales (Not Quite)

I came across a really fun article awhile ago called: Confessions Of A Disney Cast Member. The article was written by a guy who spent 5 summers working at the Walt Disney World resort as a Disney cast member. If you're like me and a frequent visitor to the Magic Kingdom, then you will appreciate the following not-so-tall-tales. Even if you've never been to WDW, the following stories are fun to read. Among the entertaining stories he has to share:

*Excuse me man, are you pregnant?*

*What's more terrifying than the 38-foot drop on Disney's Big Thunder Mountain Railroad? Having to ask women in line if they're pregnant. It's for their own safety, but forget a woman scorned—hell hath no fury like a woman who's been mistaken for being pregnant. Once, when I was in training, I watched a coworker approach a larger female park visitor and ask, "Excuse me, ma'am, but are you pregnant?" "Pregnant!?!!" the woman screamed, her voice turning heads at the happiest*

place on earth. "No! What are you saying? Do I look fat to you?!" She turned to her friend and screamed some more: "They think I look fat. Let's get out of here!" I was so traumatized by that incident I crafted a plan to avoid offending anyone. Whenever I spotted a "suspect," I asked everybody in the vicinity—including teenage boys and women in their 70s—if they were with child. If the woman I suspected was actually pregnant, she left the ride quickly. If she wasn't, she just thought I was working a gag.

*I sure am Randy today.*

Disney made the "first name" name tag famous, but the tag doesn't always match the person wearing it. One day, as I was steering the raft to Tom Sawyer Island, my name tag dropped into the river, forcing me to get a new one. There wasn't a single "Robert" left, so until a replacement could be made, I pretended to be "Randy," a name that amused visitors from the U.K. to no end. Elderly English ladies lined up to have their picture taken with me. One screamed when she saw me, grabbed her friend, and yelled, "Is that really your name?" Being a good Disney cast member, I lied and said yes. The friend said, "You know, we love a good randy man back home." But lady, even I'm not that good a cast member.

*To get onstage, dress the part.*

A few attractions choose audience volunteers to be part of the show, but the selection process is far from random. Typically, you need to be a certain gender, size, and age for each of the different roles. You might even need to be wearing a specific item of clothing. On my off days from work, I used to go over to Universal Studios, and I would get picked all the time to play "Mother" in the old Alfred Hitchcock show. They needed a guy my height and weight who happened to be wearing the same type of plain white tennis shoes I always wore. Also helpful for getting picked: cuteness and enthusiasm. Curious kids who ask nicely and look

*excited often get extra attention, along with thrilling perks like riding up front and introducing shows.*

### *Stroller relocation program*

*Disney's a family place, but the people who work there come to loathe strollers. It's part of a cast member's job to keep strollers in nice, orderly lines and to make sure they're only left in designated areas. But park visitors keep their strollers in an appalling condition, loaded up with dirty diapers, rotting bottles of milk, and half-eaten PB&J sandwiches. Others see no problem with parking their strollers right in front of an attraction's exit or entrance. Sometimes thoughtless individuals like this incur the wrath of the stroller police, and their precious Bugaboos and Maclarens are intentionally relocated to a place "far, far away"—at the very back of the area cordoned off for strollers.*



### *Yo, ho, ho and a bottle of (confiscated) rum*

*On special Grad Nites, when Disney hosts loads of freshly graduated high school kids, the park puts extra staffers inside Pirates of the Caribbean and other rides as lookouts to monitor less-than-legal activities. Our focus was mostly on what the kids were consuming. Booze, cigarettes—you name it, and a Disney cast member has confiscated it from a 17-year-old at one time or another. One clever kid, forced to hand over his bottle, noted the irony of getting busted in the middle of a ride that celebrates a drunken pirate orgy.*

*“Hey, don’t the pirates have enough?” he asked. “They need mine, too?”*

*Please keep your happiness to yourself.*

*This attraction has been camera monitored for your safety. That’s the spiel Disney broadcasts over its loudspeakers for many rides. But the cameras are also meant to protect you from yourself. One night, while most parkgoers were watching the fireworks display, a couple strolled over to Pirates of the Caribbean, where I was working. They not only had a boat to themselves, but empty boats all around them. The real fireworks display, it turned out, was visible on the security cameras to all of us working that night. Let’s just say the show the couple put on wasn’t exactly G-rated.*

If you enjoyed the above stories, you might want to [read the article in its entirety here](#), along with other theme park insider info.

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## **Changing Drawers**

You know sometimes in my off-and-on 20 years in retail, I have at times questioned the hiring of certain individuals. I don’t think I have ever questioned it more than a current co-worker who has had three months total retail experience after driving truck for how many years he did that. Two TOTALLY different worlds and it certainly shows.

Within the first week of his employment, he was \$30.00 short on his till. For some reason, unbeknownst to me, the store feels that it is not necessary to have each cashier have his/her own till. Nothing to do with the employee. Our main

office worker has worked at the store longer than I have been in retail and she doesn't find that a bit odd? I would like to have my own drawer as well so I do not get blamed for other's tills coming up \$30.00 short.

Tonight, I was really close to losing it. Said employee asked if he could start to sweep and mop the floor. So, I went to the office and got a fresh drawer. He had the audacity to ask me why I would do that. All right, I was confused. Apparently, he wanted to sweep and mop the floor plus watch the register?

Moments later, a customer (my sister-in-law no less) comes to the register. I call the cashier to the register to wait on her. Then, he has the nerve to question why I ask him to wait on her. Apparently, he is now of the mind that if you are working the same shift it is ok to run his register? I didn't understand that at all and he TOLD me I did not. He's right, I did not. I don't understand why you would want the person who is "responsible for your till being \$30.00 short" to run it at all.

Later little did I expect, I was running the register with the 3 month old retail employee standing behind my shoulder making sure that I wasn't making any mistakes. That almost did it.

But I kept my cool and waited on the line of customers. I was not about to come down to his level when we were the only 2 in the store. Small store but at times more help is needed.

A person needing to go outside for a quick break being one of them. Thank goodness, it was time for him to leave. I might have taken the opportunity to have him leave a few minutes early.

My quick "Lord, Give Me Strength" really helped! Prayer is a powerful thing, isn't it?

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# C(hair)ity

I've had really long hair ever since I was a little girl. I wasn't particularly attached to it, but I'm just a busy person, so I always liked the idea of hopping out of bed and simply running a brush through my hair if I needed to be quick and put off the shower until later in the day. About a month ago, I took my kids to the South Bend zoo to meet my mom so she could take the girls for their week with Grandma, but it was one of those 100<sup>0</sup>+ days, and I could not get my long hair off of my neck. Since I had a fun trip planned days later to another zoo and an amusement park (2 long days outside!), I decided to chop off my hair.

The hairdresser made a big deal of it, asking me if my husband was going to be shocked, but I told her not really since he knew I planned to get it cut and isn't really concerned with what I do with my hair. I told her I wanted my hair cut all one length since I'm not a big fan of the reverse mullet look that seems so popular these days. But when I looked in the mirror after she was finished, she had kind of left the sides longer than the back, giving me an involuntary reverse mullet. Sure, the hairstyle looks great on most people, but I just don't see it for me. Besides, I don't want to be just another I'm-in-my-30's-I-have-4-kids-and-a-reverse-mullet-type housewife. So I told her to please even the sides out, and she (begrudgingly? did so. Is it this woman's mission to spread the reverse mullet around the world like a virus?)

But that brings me to an interesting conundrum – if you have someone really bad doing your hair, would you tell them? Probably you would – it's your hair and you are stuck with your new hairstyle every day, 24/7! What about when the hairdresser asks you, 'How does it look?' You would say, 'not

so good'. So she would even it out. 'How about now?', she would ask. 'Still not really very even', you say – and still she would attempt to even out your hair, finally sticking you with that reverse mullet look that's oh-so-popular these days, even though it's a reverse mullet against your will – a reluctant reverse mullet. Worse, an untalented hairdresser could keep attempting to even out your hair until you have nothing left! Maybe you could keep quiet during the incident if you were getting a bad haircut. You could return days later for a refund and try to endure another stylist's attempt on your hair. You could also try to fix it yourself at home. Well anyway, by the time she was through with me, my hair was just a little shorter than I had intended, but in that heat, I really didn't care. Besides, I was given a super long ponytail that I could donate to Locks of Love, a charity group that collects hair to make hairpieces for kids who lose their hair because of cancer and other medical conditions.

Better yet, when my oldest daughter returned home from her trip to Grandma's, she wanted to cut off her long hair too. Luckily for our family, my husband has gotten quite good at cutting the kids' hair, which saves us tons of money. I'm not brave enough to let him tackle my hair yet (though he might have been better in this case, but if he didn't do well, it's much better to be mad at a stranger hairstylist than my husband), but he cut off our daughter's long ponytail, giving us another donation for Locks of Love.

My daughter and I walked over to the post office one day to send our donation, and I decided to send our picture in to the local newspaper since I've seen them print pictures of Locks of Love donations before. Yesterday they printed our picture! I can't link to the actual newspaper since you have to be a subscriber to see it anyway, but here is the picture I sent:



That reminds of a question I had regarding hair donations – what would happen if someone left hair DNA evidence at a crime scene, and you became a suspect because the DNA evidence hair was somehow taken or dropped from a Locks of Love hairpiece made from your hair donation? If written well, it could be a stage play or movie... or maybe just a far-fetched CSI episode.

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## **That's General Lord Glossop to you...**

That's right, not General Glossop, not Lord Glossop, and certainly not Mr. Glossop. General Lord Glossop, thank you very much. No, I am not on some sort of medication. I am in a show, believe it or not. What? I never mentioned auditioning for one? Well, I didn't. I had actually noted this theater group's auditions awhile back, but got caught up in work so I forgot about them. Then less than a week ago I took another look at the green room and came back to that site only to see a cast list. Nuts- I had wanted to try out for this show. Then I noticed a blurb mentioning that they were looking for a few more men. I couldn't hit the contact us form fast enough. A short time later I received not one, but *two* emails informing me that my interest was being passed on

to the director. Next morning, a call, and a request for my presence Sunday night. Resume in hand I arrived at St. Joe's (as they call it) nursing home where they do most of their rehearsals. As I arrived, another theatre group, Tesseract, was just leaving- a popular rehearsal place apparently. The directors arrived shortly after, talked to me, then I sang a bit from the show for Ann Stewart (I thought I'd mention this name to see if C recognizes it- it's a bit unbelievable that she is still doing this!) and read a line for the director, Kevin, who said I read it perfect the first time. Yes! I was in. Two other new ones joined me that night, and we rehearsed the first dance number. Of course my first rehearsal would have to be a dance rehearsal. For those who know me, I could never be considered a triple threat- far from it. Of course I'm not much of a single or double threat either, but that's beside the point. □

What? I didn't name the show? Do you really need to know? Are you sure this is the moment to say? By the way, you can wish for me to break a leg, but I do break a neck in the show, or rather it will be broken for me... □