

There's Always OKLAHOMA!

For someone else □ Honestly, I don't have anything against the show. I still say that not for Rodgers & Hammerstein's first collaboration, the modern musical would be far different. But the wait is over. I received a message in my facebook inbox from the director of *Miracles* that told me that she had some news regarding casting! Not to worry... it's not bad. I immediately grabbed my phone and was ecstatic after receiving the news. I was the only one she and the producer of the show had firmly had in place. Does this mean that I was the only guy to audition? Tom is the only male role in a cast of three. Oh, well who cares if I was?

After getting off the phone, I struck up an online conversation with one of a few people I had to tell first. I even had him thinking it was another JS (Jerry Seinfeld, Jerry Springer... forgot about him somehow). He was about to phone the police to arrest the director for slander until I came clean.

This role is going to be memorable for several reasons. Not only is it a serious drama (with some bits here and there of lightheartedness), but it is the smallest cast I have ever been part of. I am really excited to see how well I am able to pull it off. I have also been informed that the director is going to have her way with me (ok... so she definitely did not phrase it quite that way). The subject of the show is very close to her and it is going to be done her way. I totally agree! Plus, my limited experience in such shows can only benefit greatly by a director who knows what she wants. But I'm not worried: It will be work but it will be fun!

So... let the fun work begin! Does this mean that I need to add a new category?

When You Know The Notes To Play, You CAN'T Play Most A-ny-Thing

This is not meant to be a religious stance. However, it is meant to be a stance on intelligence.

Ridiculous is what I call it. A young lady who attempted to take her case to the Supreme Court was not even allowed in the doors. Separation of Church and State, indeed. Has the "Pledge of Allegiance" been taken out of the school system yet, or just "Under God"? The case may be 4 years old but it is just as necessary as it was in 2006 when a high school wind ensemble wanted to perform an instrumental version of Biebl's *Ave Maria* as part of their graduation exercises. [Kathryn Nurre](#) and her ensemble chose the beautiful piece which had been performed **VOCALLY** at graduation exercises at Everett High School (Everett, WA) one year before!. However, school officials felt that the vocal-less arrangement would meet with criticism? Selections were to be "totally secular in nature."

Let's see... how many art classes study the works of the Renaissance? Better cut that out since the vast majority are religious in nature. Umm... we can't sing "When the Saints Go Marching In" or strike us down if we play it instrumentally. I wonder if Everett High School's Christmas Concert consists of "Jingle Bells" and "Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer." Sorry [Mare](#), your "Hallelujah Chorus"... **NO CAN DO!** "Silent Night' by candlelight... **AXED!** I wonder if the officials would be intelligent enough to recognize the original German version (OH, forgive. All selections must be in English). I imagine that their Drama Department will not be performing *Joseph and*

the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Godspell, or The Sound of Music (shameful) anytime soon.

I applaud Miss Nurre for her bravery in going before the high court to hear her case. I also say a big fat “**B00**” to our government for not even considering to hear the case. Before long, schools will go back to the three rs so as not to cause any “criticism.” At least Justice Alito sided with the young woman.

Ok... rant over... thanks for listening.

Are we sure they aren't children.

***** Warning Political Post *****

The House vote on the health care bill took place Sunday. On a Sunday??? Why? Couldn't it wait until Monday? I'm not sure what I think of the bill itself. I don't have the time or inclination to read 2000+ pages of political mumbo jumbo. If a bill is 2000+ pages most of it is mumbo jumbo. I'm sure most of OUR representatives did not read it either. I don't care what your political leanings are, I really don't care what you think mine are. I do think the the people we voted to be in charge of our government really let us down on this bill.

Throughout the whole process, it was like children playing on a playground. “I have the ball, so we will play my way.” “We won't play your game, you can play with those kids.” “I'll play my game when I get all the people to play my game.” “We won't let you play your game.” “Your game stinks!!” “You don't even have a game.” “Yes we do, but you won't listen to the

rules.”

They fuss, they fight and then in what seems like the dead of night (weekends are usually slow for news). They get together and play. Things were done in back rooms so nobody could see what was going on. Things were promised so that others would play nice. Threaten, cajole or bribe your playmates so they play your game. Sounds more like children to me everyday. When are the people in Washington going to grow up. And when will the voters learn not to send children to do an adults job.

I wonder who got out the scissors to cut somebodys hair...

My Issue (IsSHOE)

I HATE shopping for shoes. For as long as I can remember, I've gotten a pair of shoes and replaced them with the same type of pair when they wore out or when I needed to change sizes – no need to see what went well with my outfits or anything like that for me. It started with some black slip-on Keds that I kept replacing for a few years, then when I played sports I moved on to black Adidas with shoe-strings; followed by some cheapie black velcro shoes from Walmart (when we first got married and were really poor), and finally my black Brahma Bravo boots – each pair of those would last me about 3 winters, and they were great for the summer too. I guess I like black shoes.

So for about a year now, I've had a bit of a shoe issue – they've stopped making the Bravo style of the Brahma boots. The soles on my current pair of Bravos have been worn down so far on one side of each shoe that water seeps in if its particularly rainy, and my feet ache if I wear my shoes all day – time for new shoes. As I said, I realized this about a

year ago now, and that's when I began to search. I thought it was as easy as going to Walmart and picking up a new pair of Bravos, but alas, I can't find them. I scanned the various offerings of work boots, but I just don't want anything with a steel toe, and I certainly don't want to spend more than \$30. And of course black ones would be nice, can't find those either. I put the shoe issue on the back burner all summer last year until winter became inevitable, and I found myself near a Payless Shoe Source in October, so I wandered in and had a look. Sure enough, they had a pair of black boots that fit my fancy **and** my feet – SOLD! I was extremely pleased that my months-long search had culminated in me finding comfortable black boots in my target price range – under \$30, and they were waterproof to *boot*, oh brother...

But not more than a month after purchase, my new boots began to crack – apparently they were SO waterproof that the waterproof shell was just that – a shell; so hard to keep out the water that it couldn't be flexible enough to handle the movement of my feet without cracking. So now winter was really starting to bear down on us, and I was stuck an hour away from any Payless. I lived with the cracking boots all winter, still loving the way they looked and the way they kept my feet warm and dry, but I was also very disappointed. When an awful set of circumstances culminated to basically grind our household to a halt in December, it looked like I was stuck with my boots – didn't have the time nor even the money to get to the faraway land of Payless to exchange the cracking boots.

But then things got better, and we were finally able to afford the time and gas to get to Payless and return the boots. Even though it had been more than 3 months since purchase and the boots were cracked (though that really wasn't my fault – they shouldn't have cracked within months, err, one month of purchase!), Payless took them back and gave a full refund, no problem. It only took me an hour and half to pick out a

replacement pair (I guess I never realized that I might be picky about shoes, but my husband's huffing and puffing at me on that date night made me re-evaluate... a little), but after walking around the strip mall for 5 minutes, I knew these were not going to be my new boots. But I had forgotten to bring a spare pair of shoes with me – uh, oh. My choices were: 1) waste more of date night going shoe shopping until I found the right shoes, then return these awful new boots to Payless, or 2) wear the uncomfortable boots for the rest of the night, then beg my mom (who was coming for a visit that weekend and lived in the vicinity of like, 5 Paylesses) to return the boots for me. I chose option #2 (thanks Mom!), and that's why I've been wearing the years-old Bravo boots with the worn down soles ever since. Every time I get a spare moment; sometimes with the kids, sometimes without, I make it a point to stop in the shoe section of Walmart, Target, Meijer, wherever – to continue the hunt of finding myself a new pair of boots. I've taken home about 3 pair now, but I've been happy with none of them. Now that winter is officially over, I've attempted forgetting about finding boots that will get me through snow and tried downgrading to a good pair of walking shoes, but I've returned at least two pair of those as well – and there is another pair still in the box in my front hall closet, ready to be returned – they just dig into my ankle bone in a way that makes me *crave* high-tops; I can't help it!

The other day, I tried searching online for the Bravo style of Brahma boots, but they only make them in an ugly Wheat color and not even in the half-size I need. I was thinking I could order something on Walmart.com and return it to the store if (when) I didn't like it, but I couldn't even find anything in my price range that would work for me.

So back to my point – I HATE shoe shopping; I loathe it. Many women love it and have a pair of shoes to match every outfit they own. I've always valued myself as different from the average (extravagant) woman in that respect – I'm pretty basic

in my wardrobe needs... my husband and I share many clothes actually, and it's not because he wears trendy woman's clothing – I opt for cheap, comfortable men's wear.

But how I would like a nice, inexpensive pair of good (hopefully black) walking shoes (preferably boots, but I'm willing to drop that criteria at this point in my frustrating shoe battle).

Is this really too much to ask?

Things that turn back the clock

Many years ago, my wife worked at a pet shop in our little town. A friend of ours owned it and needed help keeping the animals fed and cages clean. It was a little shop and tended to have fish, mice, rats and some more exotic pets. My wife found a cute little grey furball. It was a chinchilla. That first chinchilla was brought home and given the name Jimmy. He would sit on her shoulder, under her hair with just his nose poking out most of the time. A very clean and personable pet. Over the years many other chinchillas made it into our house. Some were welcomed because of their specific colors, some because they were 'rescue' chinchillas. Homes that could or would not take care of the animals, those animals were cared for here.

Fast forward to 2003. My lovely wife died, and my daughters and I are left with over a dozen chinchillas. Some most were older, but there were still a few youngsters. Over the last few years, I gave a couple away to friends. Others made it through there lives and died. The last few are all over eight

years old and they are coming to the end of their lives too. Chinchillas can live to be over 20, I'm almost sure one of ours was close to that, but we never really knew how old she was. Most die after 10-12 years of life. Today, another little chinchilla passed on. Another connection to my wife is gone.

My wife and my youngest daughters could tell you the names of almost every chin. I'm taking nothing away from my oldest, but she had been on her own during the last few chinchilla arrivals. Me, I remembered just a few of the names. Those chinchillas have been gone for some time now. I didn't remember the names of the remaining 4. I just know the color and location.

So a little beige chinchilla is not with me anymore. And memories of other chinchillas and how my wife loved the little animals flood my mind. Funny how things turn the clock backwards.

Shortest Movie Review Ever

Just watched Fight Club – one of the worst movies I have ever seen. I can't believe we wasted over 2 hours of kid-less time on this piece of you-know-what.

The people who voted (yes, all 357,160 of them) for this on imdb.com to give it an 8.8 out of 10 and made it #16 of their top 250 movies of all time should be ashamed – makes me hesitate to be advised by any of their ratings in the future.

I am not going to waste any more of my time writing or thinking about this movie.

Officially Spring In NW Ohio

I really don't care what the calendar says, as I've stated before I look for my own signs of spring. I've been waiting and waiting for the final signs of spring to occur and today I saw the last one. I saw ducks swimming around in flooded fields of NW Ohio. Not in a pond, river or lake, but in a place that corn or soybeans will be planted in a few short weeks. What could say spring more than the quack of a duck?

Well, I've heard the call of the frogs from the creeks, ponds and swamps of the area. I've seen the buzzards circling over the highways and fields. Possums and skunks seem to have more time to move about. Buds are starting to appear on some trees. There have been a few crocuses blooming. And of course I've seen the first snake of the spring. What could say spring more than the hiss of a snake?

OH yeah, I saw a robin...

Killing Time

I know that continuing to think about something does not make it approach faster, but if I've said it once, I've said it a zillion times! I HATE WAITING! I think the audition went fine... better than fine since I did get to read the script twice. There were only three of us at the audition (enough for a cast but there was another round today and one tomorrow... UGH!) After the very quick table read-through audition, I did get to sit in a rehearsal for [Curious Savage](#) which goes up

next weekend. Break a leg [Mare](#), Trav, and the rest of the cast! I was pleased to see Mr. Potter's secretary on stage again with a meatier role. I will be in the audience either a week from tonight or next Sunday... depending upon when we get back from the cathedral on Saturday.

Last night's evening wrapped with a long overdue game night. Overdue because I was sick for the last one. And I got to assist in moving a television... not a huge undertaking but big enough. C and I got both the tv and stand back in their proper spot and a picture with sound came on so...

Now, I think I will read a bit of *The Goblet of Fire* before [Taylhis](#) catches up with me. I forgot to ask how many pages "plowing through it" means. ☐ Of course, with any luck, she will catch up with me before I get to *Order of the Phoenix*.

I actually went out to fix the mailbox

Sadly it is only temporary. Continued from a previous post...

The mailbox I have it a hollow plastic post attached to a piece of steel angle iron driven into the ground. Usually, this time of year, I just have to remove the plastic post and re-drive the angle iron. Packing the area with stone is always helpful. The freeze and thaw cycles, plus the push from the snow plows just seem to loosen up the area and the mailbox. Always a spring chore, but usually one that doesn't take too long.

Not this year. The angle iron was bent at about a 40 degree angle. The plastic post was split 1/4 of the way up. So I had

to get a new post. I bought the same kind, so that I could keep my current mailbox. And then I found out the bad news. The angle iron was replaced with a wooden stake. The bolt used to attach it was replaced with 4 wood screws. The tools needed list on the outside of the box did not include the drill needed to start the holes for the wood screws or the necessity of both phillips and flat head screw drivers. Hmmm. I have other things to do today, so some of this would have to wait.

I drove the wooden stake in the ground (note self- get a bigger post) and then I attached the old post and mail box with a couple of the wood screws. I'll be back out there the next nice day to drive in a new wood post (treated lumber maybe) and the new mailbox holding plastic post.

Didn't I just have a discussion with friends on buying things that didn't contain the proper tool list? Oh well it should hold up through Monday's mail.

Happy 1st Day of Spring!



Didn't we just have a (winter!) week of 50°F plus weather, culminating in two days over 60)? Oh well, that's Chicago for you! ☐