

# A special place in 'MY' acting hall of fame

One line in a response pushed me to write this post. I don't think I've written about it before, but I remember telling a friend or two, so if you've heard it before, just be patient with me.

Way back in 1997, somebody asked me for suggestions on shows for the play house to do. I was a rank newbie to the theater, but I gave a suggestion or two. The play at the top of my list was "Harvey". It seems that the playhouse did this show before, and they were not ready to do it again. Year after year, I suggested that show. Finally, after a lot of persuasion, and maybe just to shut me up, the show was scheduled for some time in 2006. I tried out for the show and was given the lead role of Elwood Dowd. A dream come true for me. I would have done anything on that show just to be able to watch it, but I was able to be in it. I was thrilled.

One thing did put a damper on that. My lovely wife died in 2003 and would not be by my side during the rehearsals and production of this show. This was a bit of a stress for me during the early rehearsals of the show. Finally something changed. I needed some props for the show. One was the cards that Elwood was so fond of passing out, another a notebook of his favorite watering holes. And the third an billfold with some cash and other peoples calling cards. The little notebook, and many of the 'calling' cards belonged to my late wife. From that time on, I had a little bit of her on stage with me.

Then came my largest discovery. I was able to think of Harvey as my lovely wife standing on the footstool in the kitchen. This would have put her at the exact height needed for Harvey. So from the time of that thought, until the end of the run,

every time I looked at Harvey on stage, I was peering into the eyes of my wife.

Many times she said she never wanted to be on stage. She never wanted any recognition for anything she did for the theater. She wanted to remain anonymous. Well except for in my eyes, she was never on the stage. Her name was not listed in the bios, but she was on stage with me for every performance. I gave my all to that show. I pushed myself farther than I ever thought I could. And every night I looked into the eyes of my wife, shared a drink or two and was finally able to say "Where have you been, I've been looking all over for you."

No matter what comes after that show, all things pale when in that light.

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## **The end of a very long day**

The day actually started some time after Midnight last night. Our director's gift cast party was held, and it was almost mandatory attendance. It was worth the trip, because our fearless leader had some wonderful things to say about the show. The party was long and entertaining, but I got to bed very late (early???) and we had one more show to do in the afternoon.

The final show went as well as can be expected when one of the actors calls in sick at the last minute. Before anyone jumps to a conclusion, it was a real illness and not just sick from the party last night (ok, it may have been the food, but nobody else got sick). We had to cut the one scene that the person was in. Unfortunately, I was also in that scene. Life is full of disappointments.

My youngest and her grandparents were in the audience and seemed to enjoy the show. It is always fun to perform for family. I also had numerous people, throughout the run of the show, ask me if I was really a minister, or was I going to take that up as a new calling. Sorry folks, I'm an actor, I only play a minister on stage. Again I heard that this was the best I've ever done. My nature tends to think that people can only remember the last few shows they've seen. Surely I've done better on other roles? Oh well, as long as they enjoyed the show.

Finally, I took my youngest back to college. Just got back home. Definitely the end of a very long day.

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## **Potty Training Celebration!**

Ok, I know it might seem weird, especially to those of you who aren't parents. But in my family, we are celebrating a major milestone – 3-year-old Disney is officially potty-trained!!! In lieu of this triumphant moment (congrats to Disney but let's face it, one of the best parts about this is that we only have to buy and change diapers now for ONE instead of TWO!), I thought I'd share a cute potty-training-themed email forward, here goes, and again, forgive me if you are not on the same page with me – potty-training kids is a big deal, and this is our THIRD success story!



### THE POTTY

A LITTLE THREE YEAR OLD BOY IS SITTING ON THE TOILET. HIS MOTHER THINKS HE HAS BEEN IN THERE TOO LONG, SO SHE GOES IN TO SEE WHAT'S UP.

THE LITTLE BOY IS SITTING ON THE TOILET READING A BOOK. BUT ABOUT EVERY 10 SECONDS OR SO HE PUTS THE BOOK DOWN, GRIPS ONTO TO THE TOILET SEAT WITH HIS LEFT HAND AND HITS HIMSELF ON TOP OF THE HEAD WITH HIS RIGHT HAND.

HIS MOTHER SAYS: "BILLY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU'VE BEEN IN HERE FOR A WHILE..

BILLY SAYS: "I'M FINE, MOMMY.. I JUST HAVEN'T GONE 'DOODY' YET."

MOTHER SAYS: "OK, YOU CAN STAY HERE A FEW MORE MINUTES. BUT BILLY, WHY ARE YOU HITTING YOURSELF ON THE HEAD?"

BILLY SAYS: "WORKS FOR KETCHUP."



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## Death, Murder, Love, and FUN!

Maybe you've noticed that at some point this winter, I began to blog less... I no longer write reviews about every movie, tv show or play I see – it mostly has to do with the fact that there just isn't time for me to sit at my computer uninterrupted long enough to do that – well, not if I want my toddling, climbing 18-month-old to stay safe anyway. But this Valentine's Day weekend of 2010 saw me venturing to two local plays, both involving fellow tangenteers, so I figured I could let Hubby hold down the fort long enough for me to write a quick little blurb.

First of all, let me say how thankful I am for my babysitter who worked overtime this weekend – she usually doesn't do weekends, and without her, we couldn't have afforded to support our friends at either show. Friday night's selection was *Dearly Departed*, a southern comedy about a crazy family coming together for the funeral of the patriarch. The show was hilarious, and my friend [justj](#) was very memorable as a fire n' brimstone type southern preacher. I have to say that my favorite part of the show was his other character however, a wheelchair bound man named Norval who is depicted as

practically a houseplant by his caregiver wife when she describes how she cares for him – which pills, what he can and can't eat, that sort of thing. But on stage, Norval was anything but a houseplant, and just depicted him with just the right amount of humor – not over the top, but not comatose either – I felt that achieving this perfect balance was much more difficult than it looked. It should come as no surprise that I absolutely LOVED the music in the show, and it was amusing for me to think about how much that must have irked the director (who had left a party we threw one time because there was 'too much country music' – even though the only country song I played was Travis Tritt's remake of the Eagle's classic 'Take It Easy', which I didn't even consider country, but apparently some would beg to differ) – haha. I need to find out what that Elvis song was in the second act; it was wonderful.

Saturday night we tried out a murder mystery dinner theater starring [Jamiahsh](#), and we had a blast! We rounded up some friends, and when all was said and done, we had a somewhat rowdy table of 8 with whom to enjoy the show. Without having to draw any sort of diagrams or assemble any calculative theories like someone at our table who shall remain nameless ☐ I guessed the murderer correctly and was entered into the drawing to win a prize – a free one hour massage! But I tore my ballot wrong, and my friend who was also the director felt it would have been obvious if she had chosen my idiotic-looking ballot to win the prize. I agree with her; it was my own fault, and I'm happy that another patron's experience was even more enhanced by his free massage. Besides, my hubby gives THE BEST massages, and they're always free! But we had a super time at the dinner theater, the food was good, and Jamiahsh was wonderful as the bumbling FBI agent who was trying to crack the case. I loved the relaxed atmosphere of the show with members of the cast joining us for dinner and chatting casually – although too casually at times, because several members of the cast came out of character at times

asking us if our questions were for their characters or for them “in real life” – oops. But of course ours truly Jamiahsh remained in character and professional at all times!

So bravo to many jobs well done on this weekend of community theater! Knowing that my days of keeping my kids out so late are numbered (especially judging by the way they screamed on the way home), I am thankful for every show I get to experience!

And wrapping up the weekend, of course, is Valentine’s Day, and that’s where the love comes in – hopefully the kids will fall asleep before Hubby and I crash so that we can snuggle and watch a scary movie – who needs chick flicks on Valentine’s Day?!? Hope you had a wonderful weekend!

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## A TaLi Lo Production

So ends yet another wonderful, memorable experience. TaLi Lo is a new non-profit production company in its infancy started by a true theatre lover with the help of her two sisters. I think this is just great. She plans to have stage extravaganzas periodically at the Quarterline Cafe. A portion of each ticket sale will go to a group of her choosing that is near to her heart. Two dollars from each ticket for *He Crossed That Line* is going to the county hospital’s cardiac wing.

As for the show itself, it was a delightful murder-mystery full of suspense, suspicion, and improvisation fun! The victim, Joe Coffee (the evening’s Elvis tribute artist) has been murdered. FBI Agent Herman Clueso (no relation) is called in on his first case after finishing 97th out of 103rd in his graduating class.

## The Suspects:

- Miss Honey Dew... the 19 year-old widow of the 40 year old victim. Funny how she has no clue who the King of Rock and Roll is.
- Mrs. Lola Finkelmeyer... married to golf pro, Lester (Less for short, "Less is apparently more"). It seems that old Tiger Woods has been hitting 18 hoes (err. holes). A close school friend of the victim.
- Lacy Loveless... pregnant school mate of Joe and Lola. But all is not as it seems.
- Boobsie McGee another classmate of Lacy, Joe, and Lola. Seems to have very close ties to Lacy.
- Guido Zuckerstein... the owner of the restaurant where the murder took place. An Italian-Jew... mother Italian, father Jewish ("eh, This is a America"). Possible ties to organized crime and to Honey Dew.
- Brittawney Rockefeller Dinglesmoocher... yet another schoolmate of Joe, Lola, Lacy, and Boobsie. Apparently, a decendant of the Rockefeller clan.

Agent Clueso's (and the audience's) mission... to piece together the clues and determine whodunit and why. The clues come at a terrific pace while the characters and audience enjoy a sumptuous buffet until all the clues are announced and Clueso (in his ultimate wisdom, after just completing his training as an FBI agent after 5 attempts. He had a little trouble in weapons class!) announces who he believes the murderer is. Unfortunately, he misses is by "that much" and the real murder reveals him/herself only to be thwarted by the genius who is Clueso, Herman Clueso.

I had an absolute delightful time in my first improv show! Although, we were given the basic outline of the event, everything else was unscripted so you never knew what was going to happen. The culprit was not announced to the actor playing the role (and only to that actor) until just before the doors were unlocked each night. Thank you everyone in the



cast, to producer, director Lisa (not that Lisa), and all the audience members who joined in the fun.

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## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A NIGHT MAKES!

TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE WAS PURE MAGICAL GOLD! W had 15 reservations tonight and by the time we started our evening of mystery and mayhem, I'm sure we had at least 30. Quite a switch from the nine we had last night. I AM SO PSYCHED! I know I mentioned that I was scared to death when this improv thing came up but after tonight, I am hooked. Thanks in no small part to a larger than I anticipated table at the front of the murder scene. One of my best friends decided to spread the word about the entertainment via a mass email that really worked! I knew a couple of them were speculating about coming tomorrow but I am so glad that they came tonight along with a third visitor and then two more came along! HEHEHEHE!!!!

While last night's audience was very fun and we were able to play off of them really well... nothing beats interacting with a large crowd of VERY receptive participants. There were moments of physicality that no one was anticipating that I found (as a performer) very exciting! And it was all out of the blue! That's improv folks and I love it! Never judge something until you've done it yourself? I hope the video came off well enough to post highlights on youtube so I can share some of it!

There is something new already brewing for my return to the stage! As with anything involving the stage, I am already pumped about it! Stay tuned for more info as it becomes

available!

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# **We Are The World 25 For Haiti**

Some different lyrics, different styles thrown in but the basic concept remains the same.

What do you think?

Of course, this in no way takes away from the tragedy of the [luge competition](#) which remains under investigation by Olympic officials. Human error was pronounced initially, but upon reading the statement and seeing video much more should have been in place to allow for the athletes' safety.

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## A Very Intimate Beginning

Tonight was the opening for the murder-mystery dinner theatre at the Quarterline Cafe. It was really intimate because we had a grand total of **5 audience members!** But it was really fun, the paying customers seemed to enjoy themselves as they played along and attempted to guess whodunit and why to win a fantastic prize. Our overall effect had to change a bit and hopefully when we get more audience members, it can go back to our original plan! But improv... what can you say? If the paying public is entertained then it is all good!

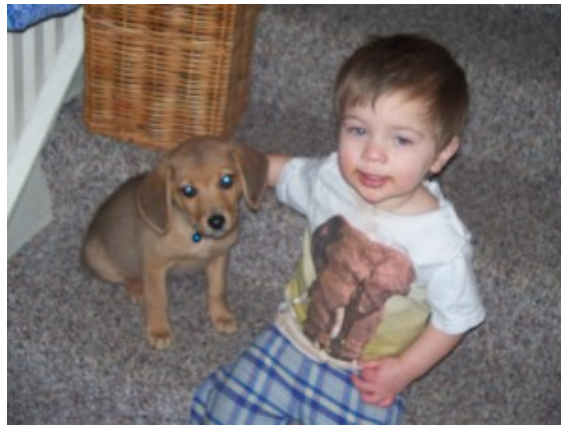
I must give a shout out to the crashers who shall remain nameless. They traipsed right on in. "Stella" went out to greet them, then they walked out. I attempted to fit them into the plot by acknowledging the late comers and suggesting that they may be two more possible suspects. It must have worked because after we wrapped, I told the cast who they were and everyone knew that I must have known them. Apparently, they were making reservations to one of the remaining two performances.

So, while fun and intimate, a few more audience members would be helpful so that we can do some of the more physical bits we had been working on. Call for reservations (419)485-0253!

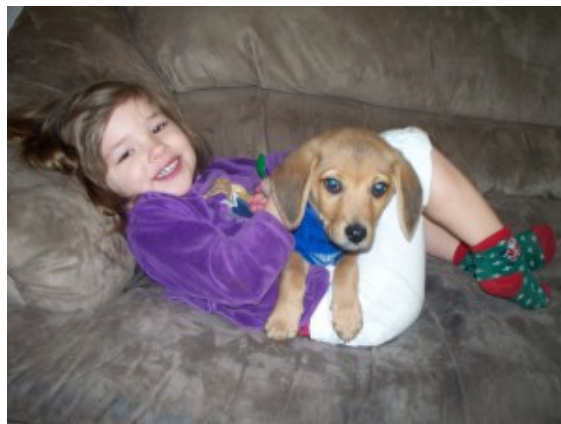
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# Cutest Puppy In The World

After almost a week of having our new puppy, I finally got him to hold still long enough for some adorable pictures – enjoy!



Gizmo will follow me up the stairs, but then he gets overwhelmed and can't go up or down! My 19-month-old son gave him a hug to comfort him; how cute is that?!?



This is Gizmo and my daughter Disney - our friend gave us a cute

little blue sweater for him, so now he doesn't shiver quite so much when he goes outside!



He wants so badly to be able to jump up on the couch, but he's not big enough yet. Won't be long; we can notice that he is growing bigger EVERY single day!!

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## The Kindness Of Strangers

I came across a couple of instances of good citizenship lately, so I thought I'd share. I would write a letter to the local newspaper, but I don't think they'd print it – they didn't print the last one I wrote them about the wonderful person who found my lost wallet and turned it in to the police station – intact! I guess the newspaper is only interested in printing letters where someone has an issue or is complaining about something...

So the other day, we were stopped at a stoplight, and it turned green – but the car in front of us was not moving, and that's when I noticed that he had his hazard lights on. The guy behind me was too close for me to back up, so I was stuck. I saw the guy behind me throw his hands up in frustration, and I'm thinking, oh great, here comes the blaring horn and obscenities (I'm from Chicago – sadly, that is what most people there would do). My husband gets out of our car to see if he can help push the stalled car, and off they go. The next thing I know, there are two other men helping push it (they had been on the corner holding signs advertising a sale at the shopping center). Then, the guy behind me – the one who I thought was p-o-ed – gets out of his car to see if *he* can help!! What an amazing example of people being thoughtful and going above and beyond! I've both lived in and visited plenty of cities where I saw (or I was) a stalled car. But in all of these instances, never have I seen **4 people** come out to help the stranded driver. I've seen cars speeding angrily around the stalled vehicle, people honking, making obscene gestures, yelling obscenities, or simply ignoring the person in need. I feel very lucky that I was able to witness such selflessness; people disregarding whatever their own plans may have been for that day – people willing to sacrifice being on time to their obligations just to help another in need. How refreshing!

And something else happened this week – I'm sure you know about the big snowstorm by now. We got about 8 inches of snow that came down in less than 12 hours. I was sitting in my living room, watching it come down, and I was trying to shovel when I could – I couldn't bear the thought of my husband having to come home from work with a walkway full of 8 inches of snow to shovel. But I have 4 little kids, and we had just gotten a new puppy, so my efforts to shovel away the snow as it fell were in vain – I just couldn't keep up. So I'm playing with my kids in the living room, watching the snow fall, when we see someone clearing our walkway for us with a

snowblower! I thought that it must be a neighbor; someone who has a snowblower and was kind enough to take pity on those of us who only have shovels. I told the kids to watch the man and see which house he went into so I could later drop off a thank you note. But instead of walking into a house, he packed up his snowblower in a red truck and drove away! I didn't recognize the man nor his truck, but I don't think he was just roaming town snowblowing everywhere he went – he purposefully cleared **our** walkway! I doubt he reads my blog, but if he does, then I'd like to tell him a big THANK YOU! And for the rest of you – never underestimate the power of a kind word or deed! I have a wall hanging with that saying on it in my bathroom, and it means even more to me now!