

This day in History

On January 20th, 1984 I left the realm of being single and became a married man. That same year, NW Ohio was under a bitter cold spell and the daytime high temps were below 0 Fahrenheit. I was also blissfully happy, as all newlyweds should be.

On January 20th, 1994 I was married for 10 years. Father of 4 beautiful daughters. We were very happy family. I'm not sure if much else happened that day.

January 20th, 2003 this was our 19th and last anniversary together, we just didn't know it then. Still happy.

January 20th, 2004, my first anniversary alone. Not very happy, nothing else happened that day in my life. Should have been 20 years.

On January 20th, 2009 I should have been married 25 years. I am sure that if my wife had lived, I still would have been blissfully happy. On that day the first black American became President of the U.S.A. That seemed inconsequential to me.

Funny how an important day in your life can color the history around it.

Harry Potter – Reading Vs. Watching

Now that I've read the first installment in the Harry Potter series, I decided to watch the movie make the story come to life. I wasn't disappointed, but I much prefer the book – the

movie leaves out a lot of details. It was obvious that was going to happen otherwise the movie would be about 12 hours long, but the excluded details were enough to make me prefer the book to the movie. Here is a run-down of thoughts I had while enjoying the movie last night:

- Did the beginning of the movie portray Professor McGonagall as a cat as she is in the book? I didn't notice it, but I also came into the movie a minute or two late due to an unplanned (though pleasant!) phone conversation. I would have liked to see her as a cat.
- I really liked seeing how the train station came to life, and especially how exactly they found platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$!
- Did the movie explain the resident ghosts of Hogwarts? I noticed lack of explanation for other characters as well – especially Neville! – but as stated before, it's a long movie, so maybe it was out of necessity that they had to cut some descriptions that were present in the book.
- The movie is well cast and directed. Everything is just like I pictured from the book, and that's a good thing. I had considered waiting to watch any of the Potter movies until I was finished reading the series for fear that movie would ruin my vision of Hogwarts, but I'm glad I didn't wait; the movie was very enjoyable. I was pleased to see that creatures like the Gringotts bank goblins, for example, looked just like the sketches in the book which also helped to make my expectations match the movie.
- Visually, the invading troll was cool, although its extreme smelliness was completely downplayed in the movie – one of the things I wish was not.
- This movie would be so cool in 3D!!
- The character Hagrid gained about 50 IQ points for the movie. He was likable, but reads dumber than he acted in the

movie. I think I would have liked to see him more like he was in the book.

- The movie is a good representation of the book brought to life, but how is it to watch it on its own if you haven't read the book? I will talk to my husband about this because he did just that. And for me – the movie almost went too fast for me. I saw events happen in minutes that in real time, took me weeks to read about! But then again, there are over 300 pages being shown in under 3 hours.

- The character Severus Snape stood out as being very well cast – I'm not remembering a very vivid depiction of him in the book, and the movie did not disappoint in this regard.

FOLLOWING MIGHT BE SPOILERS – YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO READ ANY FURTHER IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN OR READ HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

- Quirrell didn't seem to be stuttering much in the movie, which brings me to a minor complaint that I have about both the book and the movie. I felt that Professor's Quirrell's character was not elaborated upon enough to fully give the audience the big surprise ending. Sometimes I would even get Quirrell mixed up with Filch (while reading the book anyway), but I guess that could also be a side effect of reading while falling asleep!

- Did I miss something, or does neither the book nor the movie elaborate upon why Harry's scar hurts when he see Snape?

Overall, a very enjoyable movie-watching experience! Fun for everyone – the kids weren't scared by it and enjoyed it, and my husband liked it so much that he's been asking me when I'm going to finish the 2nd book because he wants to see the 2nd movie!

Still alive...

...I think. Haven't felt much like blogging lately. Tired, somewhat overworked from my car job. Last week I subbed for the first time in over a month (español), but still did cars four of the five days. Subbed today (7th LA), still hoping for tomorrow. Sorry I haven't been reading all of your blogs lately either- kinda' goes with the no blogging feeling. Some friend, huh? ☐

Less than three days to the winter retreat!

Oh, turned off the ads, something I had been considering for awhile. Didn't earn me anything so I figured why not make a cleaner look for everyone? ☐

[edited to make last paragraph a little less negative]

The First Important Modern American Musical

That seems like an oxymoron since the United States originated the concept of the musical. It seems like we were in competition with our cousins across the big pond in the 1970s & '80s with the Second British Invasion and the shows of Andrew Lloyd Webber and others like *Les Miserables*.

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II began their collaboration in 1943 with the musical *Oklahoma!* While it may seem dull and passe by today's demand for bigger, flashier, even bordering on the cinematic, this show set the standard for which all musicals are judged. This summer, [Fountain City Festival](#) will be presenting this benchmark classic. *Oklahoma!* was innovative for several reasons. Most importantly, it established the "book musical." For the first time, the plot, music, lyrics, and choreography became integrated. No longer would there be a story divided by songs and dances that did nothing to advance the plot.

It did not begin with a big chorus number as had been the practice in operettas. Curly enters singing one of the many songs of the American Song Book: "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin.'"

Something else that was totally unheard of... the title song was not even heard until the end of show.

The invention of the "Dream Ballet" was first used to foreshadow coming events and delve inside the psyche of a main character.

While the simple plot of every day life in turn of the century Oklahoma Territory seems corny 70+ years later, *Oklahoma!* will forever hold a spot in the formation of the modern musical. Better shows may have come along since and seem to overshadow it, but without it the concept of the musical would be far different.

One More Reason To Love The Wrath

Years ago, I came across a cassette tape of the *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* soundtrack. I loved it until I realized that it contained maybe a sampling of the entire score at best. A few weeks ago, I learned that a remastered edition with the entire score with all the musical cues had recently become available. I had to get it and I got it in the mail last Friday. EVERYTHING FROM THE MOVIE IS ON IT! Including the take of the first time that a character other than James Tiberius Kirk delivered the immortal "Space... the final frontier" soliloquy. If you know who it was don't ruin it for those who are not in the know.

Following the disaster that was the overblown, overbudget, snooze fest that is *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, Paramount Pictures demanded a totally new picture that would compete with *Star Wars* and hopefully win over a few of its diehard fans. This even included a desire to scrap the music from the previous film (although many of the themes would later be used in subsequent films and television series including the Main Title and Klingon themes). Ingenue James Horner was eventually chosen to compose *TWOK*.

There is not one bit of music in the score that does not stir. The Main Theme combines Alexander Courage's fanfare from the television series with a heroic march for Admiral Kirk plus a breathtaking nautical theme for the *Enterprise*, herself. Captain Spock is given a mystical tune on the panflute that really invokes a sense of wonder into the character. A menacing piece led by the French Horn adds even more villainy to my favorite *Trek* villain. (Where was I in 1982? Ok... so I

was 9. Or better yet, where was I in 1963 when the character of Khan Noonien Singh was created? I was -10 years old.)
“The Battle in the Mutara Nebula” is an 8 minute 7 second masterpiece of space battle excitement.

I have been asked at which point I would introduce novices to the world of *Star Trek*. I always point to my introduction. Although the plot is a sequel to a then twenty year old episode, my favorite theme of the friendship between two heros is what draws me to it time and again: “You are my commanding officer; you are also my friend. I gave been and forever shall be yours.” So says Captain Spock as he relinquishes command of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* once again to Admiral James Tiberius Kirk after a little training cruise runs into a wee bit o’ trouble. I could sit and watch this movie once a day, every day. Twice on my days off.

He Ate The Cheesy Fiesta Potatoes, And Then He Wore Them

I have an 18-month-old little boy, and the other day, he tried cheesy fiesta potatoes from Taco Bell. I think the title of this blog post pretty much says it all.



The Silent Willies

Last night, I attended WCCT's annual Willie Award Ceremony. I had a good time with many of my wonderful friends I have made over the past nearly four years and two I made just over a year ago! Before I attended the event, I bought a small bouquet for my favorite nominee. When Megan and I arrived at the Little Theatre, I was shocked to see that Carol had already taken care of our \$15.00 admission. Thanks, Carol but it wasn't really necessary. I got a table toward the front of

the house: one of only two tables that would sit Travis, Mary, Carol, Megan, and I. And later, the Dukeage crashed our small party. But it was all good... love ya, Cathy Dukes!

The evening's entertainment featured our hostesses in prerecorded bits as mimes. Between each of the awards presented, a filmed scene in which they interviewed several Willie nominees was shown. The bit looked oddly familiar to me.

I really enjoyed the recognition of some of the foundation members of the theatre and the challenge to the younger members to take up the torch. I did not like the laundry list of nominees for many of the categories. It made it appear that if you were in a show, you were nominated. I realize that recognition is important, but really about half of the nominees were present.

OK... here is a list of the winners... congratulations to you all!

Best Male Cameo

Denver (Bullfrog...Honk)

Best Female Cameo

Marylyn (Mrs. Harper, *Miracle on 34th Street*)

Best Supporting Actor

Denver (the role and show fail me... sorry, but I will guess Phillip, *The Lion in Winter*)

Best Supporting Actress

Sharon (Sister Clarissa, *Over the Tavern...* YEAH, MOM)

Best Actor

Gene (Kris Kringle, *Miracle on 34th Street*)

Best Set

Little Shop of Horrors

President's Awards

Crystal and Shelley (The Weekenders)

Bob ("for wearing a teddy" in a previous season)

Best Show

The Lion in Winter

Congratulations on a great season and may 2010 bring another year of great shows.



Learning The HARD Way

This guy learned the hard way that there was no escape from Lake County Illinois Sheriff's deputies. He fled from a courtroom, trying to escape, and well, it didn't go quite as planned..

Oops, I didn't have the time to try to figure out how to embed this video, so [click here to see it.](#)

Pants On The Ground

Just in case you haven't heard the new singing(?) sensation that is 63 year old Larry Platt and his soon to hit the late night talk show circuit hit, you are in for a rollicking treat. I know that the age limit for American Idol is 28, but somehow sometimes the producers allow gimmicks such as Mr. Platt to slip through to perform for the judges. This season's big news is the departure of Paula Abdul and the coming of Ellen DeGeneres after the completion of the audition process and the arrival to Hollywood. Once again, it sounds like the acid wit of Simon Cowell might be exiting after this, the 9th season, of the show. Personally, I don't think it will be as much of a ratings juggernaut without him.

Easy Money

How I wish I were talking about real life, but 'Easy Money' is the title of a board game we've recently discovered. As you may have read in the past, my husband and I collect board games. We used to go to thrift stores and pick up any games we saw that were missing from our collection. We fashioned ourselves a large game closet where we keep them all, and there are some games in there that we haven't yet had the chance to try. A few weeks ago, we pulled out the board game Easy Money and gave it a whirl – we all loved it!

According to the instructions, the first thing you do to prepare the game is to count out millions of dollars (fake of course, but still too bad) and bundle them into various amounts. This does actually add a fun element to the game; for some reason, it's much more fun to bet a million dollar bundle than it is to wager a million dollar bill – go figure. Had we purchased this game new, we would have had to do all the money-bundling ourselves, and knowing our general lack of patience, we might have quit right there. But we're glad we purchased this game used since all of the money had been pre-bundled for us. What I don't understand, however, is why the people who bundled all the money then got rid of the game, especially without seeming to play it much given the game's relatively good condition. Once the bundles of money are made, each player takes his or her turn, all moving the same pawn around the board until the bank runs out of money. Each player follows the instructions on the space they land upon, and usually some sort of gambling or betting is involved. I really like the game's Lottery concept, but the Wall Street spaces are not my favorite. I've played 3 games of Easy Money, and the Lottery was responsible for letting me win 2 of

those games at the very last minute. When someone lands on the Wall Street space, every player has to predict whether the market will go up or down and bet accordingly. Since the chances of winning the Wall Street bets are 50-50, you'd think I would have made some money. But I have some sort of terrible Wall Street luck, and I'd bet (pun intended, hehe) that I've only won the Wall Street gamble under 5 times throughout all 3 games I've played. I take it in stride though, the rest of the game is so fun and great for the whole family. Its only negative is the fact that it only accommodates up to 4 players, therefore it is not a contender for the crowded game nights we have with friends.