

Christmas Traditions

Celebrating Christmas could include food, family, friends, and gifts. Additional Family traditions could have a mandatory attendance to a Christmas Eve Service.

Our family traditions have been ongoing since the day after Thanksgiving. That was when it was 'allowed' to start thinking about Christmas. We could start to break out the Christmas music, movies and decorations. The stockings were hung up, with care, by Dec 6th. Small gifts, some candy and maybe a bit of fresh fruit would fill the stocking. Usually a Christmas ornament would arrive in the stocking, and it could then be hung on the tree.

For the past few years, most traditions have gone by the wayside. As a family we would still hang up the stockings on 6th, small gifts would be placed there. The Decorations of the past just don't make their appearance. Certain things still show up. We watch many versions of Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. There are the many other Christmas movies. And as my children grow up and start their own lives, they get to start their own traditions.

Families expand and contract. Traditions come and go. To share life, love, troubles and sadness are ways to bypass all traditions. In that sharing we find peace and hope.

To you and yours in this season. May you find what you need and have what is required. Merry Christmas.

Merry Christmas!

I haven't really felt up to blogging lately (one of those major life change things – NOT one of the good ones and NOT something I'm going to discuss on a blog right now), but I couldn't let the holidays go by without sending good wishes to everyone (anyone?) who still reads my on-hiatus blog. Bear with me, I'll probably be back soon. Here's to hoping 2010 is better than 2009!

Have a very merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year!

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:14

I had to share this.

I'm stealing this, but I thought it was funny.

I had a flat tire on interstate 80, so I eased my car over to the shoulder of the road, carefully got out of the car and opened the trunk. I took out 2 cardboard men, unfolded them and stood them at the rear of my car facing oncoming traffic. They look so life like you wouldn't believe it!

They are in trench coats exposing their nude bodies to the approaching drivers.

To my surprise, cars start slowing down looking at my lifelike men which made it safer for me to work at the side of the road.

And of course, traffic starts backing up. Everybody is tooting their horns, yelling and waving like crazy. It wasn't long before a state trooper pulls up behind me.

He gets out of his car and starts walking towards me. I could tell he was not a happy camper!

‘What’s going on here?’

‘My car has a flat tire’, I said calmly.

‘Well, what the hell are those obscene cardboard men doing here by the road?’

I couldn’t believe that he didn’t know..

So I told him, ‘Helloooooo, those are my Emergency Flashers.

Where are you?

Just wondering where you are. Do you realize I’m writing about you? Are you one of my normal readers who hasn’t replied? Are you another blogger who hasn’t written anything in ages? What is going on? Do you know you are missed?

I’m just sitting here wondering about all the places I tend to visit. I’m also not a good one to make myself known on other sites. I slip in, read a bit, and then slip right out. Sometimes this is known as lurking. So yes, I lurk. There are times that something on other sites will peak my interest and I will respond. I should do it more often.

If I’ve visited your site in the past, and you visit mine, maybe we can just say hi. This is a place for others to say hi to me. I will try to return the favor.

Have a good holiday season, whatever holiday you celebrate at this time of year.

A New Miracle

Since none of the channels I get are bothering to show the glorious original 1947 version this year, I decided to spend my nine dollars on the *Miracle of 34th Street* DVD. There is a treasure trove of added features including a very rare 1955 broadcast on the [“20th Century Fox Hour of Stars”](#) of yet another adaptation. I found it very well done for the limited 45 minute run time. There were of course deletions from the original but there was one scene that was in this adaptation that I saw for the first time on the stage: Mr. Sawyer giving his speech on the evils of myth at Susan’s Progressive School.

There were also a few behind the scene stories that were very informative:

- The filming of the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade was the real McCoy filmed on Thanksgiving Day, 1946. This was the second parade given following its hiatus during WWII.
- Edmund Gwenn (who played Kris Kringle and won the Best Supporting Actor Oscar in the original) was Santa at the end of the parade.
- Many of the interior scenes for Macy’s Department Store were actually filmed at the flagship store during the holiday season. WOW! Imagine the chaos that must have caused! An identical duplicate was recreated on a Hollywood sound stage in the event that some scenes needed to be redone.
- Both R.H. Macy and the Gimbel Brothers loved the film much to the delight of the filmmakers.
- The film was released in June, 1947. Fox did not want audiences thinking they were going to a film about the Christmas season in the summer so in its publicity

campaign, scenes were carefully selected that would not draw attention to the fact. The risk paid off and "Miracle" became a hit that ran in theatres for an unheard of 6 month stand.

A holiday treasure that teaches everyone that "faith is believing in something when common sense tells us not to." Isn't that what Christmas is all about?

My life is in the theater.

I guess I really don't have much of a life now. My daughters are mostly out on their own, so I spend my life going from one show to the next.

I tried for and got a role in the show "Dearly Departed". I get to play Rev. Hooker. Fun name and a fun role. We just finished a read through for the show tonight. Three times on stage as this character and one more as another. Yep, multiple roles again. It should be a lot of fun. This will be a very fun show.

Not sure what I will be doing after this show, so I guess I just go with this for a while.

That Which You Take With You

Is only what you put into it. I don't know if it is the play, the cast, the character, the direction, but it is probably the whole lot combined into one that makes a production completely worthwhile. *It's A Wonderful Life* is so brilliant because it tells the tale of an everyman who is shown that one person can indeed make a difference to those people around him. I humbly submit that everyone involved in this production set out to and accomplished this in extraordinary fashion, Through all the hard work, goofiness, talent, and everything, each member of the cast, crew, direction team put their hearts into it and hopefully it came through in the splendid audiences we had each performance. If I made even one audience member hate my

take on the “Evil” Henry F. Potter then I did exactly what I set out to do. As Mother Bailey so frequently intoned “You’re a Mean One, Mr. Grinch!”

I don’t care what show it is, how many lines I have, or how long I am on stage, I ALWAYS find it so Darn hard to break away. Two weeks were definitely not long enough for this show. I loved all the carts, pictures (Jeff’s portrait *Chance of a Lifetime* truly captured the image of Stewart and Reed). Even the card addressed to “The Evil One” from my Traitorous Secretary was beautiful.

Now... a few tidbits from the history of the movie, itself:

- Lionel Barrymore (Mr. Potter) convinced Jimmy Stewart to accept the role of George Bailey, despite Stewart’s feeling that he was not up to it so soon after WWII)
- Mary was Donna Reed’s first starring role.
- Lionel Barrymore also played Rasputin (hmm... something to shhot for?)
- Instead of “Auld Lang Syne” the original ending was supposed to be “Ode to Joy”
- The film was voted “Most Inspirational Film of All Time” and “Most Powerful Film of All Time” by the American Film Institute.

So there we have it... the end of a Wonderful Show with a Wonderful Cast, Wonderful Crew, Wonderful Direction and Producing, and most importantly... **WONDERFUL AUDIENCE! THANK YOU ALL FOR MAKING THIS TRIP TO POTTERSVILLE SO MEMORABLE!**

I almost forgot about the donuts in the wheelchair. If you missed them they were something which “George” will take with him.

The End Of A Wonderful Show

Well.. "Once again we have saved humanity as we know it. And the good news is they are not going to prosecute." (Anyone care to take a stab at that?)

Today wrapped up one of my favorite stage roles and experiences. Although I have become almost used to a one weekend run this year, it is going to be really hard to close the two week run of this show. The cast, crew, direction, producing for this Wonderful production was top notch. I got to work with two awesome friends I have made this year and a few others who were there at the beginning back in January. So thanks especially to Travis, Mary, Greg, and Dawn. Lots of laughs along with the hard work!

This afternoons crowd was superb! Potter kept drawing laughter from the crowd thanks to a few WCCT regulars. Such great accolades... seriously did I really deserve them? "George" even mentioned that he had a rough time during our first scene together. But one of the crowd mentioned that I was spot on in every aspect. Vocalization, presence, command, total characterization.

After peeling some tape off the stage floor and helping load some flats onto the truck, I went upstairs to the costume room to help organize a bit. A picture was taken that I will let the photographer share and that is as far as I'll go with that. Then, we had leftovers from our Friday night feast.

Closing thoughts in my next post.

A New Week... A New Goon

Well... Friday night began our final weekend of performances and this was another dandy. My goon had to take over the lights and sound, so I had to hire a new man. Good help is sooo hard to find. I am happy to say that my new employee did an admirable job... except for one moment when I had to crack the whip and prod him a bit faster by ad libbing a line. All of my friends and family who came tonight loved the show and again I was booed. As long as I know that it is for a good reason, then I think the jeers are almost as good as getting cheers.

After the curtain fell on our fourth performance, Mare led another small group on the nickel tour of the Huber. Including a few people who just moved to the area from Ft. Wayne where one of them worked at the glorious Embassy Theatre (I have not been there for years).

Finally, it was time to feast at the cast party. And what a cast party... catered Italian spread: lasagna, fettucini alfredo, bread, salad, and (as is typical) more than enough desserts. Leftovers for tomorrow. We presented Trav with his director's gift of a nice copy of *Tom Sawyer* among other trinkets.

There was one minor technical glitch. Somehow, during the off time, the sign that magically changes from "You Are Now In Bedford Falls" to "Pottersville" became damaged and did not work for tonight's show.

Once again, thanks to everyone: cast, crew, director, producer, and most of all.. Wonderful audience members for another tremendous show!

A birthday today

My daughter had a birthday today. She spent most of the day working. Her first birthday celebrated as a part of a married couple. I'm not sure if she got any presents today. I don't know if she had cake or chocolate. My gift to her is still with me until I get a chance to see her.

Even with all of this, and maybe none of that. I hope she had a good day. Happy birthday little girl.