

# This & That

It seems that the addition one of our newest [tangenteers](#) (I see a newer addition... but it has been years since I have taken a French class) I am quickly falling behind in my posts (although she does have a few hundred to catch me ☐ ).

Yesterday, I noticed real progress in the continuing dissolving of my blood clot. I still feel it... not really painful but it is still keeping me at a slow clip. Madame Peters was in tonight (haven't seen her since the day before I went to the doctor nearly two or THREE (?) months ago. I assured her that I am recovering nicely... however slowly. But I will be back to my 3-4 mile walks 3 times a week before long. Telling myself that I will be able to do the things I really enjoy doing in time helps with the psychological.

My recital with the rest of K's students is less than 4 weeks away. Memorizing my very wordy but very fun piece is challenging but I am really close. I have nailed down a fine female to do the bit with and once she completes her run in *The Wedding Singer*, we will get together and get 'r done.

Well... that is all... My food is probably over done and I have to watch *The Office* which I DVR'ed... Michael Scott's farewell is looming. I think next week is the extended special episode.

Is this the moment when the series will "Jump the Shark?" How will Will Ferrell fare in the new role? Time will tell.

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## Remember Your First Time

Yes, I very fondly remember my first time seeing Andrew Lloyd Webber's [The Phantom of the Opera](#). It was on a Saturday afternoon in October 1990 at the Auditorium Theatre at

Roosevelt University (ok... so I had to check the Stagebill for the official venue name) in Chicago the day after our marching band performed it's halftime show featuring the music of the phenomenon.... complete with Phantom masks and capes. Tonight, as the family gathered at one of the first high school productions ever produced, I was taken back to that day 20 years ago. In the row in front of me sat a woman who turned around and asked if I was one of Emily Curtis' students. I very proudly stated that indeed I was and still am. The woman (who was a dear friend) told me that Ma2 spoke very highly of me on several occasions. We both told how much we dearly miss her. I knew that I was in for a memorable, magical evening.

I do not believe that I have ever seen a professional production of any show before I saw a high school production of the same. It has been many years since I have seen Phantom on stage (the movie does not do the musical justice AT ALL) so there were some things that I did not remember. But everything about tonight's production was shockingly gorgeous.

The set design was phenomenal. My favorite piece was the bridge used during the "Don Juan Triumphant" scene. It honestly looked like it could have been used as the barricade in *Les Miserables*. The graveyard scene ("Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again") was dark and mysterious with just a faint glow of moonlight (but no fireballs thrown by the Phantom ☹).

I was also impressed with the illusion of the Phantom and Christine's journey to the lair beyond the lake.

The young thespians on stage when PHENOMENAL. The leads both began taking voice lessons a year ago in preparation for auditions and it certainly showed. The title character had an extraordinary range. I was on stage with the young man in my first Village Players production (*Meet Me in St. Louis*) and he has come A LONG WAY since then. Every time I have seen Phantom, I measure the quality of the production on one thing: the amount of goosebumps I get when he sings his signature

song "Music of the Night." Needless to say, the high school JUNIOR nailed it!

The actress playing the role of Christine in ANY show must have a wickedly outrageous voice. The runs in tonight's delivery of "Think of Me" were crazy good.

I must say that my least favorite character in the show is the third leg of the triangle: Raoul, Vicomte de Changy. He always seems to me to be a whiner. But again, a fine performance.

NOW for the real stars of the show: Msrs. Firmin and Andre, the theatre owners. They are the comic relief that holds the show together and their timing as well as their voices were impeccable. The outrageous "Notes" and "Prima Donna" pieces in which there are like 50 melodies at one time (ok... not THAT many) were handled very nicely. In younger days, I would have so gone out for the big two roles; however, after a little high school show that I was in (not a post about my on stage experiences), I definitely know which roles I am so suited for.

If I had one complaint, it is what could not be done in this production. Do not go to be blown away by HUGE theatrical spectacle. Some of the big stage pieces simply are not possible on a stage and budget of a small school and most are there (just no fireballs). Yet, if any school in my little corner of the world could pull it off, it was this one at the most glorious setting we have to offer.

My 6 year old nephew's favorite scene: "the dummy who dropped from the ceiling on the noose." Ok, that was enough for him who slept through the last 10 minutes.

Yes, a small school CAN produce extraordinary things. Thank you to the lady in front of me for taking me back 20 years and making me remember how special my own "Angel of Music" is to me. Emily would have been ecstatic!

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# Seemed Like Old Times

Last week, our primary nighttime closer turned in her two-week notice. I was called into the cubby to discuss the issue. "You have another opportunity coming your way." An opportunity that I DO NOT WANT! I came out and told my employer that once my leg is fully healed, I am going to look for another job suited toward not only my gifts but also my epiphany of the last month or so. I also told her that my outside commitments would not allow me to close 5-out-of-7 nights. I think I am so at the point where I am almost burned out by retail. I don't know what it is. I love interacting with people but I really want something different.

I guess my feelings on the matter were not taken into account as I will be closing every day I work (interfering with everything I am involved in outside of the store... board meetings, voice lessons, however my Sunday schedule will allow me to attend church). But I am not complaining since this is the best I have at the moment. I do have another week to hopefully arrange something with my vocal coach since I do have a recital for which I have a female lined up to perform a number with.

The boss has hired another adult. Someone I am well acquainted with since she worked with me not only the last time I was at the store but also at the ol' Wal\*Mart. I got to refresh her in some areas of the store... grinding meat, reducing meat, a little on the register, and a few other things.

Perhaps she will be inheriting some of these closing nights once she becomes better refreshed and more acclimated to the new owners. Making an observation and not complaining but if

I were managing a store with no more than 15 total employed, I would ask if it was acceptable to change someone's schedule so dramatically, especially when the person affected has had a prior commitment approved on Thursday nights for nearly a year. Some sort of compromise could still be reached.

Really not upset. This just reaffirms my belief that there is something out there just waiting for me to grab hold of.

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## Welcome to the 2011 Season

I was planning to do this yesterday amid all the fanfare of Opening Day but in all the excitement, I totally forgot!

Excitement that built itself up until 1:05PM: The Tigers and the Bombers were standing on their respective baselines. The young lady sang the National Anthem. And then suddenly and without warning there was this "**TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN!**" It must have been a freak occurrence as I heard nothing about it from anywhere else but it got very dark, I couldn't see a thing and moments later when it got light again, the Detroit Tigers and New York Yankees were **BLACKED OUT!** What a way to spoil a perfect opening day. I was informed that the game was on the Detroit feed of FOX Sports, unfortunately, we do not have the service. I do have the ESPN app on my ipod which allows me to get updates which was no where near as fun as watching or listening, but it sufficed. And the "EVIL EMPIRE" (cue the "Imperial March") pulled off a 6-3 victory!

Warmer weather may be yet to come but the MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL SEASON has begun (for some). No matter who you root for good luck to all teams in a fun, exciting, safe, and SCANDAL FREE 6 month run! Number 28 and what is this UNDERDOG stuff!



OK... so the video is a few seasons old but it was the best I could come up with featuring the theme.

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## **It Was The Rat Poison**

Last night, I FINALLY was up to attending a great game night with marvelous friends and one newcomer (a newcomer to me although, he had been to at least the Super Bowl extravaganza, I believe. My first game night in three months was full of laughs and great times. I got to see dear friends I have not seen since New Years or before and this also helped my continued progress. Laughter and wonderful times with some of my closest compadres is indeed the best medicine... better than rat poison, that is for sure.

I also got to see the four kids (plus two tagalongs which one of our regular game nighters brought along). Poor Beebs definitely was NOT feeling up to his normal self. The other little ones played on the Kinect system... something which I think looks interesting in the near future.

After the merriment of the evening wound down (about 12:30), I set out to make the 12 mile trek home. Before I even left town, I was traveling along and all of a sudden, a raccoon jumped out in front of me. Instinctively, I swerved and crossed the yellow line. Unbeknownst to me, one of B-town's finest was right behind me and turned on his red and blue lights.

*"Did you see the raccoon I had sicced on you?"*

Indeed I had! Apparently, the town has gained quite a surplus

of the critters... living in the sewers until they plot their take over. Sounds like a bad B-movie to me. The friendly officer and I engaged in a conversation about any future theatrical endeavors I have coming up which led to the tale of my 3 month journey. After my identity was confirmed and I was not deemed a known terrorist, I was sent on my way. Good thing I did not indulge in the wine that was brought to our night of fun! I don't think it would be good to mix with the rat poison, anyway. ☐

**THEN**, I got back home and learned that the Buckeyes were defeated by two points by Kentucky with a buzzer beating shot. So much for my bracket... and I was doing so well for my first time ☐

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## **BOY DID I NEED THAT!**

My adventures for the week have been very rewarding and gratifying. Monday, I went to a board meeting of which I have not been since January ☐ Everyone was happy to see me and inquired about my well-being and progress. Slow but sure and gimping along but progressing however little. After the meeting, C,L, and I went to dinner and had a nice, engaging conversation that entailed a lot of topics not the least of was some possibilities about my next great adventure. One **VERY PROMISING** possibility will depend upon my current manager. Since I seem to see her less and less frequently, I left her a message informing her of the possibility. I just pray that she makes a decision that will be beneficial to both of us. I told her I will not pursue anything until I am as close to 100% as possible.

Today, I went to my first voice lesson in three months. I was



immediately bombarded by two adorable boys. One who kept regaling me with jokes typical of a three or four year old.

By the time the 6 year old was read to whoop me at Battleship, it was time to begin my lesson. I did AMAZINGLY well for sitting in a chair... of course, I tried to sit with correct posture. But I narrowed my recital choices to two.

One requires a female to join me. K informed me that there are a few of her other students who would be up to the challenge but she hesitated to have a teenager perform the number with a 30 something. So, she allowed me to try finding a guest performer. Very fun piece while just a bit challenging. I can think of a few ladies I would enjoy performing with.

So... while still gimping along, the two days venturing around helped immensely! Being with great friends and doing what I love to do definitely helped! Just learning to accept the fact that it is a talent which I need to begin to share more and more. One of the many gifts I have been told that I possess which can only come from Above. Thank Him for that!

PLUS... as an added plus, I got to catch up with a GREAT friend from my WM days. Via facebook on which I found her a few weeks ago. Go to chat a bit, discuss lots of things including the dismissal of our former boss which seems to be interesting yet surprising all at once.

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## Best In Film

Seriously, how many different groups must we listen to in order to determine what is the best film of all time? We already have the periodic AFI specials. Tonight we had another group telling us which was supposed (I believe) to

take the popular vote into account. One of several genres I caught was "Best Musical." Of course, I had to comment on that one. I took umbrage with the five choices and their placement. Now we have "Best Kiss?" OH< PLEASE! Back to the topic at hand...

### Best Musical:

- *West Side Story (1961)* I don't believe that there has ever been a more celebrated movie musical... winner of 10 Academy Awards. The Romeo and Juliet story told amidst the backdrop of gang infested New York City. Elvis was offered the lead role of Tony; however, turned it down because he thought it would tarnish his image if he were associated with a film that dealt with violence. Fascinating, since one of his earliest films, *King Creole*, dealt with just that. I, personally would have placed this one higher.
- *Singin' in the Rain (1952)* **Classic, CLASSIC, CLASSIC!** Gene Kelly dancing and singing with a 103° temperature while being drenched by a mixture of water and milk (because water alone did not show up well enough). My favorite scene, Donald O'Connor's "Make Em' Laugh" song and dance.
- *The Wizard of Oz (1939)* **WHAT!!!! Totally missed out on this one!** Especially when you look at the next two. One tidbit I was not aware of: at times, Judy Garland could not stand working with Toto because his breath was so awful. Help me out, Taylhis... have you heard THAT one?!
- *Grease (1978)* While I do enjoy a viewing from time to time, this one gets on my nerves. Maybe it is from all the times my siblings and I were allowed to stay up past our bedtimes to watch it on a school night... maybe it was the drama of a certain community theatre's production. Definitely voted too high... should have been #5 at best. Well... at least the horrendous *Dirty Dancing* was not in the top 5. I guess there are some who consider it a

musical.

- *The Sound of Music* (1965) The most profitable movie musical of all time. With inflation taken into account, it has made over \$1 billion placing it third all time behind *Gone with the Wind* and the original *Star Wars*. I would have a hard time deciding between this and *Oz* as the top musical. Both are personal favorites.

At least they got the "Top Action Film" correct. *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. No bloody Indiana Jones and the... placed before the title. When did they add that, anyway? I dunno... would anyone be game for a fifth installment? Harrison Ford would be if the story was right. Just do away with Indy's son.

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# Feeling Adventurous

I'm not sure if it was the 60<sup>o</sup>+ weather of the past weekend (sure felt good) or just the idea of a little return to normalcy (whatever that is) but I have decided that this week I am going to set out on a few of the things I have been missing out on. Last Friday, I ventured out to get my first refill on my meds. A 90 day fill up... I guess I really am going to be on it for A LONG TIME, but it is for the best.

Later this afternoon, I am going to attend my first FCF board meeting since this all began (back in January... I refuse to miss more than 2). I am so excited to be able to get back and help get one of my favorite shows rolling along. I have finally come to the conclusion that thinking too much about auditioning for either [The Wizard of Oz](#) OR [Annie](#) (at another area theater) needs to take a backseat until I am 100% ready to go. Even then, I really want to focus on what lies ahead after I reach that goal. Still thinking about what that is going to be.

Thursday, I am going to my first voice lesson since January. K informed me that I picked the perfect time to do so. Her students are preparing for their annual recital and she was hoping that I would be back on my feet ready to go by then. I will pass along the details once I am confident that I will be strong enough to participate. God and everyone else knows I want to be but I am still being a bit realistic. It has nothing to do with my vocal ability; hopefully, my physical ability will be there as well.

**AND FRIDAY... MY FIRST GAME NIGHT SINCE JANUARY!** I cannot wait until I see some of my friends whom I have not seen since the start of 2011. Even those I have seen since. Hopefully, I

can convince a little buddy of mine that I do not live in the hospital. ☐

Goal setting and pushing forward just a bit surely will not impede my progress. After all... the doctor wanted me to go back to work the day after I was released from the hospital.

And in all this time, I forgot to wish my fellow Tangenteers a HAPPY THIRD BIRTHDAY! It has been a very fun and at times thought-provoking adventure and I truly enjoy continuing to get to know some of my best friends even better through their life experiences and thoughts! And WELCOME TO SPRING... it HAS been a long winter.

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## **A Change Is Comin'**

As I was reading the newspaper this morning, I found that some universal changes will be made in the Catholic church (which will be fully integrated by November at the beginning of Advent, the season when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ). As an area priest noted, these changes will not be as dramatic as those that took place in the late 1960s. Most of these new changes will be seen in the responses spoken after blessings and some of the words spoken in prayers. From what I gather, these changes are meant to reflect the translation from Latin.

I have noticed a lot of word changes in our hymnals. Our organist has two humongous binders which are held together by duct tape that must date back 20 years. For every season, we get new song books and sure enough there are a handful of songs which have words changed. Most are little things such

as a "man" changed to "all."

*OLD:*

*We are the light of the world. May our light shine before man.*

*NEW:*

*We are the light of the world. May our light shine before all.*

May not seem like much, but we must follow what is in the new book or the congregation might choose to not join in song... those who do choose to join □ BRAINSTORM! Why not have a screen in front of the church display the words? Not sure if I have ever seen a Catholic church use audio/visuals in quite this way but I often find that the book gets in the way at times... esp. when I lead which is why I like to memorize the pieces as much as possible. WAIT! The church we visited when we spent the weekend visiting my oldest brother while he was in college used such a display.

By the way... i know that no one is infallible, but the local newspaper has made two big goofs in the last week. Last week, our sectional champion boys' basketball team was honored with a picture of LAST YEAR'S TEAM. The caption was for the current team but the photo included players who graduated last year. Today's paper included a photo of the interior of "Sacred Heart Church" when it was clearly "St. Mary's." Unless of course, the churches are identical in every way. I'm sure I have been inside Sacred Heart at least once but that was 20 something years ago.

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# The Spider Or The Potter

Last week saw yet another delay in the [Spider-Man](#) musical opening. Not only another delay but a new creative team was brought in to take control of the astronomical catastrophe (ok... I had to leave that... I honestly thought it was a -y and not catastrophe... this coming from someone who misspelled p-a-j-a-m-a-s in the 6th grade spelling bee ☹ ). Nine years in the making and in previews for months! I'll say it again... sometimes it is best to leave things in the mediums they were meant to be. Comic books, cartoons, live action television (remember that?), movies... live theatre (?). By the time this mess is ever (IF ever) straightened out, it might be Spectacular to look at but will it mean anything beyond the \$65 million dollar+ price tag? In any case, opening night has been pushed back to sometime in the next decade (or is it this summer).

In other theatre news, Daniel Radcliffe is in previews for his singing and dancing debut in the 50th anniversary revival of the Frank Loesser classic, [How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying](#). The show itself may be extremely dated but I was fortunate enough to see the last Broadway revival in the mid 1990s. It was a fun show that I could see being done in community theatres in my neck of the woods. Perhaps by the time the rights become available again, these theatres will not be so turned off from staging musicals more than once every two years or so ☹

Why would a 21 year old straight from completing one of the most lucrative film franchises in history, choose such an undertaking? As I understand it, the former boy wizard wanted a real challenge. No dance experience, little vocal training, so maybe it was the name (KIDDING... I'd rather see a 50 year old revival than a NEW show that has been stuck in a rut for half a year with no end in sight no matter the premise).

Break a leg, Dan!