

In His Hands

The next few weeks will not be easy ones. This morning, we learned that my "Aunt" Lu's (my Uncle Bob's current wife) mother passed away last night. A very long-lived lady... sweet as anything who lived a very prosperous life (91 years young with 12 kids, I think). She was a huge fan of the WCCT and she would come to shows quite often either with Lu or Father Fred. I remember that following *Grease*, she and Lu came to the basement to say Hi. She was also the Grandmother of one of my best friends.

Yesterday, we learned that Aunt Carol (Bob's first wife) is nearing the end of her long fought battle with cancer. Definitely will be very hard this one. Care givers were at her house with my cousins and the rest of her family to prepare them (as much as can be expected anyway.. can anyone really be prepared?) I'm not really sure how long she has been fighting, but it has been a great while in and out of remission until finally there is no more that can be done except to pray for Carol. So many great memories growing up, spending the night with my cousin until it was deemed inappropriate for Alicia and I to stay over at each others house (I think I was 8). At get togethers, we would always devise a plot whereby we would con the parents into allowing this. Very few people refer to me as "James" but I got so used to it that I expected Carol to address me as such. I remember a Christmas gift she gave me a few years back in a large envelope with "For Your Eyes Only" printed on the front. You will have to use your imagination to determine what was inside and it had nothing to do with the 12th 007 movie ☐

So... could be a rough few days ahead. Not the most opportune time of the year but I don't think there really is an appropriate time. But at least their suffering soon will be ended and will soon be in a much better place.

Modern Day Grinch/Scrooge/Mr. Potter

I think this real individual is NOW the king of the humbugs. Last weekend, a rather disgruntled gentleman shoved a Salvation Army bell ringer to the ground and stole the kettle that held the money passersby had dropped in. When he was apprehended, the person stated that he "hates Christmas and got tired of the ringing bell." So much for the mob of Black Friday last year who trampled a Wal-Mart employee to death.

MAUMEE, Ohio (AP) – A man who claimed to hate Christmas shoved a Salvation Army bell ringer to the ground and swiped one of the charity's red kettles stuffed with hundreds of dollars, police said.

The bell ringer, an unemployed woman, tried to pull the kettle away from the man Saturday evening, but he pushed her down and said, "I can't stand you and your bell-ringing. I hate Christmas," police said. The bell ringer chased him into a store parking lot before he tossed the kettle into the back of a stolen pickup truck and sped away, police said.

An empty kettle was found a day later. Police arrested Shawn Krieger of Toledo on Monday morning and charged him with robbery.

The Salvation Army estimated that the kettle held \$500 to \$700.

The bell ringer, whose name hasn't been released, had been collecting money outside a general store for most of the day when she was shoved from behind, said Capt. Steven Lopes, coordinator of the Salvation Army in northwest Ohio.

"She was so upset," Lopes said. "She was concerned that she wouldn't be allowed to bell-ring anymore. We want her to continue."

Krieger, 44, walked by the bell ringer at least twice before he made a grab for the money, said police Sgt. Jeff Siebenaler.

No witnesses have come forward even though the store was crowded, he said. "These things happen so fast sometimes people don't know what they saw was a crime occurring," Siebenaler said.

One shopper wrote down the truck's license plate number, and others consoled the bell ringer, who suffered a small cut when she tugged at the kettle, Lopes said.

Evidence inside the stolen truck, which was found in Toledo, led police to Krieger, Siebenaler said. Krieger could face more charges for the stolen vehicle, Siebenaler said.

Krieger was being held Monday on \$25,000 bond. The judge will assign a public defender to his case.

Not everyone likes the holiday season but what a hideous way to display it. Coal is too good to put in this man's stocking.

Tech Sunday

WAIT A MINUTE! Isn't this a week early?! We still have another full week and a few days before curtain. Weell... that may be but the Huber is always in a bind this time of year:

school programs, civic gatherings, etc. So, we must share the space with others. Mr. Potter would definitely find this situation downright despicable. But, I guess we will make nice. Yes, we did have the lights and mics going for the first time four our nearly 4 hour rehearsal... which was to be expected. However, it went rather well for the first time on stage, off book, all the way through with lights, sound, and set thrown in. I was pleasantly surprised how well I did with the lines. There was only one spot I really noticed where I forgot a line but the same is repeated only two lines later, so I will just pick it back up Thursday night.

Poor George... I'm not entirely sure that I would like to be in his shoes. All those lines. I have a great many, but.. OH, MY! In one of our scenes together, he asked me why I did not have my script. It was in the house being used for prompting.

I am also happy that I have been able to come up with my full costume... minus a hat... in my own personal wardrobe. I had to take my jacket to be cleaned, but that is to be done by Tuesday afternoon... good to go!

I must say that I think we have another heart-melting, scene-stealing little tyke on our hands. It's a good thing Mr. Potter and Zuzu do not share time on stage because I'm not sure I could keep the mean demeanor.

So... another 12 days before curtain. Just need to keep reading over my lines, getting my cues in order. I did get a new line tonight... added from the movie

Back On The Hardwood

So much for retirement, eh? Tonight, my Uncle Bob returned to take command of yet another high school basketball team. He coached the high school girls for 12 years and retired. Last year, he co-coached the boys team and retired after the season ended. Finally last summer, he got the itch again while on the golf course and is now coaching the varsity girls team of his alma mater's biggest rival.

I really get a kick out of watching him perform. Very emotional, vocal, and BOY CAN HE PROJECT (of course, I have known that most of my life ☺)! Most of the family went to his return game tonight to support him... fun times, although... His team did well until the final act when the girls could not hit the broad side of a barn (the girls scored two points in the fourth frame) . The score was tied 28 a piece at the end of the third act and even through the first two or three minutes of the final period. I think the three pointer by the opposing team took a lot of the wind out of their sails. But as Uncle Bob said, they have a lot of work ahead of them.

Holiday Fun & Chaos

The chaos actually began Wednesday morning. Mom was working in the beauty shop... **UNTIL 11** at which time she wanted the kitchen. At ten, Dad decides it is the perfect time to strip the counter top off. Granted, it is pretty old, worn, and could stand be replaced... but the day before we have company over for Thanksgiving?! Oh, MY... am I glad I had to go to work from 12-9.

After my 9 hour shift, I returned to see him still at it. Mom

was already in bed, but I can imagine the scene at home. I would not want to have been there ☺ . At around 11.30, he decides it is good enough and **THEN** decides to run the vacuum. At 11.45, Mom comes out, gives him a dirty look, and walks back into the bedroom... nothing even needed to be said.

Thursday morning, I got up at 8 in time to shower, bring the table and chairs down from upstairs, then watch the Macy's parade. Ironically, my favorite part of the 3 hour extravaganza is not the floats, nor the balloons. It is watching the performers from Broadway shows and singing groups seeing how badly they can lip sync. Who is Boy Likes Girl? I must be getting really old! Did anyone see Gloria Gaynor and her 30 year old "I Will Survive?"

After the parade came (not the dog show) the traditional immediate family dinner. Ma and Pa, siblings and their families. I did not indulge too much because I had two other meals to attend. I did get to see Chad and his pumpkin pie (or was it Cool Whip with a bit of pumpkin).

After digesting a bit, I ventured to another gathering. I knew I had a good amount of time between the afternoon and evening gathering so I went to the home of my wonderful friends and had smoked turkey and other delicious food. We have never had smoked turkey, but I find it enjoyable. Carol brought a game that I swear I did not cheat at. I read a few cards without looking at the answer and put them in the back of the box. It's only cheating if you look at the answer ☺ And I was treated to The Potty Movie... thanks girls. I found it quite odd that a 3 year old had a strangely deep feminine voice.

Finally, I returned home for our traditional Thanksgiving celebration with my mother's family. In total, we probably had 20-25 people in the house. It's always good to be surrounded by family and loved ones but something about the holidays makes it even greater. Maybe it's the constant

ribbing Chad tries to dish out about sports but knows he is fighting a losing battle. Outnumbered about 16:1. But the Cowboys again won their gimme. Maybe that's why they always play on Turkey Day. Sorry I can't say the same for the Lions.

Finally, about 10, everyone was gone, tables and chairs put back. and I was pooped. I wanted to go back for a game night, but I did have to be at work at 6.30 this morning and I almost did not make that! Hope everyone had a great holiday giving thanks for the many blessings we receive every day!

Evilness IS Greatness

I believe we are now in our fourth week of rehearsals and still in the modified crampness that is the Huber's costume shop. BUT, we get the stage tomorrow night... **HOORAH!!!!** Tonight, we put everything together... blocking and lines, the whole show start to finish. Not too bad. Travis was very pleased with our efforts. One piece of advice was some of the casts dancing around on stage... which is always difficult the first couple times through... especially when it is a non-musical, non-dancing production. However, this comment did not apply to me for obvious reasons that will be made quite clear when you come see the show the weekends of December 11 & 18..

Personally, I am quite pleased with my evilness so far. I constantly hear references to "You're A Mean One, Mr. Grinch" and Scrooge... I still think Mr. Potter is even more sinister. I have one line that I just love and cast members have commented on my delivery. However, I need to look at my long passages. I get on a devilish roll and then blank out on a line, but I **AM OFF BOOK!**

Still needs work but once we get on the stage it will all come to greatness! And the [Village Players](#) NEW website is up and running... so check it out.. Although, I need to point out that on the online ticket ordering, only the first weekend is up.... something which [Webman](#) and I discovered A small glitch I forgot to mention to the director. Oh, Travis....

I almost forgot to mention the lovely drive home in the fine London fog that has only gotten worse as I make my way to watch the hilarious *I Love You, Man.* Good luck with the drive in the morning or the delay whichever comes your way.

Elementary Chinese Proverb

So after mass tonight, I took two lovely, entertaining young girls to watch me niece in her elementary school's production (not program as the director informed us before the curtain rose... the distinction is the mere formality of budget) of *Mulan, Jr.* I was really impressed by the entire production, the set design and costuming (for nearly 80 3rd-5th or is it 4th-6th grade... WOW!) was very well conceived especially for an elementary school show. The backdrop was a very impressive painting depicting Chinese mountain scenery. But the costumes were one of the highlights of the show. I'm not sure how many tailors were used but we were informed that they were all handmade.

For such a young cast, I was really impressed by some of the performers. My favorite was the evil leader of the Huns, Shan Yu. A tall, imposing figure dressed in black with his small entourage. His voice was also quite commanding.

I also thought that the young lady portraying Mulan had a very nice voice.

I must have been trying too hard to locate Elizabeth, but I still think the costuming was so well done that it was difficult to spot her. Taylor actually pointed her out to me. Oh, yeah... that's her in the purple robe!

There were also some miscues that were not entirely the cast's fault. A few times the miked performers were not heard because the sound tech failed to have them on. However, one young man must have been delayed in his entrance because I heard someone on stage whisper, "Where's ...?" Ah, the magic of live children's theatre. Overall, I really thought it was adorable and Taylor and Sammie seemed to enjoy themselves which made it even more worthwhile. Plus, they even brought a gift for our star. The Huber Opera House was filled to capacity (well... the main level) which was something I had not seen since *St. Louis*. I guess it is true what they say about audiences with children on stage, but **80!!!**

I also got a very early Christmas present. A blast from the past, actually. I know someone in my family had the Parker Brothers [Six Million Dollar Man](#) board game. I knew as soon as I saw the box that I had played it years ago. LOVE IT... **THANKS!** Plus we had time to play a quick game or three before the night ended.

SIX IN A ROW!

WOO HOO!!!! Game day party that seemed like a pre-Thanksgiving feast. I certainly ate like it was a feast... well, just call it another holiday! But OSU has now defeated the dreaded "Team from the North" six years in a row with an awesome 21-10 victory including an end zone interception turned TD on the Wolverines first series! Now.. outright Big Ten

Champs off to Pasadena on New Years Day!

Joshua, whom I was mildly surprised to see at the house, was anxiously awaiting kickoff time. At half-time, I challenged him to a good ol' game of the ORIGINAL Donkey Kong (not the newfangled Super Mario endless array, but the original quarter munching variety... on the Wii). I surprisingly defeated him. After that, we saw little of the 13 year old (so much for the football game).

Then, I learned that Jeff is planning to take Elizabeth to see the new Twilight movie tomorrow after her play wraps. Honestly, I don't get the hype... too much, I think. Maybe, one day I will sit and watch it to see what it's all about; it looks like a teenage, vampire meets girl with a werewolf best friend love triangle. I'll pass.

So, now off to church... then to watch my niece on stage with a couple other little ones.

GO BUCKS!!!!

Picard's Wonderful Life

I know that there have been many spins on the themes of *It's A Wonderful Life* and I revisited one of my favorites the other night. In *The Next Generation* episode "Tapestry," Captain Jean-Luc Picard lies in sickbay following a mortal wound sustained during a battle. While clinging to life, the good captain stands on the threshold to eternity where he is greeted by the wonderfully charismatic entity known as Q. The nearly omnipotent character offers Jean-Luc a choice: spend eternity by his side or return to the past and relive a life defining moment. If Jean-Luc changes the event, Q promises

him that nothing earth-shattering will come of it.

The event centers around an incident involving the young, brash, devil-may-care Ensign Jean-Luc Picard and two of his fellow Starfleet Academy friends. The trio is on starbase for one last hurrah before going their separate ways. After a game of chance, Picard's friend discovers that he has been cheated by a rather nasty Naussican and a bar fight ensues. At the end of the fight, Jean-Luc is stabbed through the heart (a feeling he laughs at), requiring him to receive an artificial replacement. Also involved is the relationship involving his female friend which may or may not be a regret.

Will Picard change the course of his life? What will happen if he does? Although he is "just not that important" to the universe as a whole, what changes will occur in his personal life? Or will he simply be lead off to an eternity of what must be his own personal hell with Q?

Week The Third

Ok... former director and current fellow cast member, this is for you (I expect a comment, btw ☺) Tonight began the third week of rehearsals and there was A LOT GOING ON! We have posters to distribute and I grabbed enough to paste all over E-town. We were all informed that Hicks-TV (or is it HIX=TV?) is going to be by tomorrow night to film a piece on the show. My aforementioned former director/current fellow cast member mentioned that this was her least favorite part of her directorial debut? I thought my debut on the news was a blast. Even Travis said it was very humorous as I threw the interviewer for a whirl. Here is a [link](#), Beth... just for you (you can have something to watch as well as read). I must

also commend our director in his continued efforts to step into multiple roles for missing cast members... male and female alike.

As for rehearsal, it is coming along quite nicely (which is subjective... I don't think nice is a good way to describe Mr. Potter). Apparently, my evilness is improving but he said I need to slow down a bit... which I have heard before. Well... as soon as my goon decides to show himself, it will be easier to make my entrances and exits. But even going through the scenes, I am developing even more ideas and with just under a month to go...

Oh, yes. On the way to my car following rehearsal, I was flashed by said cast member and she had her young son with her as well... SHAME ON YOU! I AM SHOCKED! ☐