

A Hug For The Hugs

Strange how the events of a few days can change the atmosphere around you. Just days after I was joyously welcoming the arrival of two special little ones, a life-long family of friends experienced not one, not, two, but three tragedies.

On Thursday, one of my dearest friends welcomed a new granddaughter. The moments Teresa got to spend with her son Cody, his girlfriend Carly and their baby Cori were very happy and will be remembered forever but very short-lived as she was taken home above only a few short hours after she was born.

Saturday morning after finishing shopping for my nephew and nieces' birthday, I found a message on Facebook asking if I had heard about Don. She had read on a family member's post that he had passed away. Before we confirmed it, we decided to find out for certain. A few moments later, I received a horrific phone call. I said a prayer to calm myself down before I called mom's cell phone.

Hours before Don's passing, the twin sister of Blake's (Jena's son) girlfriend was killed in a car accident.

Such great memories growing up with the Hug family:

- The family lived in this house until my parents bought it when I was about 6 months old. My poodle, Buffy was one of Digit's puppies and we took her out often so they could visit.
- I was always "Seah's" baby. Marilyn sat for the four of us quite often. In the summer, Teresa would take over. I even asked Don if I could marry her. On her wedding day, I went back before the ceremony to see her and she told me "Please, don't cry." I don't remember if I did or not (my memory fails me). While she lived in Ft. Myers, we would write to each other ON PAPER! Does anyone do that anymore? ☐ I was surprised when I rode

along with Marilyn and my mother to pick Teresa up from the airport for Jena's wedding. I believe the ruse was that they had to go do something with the wedding dresses.

- Sunday night caramel corn. I put this on Facebook and Chad confirmed it! I KNEW that I was not crazy.
- I believe that I am too young to remember but my oldest brother Jeff was with them at McDonalds. He wanted a cheeseburger his way (Just ketchup). He did not get it 'his way" and got sick. ALWAYS The picky eater ☐
- Like Teresa did with me, Jena took Christi under her wing and took her wherever she went whenever possible. My sister was the flower girl in Ron and Jena's wedding.

So many great memories and I'm sure that I have only scratched the surface. But what an indelible mark the Hug's have left on not only myself but on my entire family. God, please watch over Marilyn, Van, Teresa, Jena, and Tod and their families in these painful days. Lift up their spirits and let Don, Cori, and Mickae rest in peace. As Jena's daughter Cassandra once stated: "We are like family who rarely see each other but know they are there,

Love you all!

Many Blessings This Week

Today, I became an uncle yet again. Kyndal Grace Hazelton was born at 3:46pm weighing in at 7lbs 10oz and measuring 19.5".

It has been a long haul but she arrived safely. Calls at 12:30am... 3:00am...7:45am. Finally, Charnel's water was broken around 11 this morning. We have two little girls and a Bandit

sharing the house with us for the next few days. Two special healthy little ones arriving in less than a weeks time... [WHAT A BLESSING!](#)

A touch of sadness also. Ma2's mother passed away Saturday at the age of 88. But I am sure that Mrs. Foster is now with Emily and Mr. Foster in a place where there is no longer any pain or suffering. May HE watch over the family and may Jonathan return from his deployment safely.

I have the final piece of my Weekender gig coming soon. In the next four months, I will put the spit and polish to the lineup of "Songs I Have Learned" including finding 4 male voices to fill the finale out. One I have asked (any other interested gentlemen out there? Two other fellow tangenteers are (I will assume) out of the question. One from a distance perspective; the other admits that he "doesn't sing."



Sold Out Two Months Ahead

WOW! I learned at my weekly voice lesson that the local community theatre's production of *A Christmas Story* already has two dates sold out! Not sure if a show has had sold out dates two months ahead in this area, but this is the first I know of. K will be playing the role of Ralphie's mother and her little man will be playing a little boy... no lines but he is already being instructed to develop the character to give himself some business on stage.

Now that I am five months out from my weekend gig, I have

begun to plow through my books to find new things (or old things that are worth digging out) to not let my list become a lesson in tedium. I dug out a favorite that I have never before been able to get because of range... (guess which part gave me fits). Two octave range from a low A-flat to a floating high A-flat. Poor K was commenting from the keyboard on the 5 flat key to the 4 (or is it 5) sharp key. I probably should also pick some unfamiliar pieces just to take me out of my comfort zone. I also visited an old friend that will be a part of the evening. I really do not want to add too much to the program but if it goes from 45 minutes to 120 minutes before February... NAH! No one wants to see me on stage **THAT** long ☐

Date Set

Well... I finally set the date in which I will put on glorious display that which I have been concentrating on for sometime.

It is just less than 5 months away but it will be here before I know it. Even with this leg of mine the last 7 months have not been slow... although I am sure others would disagree ;). I checked the school calendar to see if there was a weekend when there was no school event going on so there would be no excuse for some to not attend ☐

[At my latest blood test on Monday, I was informed that the blood is right where it needs to be. Not too thick, not too thin, but just right. Just call me Goldilocks]

Why so long? I had a feeling there was going to be a wait with not one but two shows in October, the Christmas show in December, the awards night in January, and any other events scheduled in between so February was the first month

available.

In the meantime, I will dig through the books, find more material for future use, and focus on the program without making it stale. I was reminded of some of the splendiferous music from *West Side Story* the other night courtesy of "Glee."

Music, yes... choreography not so much. Plus, I suppose I can look back at the foreign pieces I had glanced at a few months ago. A small challenge.

I do see ads on television for *Jersey Boys* (the Frankie Valli and the 4 Seasons story... one of the few jukebox musicals I would like to see) set to play the Stranahan in February, too. Maybe it ISN'T that long away.

It All Began (AGAIN) Here

Twenty years ago, a resurgence of Star Wars began not on the big screen but on the printed page. Back in 1991, the franchise itself was in danger of becoming obsolete and forgotten. It had been 8 years since *Return of the Jedi* (long before the Special Editions and bloody prequels came along). Enter Lucasfilm Publishing who got the ball rolling and eventually leading to [Timothy Zahn](#) penning a three volume series chronicling the further adventures of Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Princess Leia, and all the rest following the events of the final film.

Yesterday, I finally received my copy of the 20th Anniversary edition of said novel: *Heir to the Empire*. It has been sometime since I have checked the novel out from the library.

The book itself is gorgeous featuring a silver-colored dustcover with the New Republic emblem prominently displayed.

Underneath the cover is a rendering of the original cover.

Inside in the introductory remarks, the author and his editor provide insight into the story behind the new trilogy.

Something new in the meat of the book is annotations by Zahn providing insight into the development of characters and events. Names of friends, acquaintances, and contest winners became a part of the Expanded Universe! I have not yet begun to read the story itself but was captivated by the anecdotes including some flack from fans the author took for introducing such "Earthly" items as hot chocolate into the SW universe.

Also a well-known Trek term was given some highlight but was quickly defended.

I must say that I am throughly enjoying the book and I haven't even started it yet!

Ok... ok... should I or shouldn't I comment on the OTHER big Star Wars event that happened yesterday. All right I will. For the first time, the entire cinematic saga (Episodes I-VI) are available on Blu-Ray. Personally, I have no problem with the release itself. I just grow weary of George Lucas changing the movies for each new release. I accepted the Special Edition releases of the original films prior to the much-inferior (IMHO) prequels. Now it seems that he adds pointless bits every 10 years or so. I agree with those who state that they are his movies and can do what he likes with them but do not like the "inclusion for the sake of inclusion." Aliens being included via the wonder of CGI that were not there before. And the most awful inclusion of all:

At Least The Party Was A Success

This afternoon, the family made the @ 2 hour trek to our cousin's home in Huron... not a "fur piece" from the Amazement Park.. in fact once we exited, we had the choice of turning left to go to DRM's or right to go to the Point. This time, the left turn (at Albuquerque) won out. ☐ I had never been to the house before as I seem to have been involved in one production or another when the birthdays arose. For some reason, I am not involved in any shows so I was really excited to make the trip! I must say that it is a very nice place.

Next time when there is not so much craziness, I will ask for the guided tour.

As usual, fun was had with some gentle ribbing among some and catching up with relatives and a friend I rarely get to see.

Almost 20 years since *Annie*! WHAAAATTT??!!!!!! Food glorious food. An abundance of pizza, ICE CREAM CAKE (one of the greatest inventions ever), and more. Something unusual in the festivities... a pinata in which you pull streamers instead of hitting the object with a stitch. Did someone see the youtube video of my brother attempting to hit Spongebob? Needless to say that the pulling of the streamers was a bit anticlimactic.

I must say that the 4 year old birthday girl made out like a bandit: Princess paraphernalia, My Little Pony (everything old is new again), the obligatory clothing, and a bicycle.

FUN TIMES!

While the merriment of celebration continued, the highlight of the evening turned out to be a lowlight. The Buckeyes played (if you want to call it that) abysmally. Listening to it on

the way home on the radio was bad enough, I would have hated to watch it. I read on my Nook most of the way (I was a passenger in the car not the driver).

Next summer, I think a trip to the park will be LONG overdue! I've been to the Island since I have been to the Point!

A Day Of Heroes... Ten Years Later

It just seems surreal that we are already remembering the tenth anniversary of one of the two days that "will live in infamy." It seems like only yesterday when I rushed out into the beauty shop (on a Tuesday... don't remember why Mom was working unusually on a Tuesday) to tell everyone that a plane had just crashed into one of the twin towers. I'm sure, like millions of others, that this had to have been a horrific accidental however, minutes later it became clear that the United States of America was under attack! Like everyone else, we were glued to the television.

A few years ago, I travelled with some friends to Ground Zero and saw first hand the remains of the horror. I remember vividly standing at the site where a few years ago, I was on tour with the BGSU Men's chorus on Spring Tour. Totally stunned! Walking through the building which houses items from the site, video clips, recordings, fragments of the buildings, and a myriad of other memorabilia was very emotional. Seeing the skyline from outside our hotel complex was haunting.

Remembering, what to me, was the worst day in the country's history. The worst day perhaps but not without a sense of pride in hearing America's response to the attacks. he

hundreds of firefighters, police, and other rescue personnel bravely, selflessly rushing in to deadly environments to rescue the living and search for the departed. Hearing the voices and hearing the stories of those who fought back when their plane was hijacked. TRUE heroes who do not wear capes or leap tall buildings in a single bound!

This weekend, I was presented with a brilliant question: "What do we tell the little ones who may or may not understand the why and consequences of September 11, 2001?" How are the children of those who sacrificed their lives remembering their parents or do they even remember them?

Today, let our nation remember those heroes not in the spirit of retaliation of those who were responsible for the devastation but in a spirit of forgiveness. This morning's readings and Father Art's sermon could not have been poignant. How many times must we ourselves forgive others? Seventy-seven. Drawing from the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32): [We are] still a long way off.

Remember and forgive.

Well It's Been A Long, Been A Long, BeenaLong (Few) Day(s)

Started on Wednesday afternoon. Dad came home from his crossing guard duty and headed to his bedroom (in itself not unusual) and fell asleep (which is a little strange). Around 6, he came out for a bit and told us that he was not feeling well and shortly turned in for the night. Around 11, I heard

the parents talking and all of a sudden, I hear Mom calling my name. So I run to the bedroom and see her holding him up trying to steady him in an attempt to get him to the restroom.

Before I get to him, he (not so gracefully) tumbles to the floor. To me, he looks kind of pasty and sweaty and he is mumbling but coherent (unlike the stroke adventure). Call 911 and by 11:15 he is on his way to the hospital. Mom and I get there about 11:45.

While sitting in his ER room, his heart rate goes on a roller coaster. Up and down, down and up. The lab tech came in and attempted to draw blood and wouldn't ya know... he was being stubborn and didn't want to give any... but eventually cooperated
□ Around 3:30AM, we are finally informed that he is going to be admitted (course, we didn't see THAT coming at all). So, 4AM finally get to bed. I got a few hours. Mom got 45 minutes.

Thursday, he was given a pint of blood. About 3-4 years ago, he had to be given 7 pints after suffering a bleeding ulcer. We had to wait until the battery of meds he has to take everyday to travel through his system before they can do anything extensive to determine what his problem is.

Friday morning, Dad is scheduled for a colonoscopy. I had to go over for my own lab work so I arrived in plenty of time for his voyage to the OR. Mom arrived shortly before the procedure began as Dad made sure. The procedure did not last long and showed that he had suffered another bleeding ulcer, nowhere near as bad as the previous one. In fact, it had stopped. Apparently, he is really prone to these because of his susceptibility to the acid in high acid foods: citrus fruits, tomatoes and the like. I guess when we order fruit from our school's FFA later this season, he will not sit and indulge in 2-3 huge grapefruits in one sitting. Back up in his ICU room (it seemed a bit different than the last time I was there), he fell asleep so I did not feel guilty when I left to meet some friends around the corner for lunch.

Today, at least we know what the problem was and is being treated. He probably will not be able to come home today as his "numbers" are still not where they need to be. But with the help of the doctors, prayers from loved ones and with HIS guidance, I'm sure Dad will be back to his "normal (?)" self in no time.

It Was A Dark And Stormy Night

Ok... backtrack post... Saturday night after church, I tagged along with my parents to watch the little ones in their new house. While it was fun to have the family stay at the house after their return from "The Last Frontier", it was a relief for all concerned when they moved into their new abode a short walk away. Nice house that has been well taken care of.

Before I had decided to make my way home, it began to storm. AND STORM IT DID! Before the storm began, the two girls were asleep. However, the biggest baby was still up and you never saw such a sight! Big 120lb. Bandit decided to take refuge across Mom, Dad, and I on the sofa. He was shaking like a leaf and whimpering like a infant! Big old softie. Although, I have heard tell that he will let a stranger know that he does not like them specially when they are around "his girls."

Just not during a thunderstorm! I can only imagine being actually attacked by the Burmese Mountain Dog when a greeting from him seems like you are being attacked. ☐ The only thing missing was the camera.

Finally, after the storm turned into a sprinkle, I braved the hazardous walk home.

One Labor Day Institution Comes To A Close

Well... another summer is UNofficially over. It seems that once Labor Day is here, the kiddies are back in school and the county fair is about to begin, the scene changes. However, it is my favorite season. This holiday weekend is considerably different and I did not even realize that it was set to change this time last year. Since 1966, Jerry Lewis has been the face of the Muscular Dystrophy Association as HIS telethon began airing locally and has spread Nationwide since. In total during his reign, he helped raise \$1.66 billion to find a cure to the number of diseases which affect millions of "Jerry's Kids" around the world. Apparently, last fall it was announced that the 21.5 hour telecast would be chopped down to a six-hour broadcast on Sunday night from 6PM-midnight. That was not the only change to come.

In May, Jerry announced that this year's star-filled extravaganza would be his swan song but he would appear to close the show with his traditional take on "You'll Never Walk Alone." In August, the organization announced that not only would the comedian/philanthropist not "be appearing on the telethon" but also "had completed his run as [MDA's] national chairman." Dunno but it sounds like some water under that bridge especially when little has been heard from Jerry himself.

I had to work last night and went to a bon fire after so I was unable to watch any of the shortened broadcast. However, I have learned that in the 6 hours \$61.5 million was raised (two million more than last year's total). I think it will be interesting to see if this version will be as successful as

the last 45 years. I realize that 22.5 hours is a long time and technology exists that can get word out and raise \$2 million more than a year ago; however, it should be interesting to see if this year was more of a farewell for the decades long chairman.

Plus the fact that 2 days ago it was 100°+ and today's temp barely reached 60° has not been lost on me! I love the autumn season but a gradual fall into it is greatly appreciated ☐