

# Ish a show, now get outa my way.

[A Miracle on 34th Street](#) opens this Friday and we definitely have a show to come and see. This was not always apparent by the number of people we had drop out and then had multiple recasting of the actors involved. My first entrance in the show was to be as the Drunken Santa who gets fired from the parade. While I still play that role, I have another part in the opening scene.

We have a great cast, wonderful crew and excellent director. I get to be on stage with a few of my favorite people to work with. We have new faces and quite a few young faces. Be sure to get your reservations early. I've heard them talk about it on the local station and I only listen to about 20 minutes in the morning.

I get the evening off tonight, so I get to get some of the things done that have been waiting for just such a moment. Short post, but I will be busy soon.

Come see a show...

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## A Turkey Day Movie Review

Or, how I spent my Thanksgiving Day.

First things first, I didn't have anything close to a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. First at just before Noon, my youngest and I had bison chili. Not your normal fair at all for Thanksgiving. My youngest had kennel duty at school for

the afternoon, so we needed to get to Fort Wayne early in the afternoon. Fun stuff for a Thanksgiving day. I would assume that this is the norm for students in a Vet Tech program.

While in Fort Wayne, my daughter and I caught the 3d Disney Movie "A Christmas Carol". First things first, The 3D for this show was awesome. I'm a very big fan of Dickens "A Christmas Carol" There are many movie versions of this story and I've enjoyed most of them.

First No Spoiler if you know the story. There will be spoilers later.

They kept the main story of "A Christmas Carol". All of the important aspects of the story. The animation was very well done and the characters were well maintained. For periods of time, I actually forgot that this was an animated movie. As I said earlier, I really liked the 3D effects. Most of them were well done to make the movie have depth. A few made you feel like you were in it. There were also a few that looked like they were just done because they could. I would have rather had those cut out, but I guess that is what some people expect in a 3D movie. Main result, if you like the Dickens' story, you will like this story. If you like 3D animation, you will probably like the show. I would definitely pay the extra amount to see the 3D version.

\*\*\*\*\* Spoilers Follow \*\*\*\*\*

I wondered how this would work out. I didn't see the necessity of doing this story in 3D or as an animated movie. I've been wondering about that since I first saw the theater trailers. I had many reservations before I went to see it. I was pleased that they did not destroy the story. Now for picking and praising. First, I thought the characters were very well done. The initial 3D effect at the start of the movie hooked me from the beginning. I liked the candle effect in front of the window. Other effects I liked were the snowflakes, flying

over/through London and the Ghost of Christmas Past.

I liked the way the effects were used during the Ghost of Christmas Present was wonderful. Actually, I was impressed by this vision of the ghostly visitations. It was also a very good way to use the 3D effects. Not many complaints through the first two ghosts, except may the 'rocket' effect at the end of the Ghost of Christmas Past's visit. One of my first problems with 3D for 3D only.

My biggest problem with the movie were the 3D for 3D only. While the initial tour of London was almost there, the tour of historical London is a great way to set the movie. I next noticed it at the end of the Ghost of Christmas Past. There were one or two times during the Ghost of Christmas Present's visit, but they didn't bother me nearly as much. But during the scenes with the Ghost of Christmas future, it seemed like these 3D effects were overwhelming. In fact they added quite a bit to the story to get these 3D effects in. That is the only reason I can think of that they added the Death Coach chase and the shrinking of Scrooge. Parts of the movie were really not needed and if they lasted much longer, I think the movie could have been ruined for me. Without the 3D, I don't think I would have liked that part at all. I am, of course, a Dickens' fan and I don't think you need to add to an already wonderful story.

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## **Thanksgiving day...**

I'm not quite sure what I will be doing on Thanksgiving except driving to Ft. Wayne in the afternoon so my youngest can take care of her kennel duty. I will be picking her up tomorrow afternoon and then driving back on Thursday. I'm not sure yet

what I will have for dinner on Thanksgiving.

So Thanksgiving, of course, is a day to give thanks. This year wasn't the best, but it did have some things to be thankful for.

There was an addition to my family when my 3rd daughter got married, and so I now have a 3rd son in the family.

During that time my second daughter and her family came up to Ohio to attend the wedding. I was able to schedule some time off and take them back to Florida. So I was able to spend some time with the part of the family I see the least.

My youngest started college and is doing well at school.

I've been able to spend a lot of time with my oldest daughter this year.

And I have some wonderful friends who have been a comfort for the lousy times of this year.

Have a Happy and Save Thanksgiving.

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## **Real life on stage**

On a spur of the moment decision, I decided to go to the theater today. A show called "Fat Pig" by Neil LaBute. The director of the show was enthusiastic about this show before it was even a sure thing. After watching it I can understand why. If you read this before the show is over this weekend, and you like theater, go See [the theater page](#) to get more information. It is rated 'R', so leave the kids at home.

The show was vulgar, crude and occasionally ugly. It was also

very real. While you may not know a person exactly like any of the four characters, you probably knew at least one.

Talking with people after the show made us think that we were watching people, kind of like intruding in their lives or spying on them. Not at all like watching a show to entertain. It was occasionally very funny. At other times it made you think.

I can't say I enjoyed the show. I really enjoyed parts of the show, but the show as a whole was not an enjoyable experience. It was a thinking and introspective experience and it has my full recommendation to stop what you are doing to catch the show.

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## **Stories of life, love and family**

Since I've been sharing some family hints in the kitchen, I remembered many stories and recipes that went together. Most of these stories were due to the fact that my children were picky about the food they ate. Some are more picky, some grew out of the picky stage. As you may be able to tell, some are still in the picky stage. I've decided that my blog is not the 'stage' that I want for these stories and recipes. Some may make it here, just because they were so much fun. Others will not. After this project is finished I may want to share the completed work, at least with my girls. ☐

Why share this here? I think I need a little bit of pestering just to get it done. So I'm asking, maybe begging, for my loyal readers to comment on this post every so often. Ask me how it is going, or even if I worked on it.

Some fun Huh?

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# Stone Soup

I'm not sure how many people remember the story of 'Stone Soup'. I've heard it many different ways, but the basic story is always the same. Someone who is hungry (beggar, soldier, hobo, ect.) offers to make stone soup when nobody has any food to share. He starts with a pot, some water and a stone. All during the making of the soup, he says out loud how good it would be if he just had 1 more item to add. By the end of the story he has made a pot of soup, getting all the ingredients from those who turned down his meal request earlier. He shares the soup and they all agree it was the best soup ever.

I've made something like stone soup for years with the various leftovers we have had. I don't think I actually used a stone, but I did call it stone soup once or twice. That is when I wasn't serving garbage or poison (family joke, no poison or garbage actually served. ☹ ). So when you have a lot of leftovers that won't quite make a meal, see if they could be added to a stone soup recipe.

## Basic Stone Soup

Cooked Meat

Seasonings

Vegetables

Noodles/pasta if desired

Stock

If the vegetables are fresh you will need to cook them in the stock before adding other ingredients. Use Chicken stock with leftover chicken or turkey. Beef stock with leftover Beef. For

leftover Pork, you can use either or combine both. Vegetable stock is also good for all meats. For a cream soup, add milk and thickener of choice at the end of the cooking time. My favorite thickener is leftover mashed potatoes.

#### Varieties

Mexican – Go wild with your spices, use some taco seasoning. Use a tomato or vegetable stock. Good vegetables in this are corn, green beans, pork and beans, pinto, lima or kidney beans. Left over pasta sauce, marinara, sloppy joes works well.

Oriental – Try adding Ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, soy sauce to the meal. This works well with leftover chicken. Add in oriental vegetables.

Beef Stew. Great when you have leftover beef on any kind. You can even make hamburger stew. Add stew vegetables and use mashed potatoes to thicken the stock.

Stone Chili – Left over Meatloaf, hamburgers, sloppy joe, ect. Add regular chili seasonings, some canned tomato soup and beans.

Try your own variations.

This also works with non leftovers. Just add ingredients until it tastes the way you want.

If you really want a group experience, have everyone (at least 4 people) bring a soup ingredient. Combine all at a Stone Soup party.

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# **I have this and this, what can I make for dinner?**

Yes, my daughters have asked this question, or “What can I do with?”

If you ask any of my daughters, you will find out that I experiment in the kitchen. I tend to think of cooking as science with food. I like to find out what flavors go well with others. I often find out what flavors don't go well with others. Not all of my kitchen experiments work. My daughters may tell you that too. But over the years, a few of these experiments became family favorites. Our family meatloaf recipe is one constant changing experiment. Many different flavors made many wonderful meals. Through all of this experimentation, my girls learned that they could trust me if I said I tried this and it tasted good.

Where is this leading? Well, I thought that if I can get my daughters to read and reply, I'll give a few recipes from various starting points. My goal will always be 1 or 2 pan/pot meals that take very little prep time. I dislike washing dishes, so the fewer I get dirty, the better I like it. Since I'm not sure my daughters will reply, I will open this up to everyone. What do you have in your refrigerator? What's for dinner?

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## **Now that I have one...**

Can I do anything else with a double-boiler?

The short answer was yes. You can cook anything that needs low



even heat. Most of the time this is chocolate for candies. You can also make many sauces and fondues. There are many recipes on the web just for double boiler cooking. In fact the double boiler was one way to reheat leftovers before the microwave. But can it be used to make a main dinner dish.

For that I needed to do a more in depth search. I've never used it for more than melting chocolate and making custards. Never a main course.

I did a lot of searching and found many sauces for main dishes. I also found that a double boiler was used to reheat the dish as a part of the dish. I even found a recipe for scrambled eggs. While I do like eggs for dinner every now and then, I didn't consider that a main course.

Then I found one. I've never had it before and will try it shortly. So let's try to make Welsh Rarebit. Yes, the double boiler is used to make the sauce, but since the sauce is the main ingredient in this dish, I think it fits my needs. The only thing that isn't cooked in the double boiler is the toast. There is even a variation that uses poached eggs with the sauce and toast. Those could be cooked in the lower portion of the boiler after the sauce is ready. Double use from a double boiler. I like that.

From that I could also make Eggs Benedict. Toasted English muffin, poached eggs and hollandaise sauce, but I have to cook the Canadian bacon.. Hmm not quite a full meal with a double boiler, but close.

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# Dad, I don't have a...

When my oldest moved out on her own, one of her first needs was a double boiler. Instead of asking how to cook a main or side course, she wanted to start with dessert. She wanted to melt chocolate.

Dad, I don't have a double boiler, can I just heat it on the stove? Hmm. By being very, very careful I've had some luck melting chocolate over a low heat on the stove top, but it can be tricky and the chocolate can burn or scorch easily. I haven't had much luck with microwave melting, but that could be because my microwave is very old. So I did suggest to my daughter to use a double boiler. But didn't she just say that she didn't have one?

The good thing is most kitchens have at least one substitute for an official double boiler. A double boiler is a very simple device. One pan is supported over another. The lower pan hold water to boil. The upper pan holds what you want to melt or cook at low/controlled temperatures.

Easy solution a small pan held over another with boiling water. Problem is holding the pan until the cooking is done, it can be tiring. Better is to rest a slightly larger pan on top of the smaller pan that boils the water. But it is a balancing act and you still have to hold the pan. A real double boiler has the upper pan resting in a recess in the lower pan. Can this be done without the special equipment? It can if you have a round stainless steel or oven safe glass bowl. Just rest the bowl in a pan above the boiling water. If you really want to know, the stainless steel bowl works best for me.

More on what you can do with a double boiler later...

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# New Category

My daughters have asked me many questions over the years. Sometimes about cooking, sometimes about kid issues. I was thinking that I could put some of the answers on my blog. I will be going through some of my past posts to see if any past items could be moved over. I have one question to answer, but I will need to look up a few things and get them written down.

Anyway, the new category is Family Hints...