

As the children grow older

They used to set cookies out for Santa, and a big carrot or two for the reindeer. A big glass of Milk could also be found for that jolly old elf.

Then bright and early, actually more dark and early, they would wake up. Anticipation filled their eyes. Waiting, ever waiting for Mom and Dad to say it was Ok to go to their gifts.

Christmas morning was always the time for that 1 big gift the girls wanted. Christmas eve was passing gifts out from our own little family. Even after the existence and identity of Santa was discovered, the girls waited for the Santa gifts on Christmas morning. We did well at hiding the gifts, or even how we were able to get them. Our oldest thought for years, that her Grandparents were helping Santa. Not true and it never was. Save a dollar or two every week and the presents could be found.

This year there are less presents in the house. The girls all know were Santa gets his gifts. They don't wake up before the crack of dawn anymore (Ok, well 1 still does, but that is her everyday wake up time). No cookies, no carrots, and no glass of milk was waiting for Santa. Of course Santa joined the gym and is trying to loose weight. ☐

Later today, much will be the same. On to the grandparents to celebrate the day. Much will not. 2 daughters are married and on their own. One many states away. Another daughter engaged, but she, and her fiance will be with us this day. One in her last year of High School. Their mother has been gone for 5 Christmases now, she is missed.

Again, may you find hope and peace during this season, and through the entire year.

Five Years Ago (Part 6)

Christmas Eve 5 years ago was not an experience I would ever want to go through again. My dear wife was very sick and feeling bad from the latest round of radiation. Snow was falling heavily, and it took much longer to get to Toledo than anticipated. On top of all that we were going to put our dog in a kennel so we could spend the holidays with family in Toledo.

It snowed so hard, that I could not find the kennel. It was my first time there, my oldest sister set it up for us, our Christmas gift. Road signs were covered with snow and we spent a long time trying to find the right turns. The dog never made it to the kennel. There was no room for him at my in-laws, and a cold cramped basement for him at my sister's, were Christmas Eve dinner was.

Tired and angry, I took my daughters to dinner with my side of the family. After dinner, I dropped the two youngest off at Grandma's and took the dog and my second oldest back home. With about 8 hours of rest, my daughter and I went back to Grandma's to have dinner with my wife's side of the family. For me, it was a very tense day, but I put it behind me as much as possible to make sure my wife had the best day possible.

We really didn't know how much more time she would have, and I didn't want to know.

After that Christmas, I tried to forget the events of the night before. I was never able to. 5 years later I remember almost every word. Words said in anger and frustration. If I could take them back I would. Little did I know how they would

haunt me. That Christmas Eve was not the one I would ever have wanted for our last one together.

Twas the night before Christmas

With apologies to C. Clement Moore

Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house
There was bedlam galore and it frightened the mouse.

The children were bouncing up and down on their beds
As the sugar from candy rushed straight to their heads.

Mamma she was screaming, and I hit the roof,
I went for the bottle marked 70 proof.

I started drinking the stuff, in a very swift manner,
And I fell off the chair, hit my head with a spanner.

While down on the floor under the dining room table
I rested a bit and moved when I was able.

When what to my wondering eyes did appear,
But little pink elephants with plenty of beer.

Now I knew not to mix high spirits and low
'Cause you'd just get sick and possibly blow.

Now I know that there should be more to this poem,
But I think I am finished, cause I can't find my comb

Merry Christmas! I hope you find peace and hope during this
season, and the rest of the year too.

More winter weather

Today we are receiving more winter weather today. While the temperature has warmed up, we are getting more snow and a possibility of more freezing rain. With me having to drive to Toledo tomorrow. I hope the weather clears up before I need to leave.

Rain, snow, and other freezing stuff. I guess I am glad that there will most likely be a white Christmas. More fun and games, at least I don't have to drive to work at 6:00 in the morning.

Sounds like the freezing rain has started. We will see about tomorrow.

Hot winter drinks

I've been thinking of some hot winter beverages, be they spiked, spiced or just hot. Things I like, but generally limit to the winter months (I drink hot tea and coffee all year round). So here is my list, if you want recipes, I can dig one or two up.

Hot Chocolate: I don't really care how you make this. You can use an instant mix, or chocolate and warm milk, all is good. Especially with whipped cream or marshmallows. For something a bit different, I usually add some mint extract. Or maybe some mint schnapps.

Hot Spiced Cider. I will drink this in the fall when cider

becomes more available. But I like it all winter long.

Hot Spiced, Spiked Cider... same as above but with a jigger of Captain Morgans.

Hot Mulled Wine Good stuff when done properly.

Hot Lemonade. I'm not sure what started this, but it sometimes hits the spot when coming in from the cold. Also hot sweet orange juice. The orange juice is good with some Amaretto added.

And Kahlua, coffee and cream.

I just noticed, I may be a bit of a lush when it comes to winter drinks. But I usually only get the Cocoa and hot lemonade. ☐

The real Grinch and other Christmas adventures

Just finished watching the animated version of Dr. Seuss's ["How the Grinch Stole Christmas"](#). This was a fairly faithful adaptation of the Dr Seuss book. With Boris Karloff (Frankenstein's Monster, The Mummy and other horror stories from the black and white era) as the narrator and the voice of the Grinch. I watched this show as a child, and with my family when the girls were much younger. We do tend to watch the old standbys year after year. The stories hold up for young and old.

My lovely wife used to love all these Christmas animated classics. Charlie Brown's Christmas, the Grinch, Frosty, Rudolph and I may be missing one or two. With a version or two

of the Christmas Carol, our holiday view was full.

This all culminated, not with another movie, but with dear old dad reading "A night before Christmas". I'm not exactly sure when it started, but when my oldest was 18 she still wanted me to read it.

I'm going to try to do it a little different this year. Future blog notes will let you know if I am successful. But I have some additional members of the family that haven't heard this story from me yet. We will see.

Baby it's cold outside...

Temperatures dropped below 0 degrees Fahrenheit, that is about -18 degrees Celsius. That is cold folks. It is cold enough that I don't want to be out in it too long. It is cold enough that the old fireplace is working overtime just to get up to heat. The breeze is bone chilling.

To top all this off, we were without power for a few hours this morning. Since I have electric heat, that meant I woke up to a cold house. Since I have a well, it also meant no hot showers. Conserve water, get a fire going and report the outage. Actually, I found out I didn't need to report the outage. It was widespread enough to alert the local electric company without my call.

Days like today are made for playing games, and drinking hot tea or cocoa. I was able to heat a kettle of water on the wood stove and made some instant cocoa. My youngest and I played a few games and had a good time until the power came back around lunch time.

Still going out and getting firewood was an experience today. I guess I'm just not used to the cold yet. I remember, not too long ago, going out on days like today and playing games with my girls. Just last year, I remember going to the [zoo](#) with most of my family. Walking around and admiring the many [lights the zoo](#) puts up for the holiday season. Our family has been [members of the Toledo Zoo](#) for many years, and will probably continue as members for many years to come. I have yet to see the lights this year, but will before they close by the end of the year.

So for all in places that are cold right now, find some way to stay warm. I will.

Another Technology post

Ain't technology grand. Today, I looked at my stats again. I found somebody has accessed this lonely little blog on their blackberry. I've seen people stopping by that use Windows, Macs, Linux boxes and other PC systems, but I don't recall seeing anything from a phone. Amazing. You can now read complete drivel, on the go, with your phone. (yes, I do think this blog is complete drivel, I'm only emptying my brain, I try to keep the good stuff in.)

So for my information, what type of device do you use to blog or read them? I've only used my windows laptop. Multiple Web browsers, but I keep trying new things. Really I just want to know who used the blackberry? Curiouser and curiouser.

Theater award night...

An annual event for our [little community theater](#) is our award banquet. Fun time with good food, fun skits, and of course, awards for the actors and shows.

It is always fun to be involved in a show. At the time it is a lot of work and it takes up quite a bit of time. But when the show is over, there is always a let down of sorts. For me, this award show brings back all the good memories of the shows, but the time and work involved is a lot less (unless you are setting up the show).

I won't go into all the awards won. My memory of who won what and what show it was for, and how to spell the names is lacking at this hour of the evening. Even with that, I would ask them first before putting their names in my blog.

Me, I wasn't in any shows this year. I didn't design any sets. I wasn't a director on any show. I wasn't expecting to win any award. I did!! Shock of shocks. It was an award that is decided on by the president of the playhouse trustees. Big honor I will have to say.

Winning this award got me thinking. I have strange thoughts all the time, so this was no exception. After the show was over, everyone was congratulating everyone with an award. The common phrase heard was: "You deserved it." Of course most if not all were well meant. But in common, polite society would we ever say anything else? Would you say: 'Why the heck did they give that award to you? So and so did much better, they should have won.' (of course behind the scenes, they are saying those words to so and so.) No, polite society will generally refrain from those remarks, until enough booze is swallowed. ☐ Polite society will refrain from making comments other than the 'congratulations' if they feel the award was not deserved, or they won't say anything.

Why did I think of this, well I got a large number of those "You deserved it." comments. Being the humble person I am (no that isn't meant to be a joke), I was caught off guard again. Then again, thanks to the training my wife gave me, I can read body language very well (my secret is out now, oops). The language of the bodies, and the words said were matching up. The people saying the words, meant the words. Wow again, I was humbled.

Over the years people have done more for the theater than I've ever done. This year there were people that did more than me. But the big thing for me is this one little fact. The theater has done more for me than I've ever done for the theater. Little things here and there, now and then, have kept this old soul in good health. The people in the theater were there at my darkest moments. Outside of my daughters and others in my family, the theater was an anchor to sanity. For me, that was better than any award they can give. I cannot say thank you enough for that.

All this from one little theater group. Wonderful therapy for a grieving widower, and good shows too. Is it any wonder I keep going back?

Not much movie watching today

My weather day turned into a day to install my new router. This now allows all the computers in the house to access the cell modem at the same time. Yes, this does slow down from the direct connect speed just a bit, but if only one person is on, I didn't notice any difference. But I will be able to work, my daughter will be able to do homework, and I'll finally be able to get to the internet from my linux box.

I also found out that I can IM multiple daughters at once. Could be fun if they are ever online at the same time.

Things just moved fast when I was able to get my high speed cell modem. And the speeds are getting faster every day, well almost every day.

Then on to a party with the people I work with. It was a fun time.