

# A little bit older

I went to dinner before going to the theater for another night in the light booth. It was a special dinner with Grandparents, Sisters and an Aunt and Cousin. It was in celebration of my youngest 17th birthday. This is her last year as a child. By law next year she will be an adult in society. My youngest is almost an adult. When did she grow up?

A very dear friend was saying something about her birthday coming up, and found it a bit overwhelming. Me, I've never had any problems with any of my birthdays, after all it is just a number. I do find I'm having a bit of trouble with other days. Daughters' weddings, graduations, and their birthdays. Funny, I don't feel old when I have my birthdays, I do on the other days mentioned. Today I saw the 17 year old that is my daughter. Talk about feeling old.

I guess that comes with being a parent. There are children who now call me Grandpa. Hmmm when did all this happen? Yesterday, I wasn't even sure what I wanted to do when I grew up!

I'll have to go find my cane, glasses and hearing aid and hobble over to the rocker... Today I feel old...

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## Adding a site or two

Notice on the right side of this page there are links to various things. There are of course links to the blogs I write, and comments people make about them (Hey, I like the comments, so keep them coming). I have links to other blogs. I now added a few links to other places. I will be adding more in the future. These are the places that have some interest to

me.

Since I've given a good percentage of my writings to things that happen in and around our little theater group, I thought I should add that site too. I don't go to it that often, because I often know what is going on there. I was going to write a little bit about the theater anyway.

Last year in or around February I celebrated my 10th anniversary with the theater. Funny, I can't remember the dates of the show, but I do remember it was the first show of 2007. It was the 3rd show of the 2006/2007 season. At that time, we were known as 'The Williams County Playhouse', or in most cases, just the Playhouse. People who knew about it, knew what you were talking about. I've averaged participating in 2 shows a year since 1997. I wasn't always on stage, sometimes I would just run lights or help building sets.

Me, I'm what you could call a character actor. I've only had a couple of lead roles. Most of the time I'm in a supporting or cameo role. I kind of like it that way. I can only think of a couple plays where I would really want the lead role. To my great satisfaction, I have played the lead in the one show where I really wanted that part. Too bad we don't have a history section for the theater web site. As a local community theater we've been active for over 50 years. I did notice today, that I am in a couple of pictures for some of the shows I've been in. Didn't remember taking some of those pictures, and I'm glad none of the "Run for your Wife" pictures got in there.

Anyway, what was I going on about? A yes character rolls. I can't say I was much of a character my first year or so. I just didn't have the confidence in my acting to really start having fun. I had fun during rehearsals and after the shows, just not during the shows. The turning point came in a show called "Wait Until Dark". While the director wanted me to smoke, it was pivotal to the rest of the show, I never managed

to look comfortable smoking. I never smoked a cigarette in my life before that one on stage. Even though I looked like a rookie smoker, I think that caused my comfort level on stage to make a turn. The next time on stage, I was adding a little more to my characters. I've played an old man, a young kid, a psychiatrist (three times), a few cops, husband, minister, gay neighbor, British Sgt. Major, Silent film Actor, card playing buddy, gentleman's gentleman, and a friend to a 6' 4 1/2" tall rabbit. I'm sure I have left something out, but that should cover most of them.

My favorite role was that of Elwood Dowd in "Harvey". My least favorite role, was that of one of the beat cops in "Arsenic and Old Lace", but it was my first WCP show, and I was sick during the run. My most memorable show was one I was in the light booth for. The very first show after my wife's death. It was a show that dealt extensively with death. It was pure, intense therapy. Theater, my friends, can heal the soul, calm the heart, and make life a bit more realistic.

Why talk about all this now? Well, I know our little theater is in a financial bind (nothing new here, but that is the way of things). I'm sure other community theaters are also on the lookout for cash. So, I guess I'm begging a little here. There is a very good chance that you live near a community theater. Look them up, stop by a show, support them. Yes, there is a little culture going on, and the people in the theater groups are doing it for fun (we don't get paid folks), but it can be so much more. Have a laugh or a cry watching live theater....

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# Running down...

One of those, I shouldn't have gotten out of bed days. I'm hoping I'm not coming down with whatever my light booth double had last week. She needed at least a few days to get over it. I don't have that kind of time.

Things I wanted to get done during the off days between shows, I didn't get done. So I'm falling farther behind in things I need to do around the house. I'll have to make some time this Saturday morning to get things going.

One more weekend of shows, and then on to Children's theater for my youngest. I guess I will be seeing a lot of that theater this summer. And I haven't been in a show yet. I know I will have to get going to make sure I help out with the show I'm a producer of. My life in theater is never done.

Good night folks, just a quick update.

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## Because it's Logical

Those who know me may have different views of me based on where they see me most often. In the theater, I tend to show my more creative (silly, strange??) side. At work, I tend to the serious, more logical side. Some others will see me as a possible combination of the two. Which is the real me? Well, both are me. If you meet me, I tend to show the real me. I don't believe in putting up fronts for anyone. But I do have many sides. The theater brings out some of the light hearted me. Computers will bring out my logical side. Friends can have get either, depending on the situation. Some may say I have a sinister side too. In a certain mood, I will talk in many

different voices (I do a pretty good Stitch and Bullwinkle). Other times I tend to imitate Mr. Spock from Star Trek, not the voice, but the purely logical side.

Today, I'm leaning toward the Spock side of me. Somethings I read made me think about recent events in a logical light. I have read in many places where people who lose a loved one (especially widow/ers) have or receive 'signs' from their loved one. I don't believe in that. I'm a logical skeptic in this. Not to hurt anyone's feelings, but most of the things I read about can be classified as coincidence or wishful thinking. After you lose someone you really care about, little things can bring a lot of comfort.

The one thing I heard about most often are pennies or dimes found. My first question was why these coins? Why not nickels, quarters, or Dollar coins? Why not some foreign coin I would never find around my house. I found coins of all sorts before any close loved one died, I found them afterwards too. People, including those who live in my house, drop small coins all the time without noticing them. I just happen to keep my nose to the floor looking for them. Coins really don't seem to be a good sign.

Any other sort of natural occurrence fall in the same category for me. I have seen butterflies all my life and even had them land on me, having this occur after a death is just the same thing that happened before. Seeing birds, clouds, rainbows ect, all have happened throughout my life, happening again is just that for me.

Then we have the electrical malfunctions. Radios going on without warning, clocks that haven't worked starting to work again. Well, I can't say this ever happened to me before or after a loved ones death. For the time being proof/disproof of this sign is not available. If it happens to you, take it anyway you like.

Feelings of a person being in the room is one I have the easiest time explaining. I've had that feeling about many people in my life, some of the time they had died, other times they were just gone for a period of time. People are creatures of habit, we tend to expect people and things to be in a certain place at a certain time. Seeing them there when they aren't there could just be replaying old memories. As I said, I've experienced this, but it never felt like a sign. Especially when I see my younger sister playing drums in my basement. This was my brother's house before mine, and my sister would play the drums quite often. There are times when playing Beatles' music, I will see her pounding away on the drums. In the same way I see other people (living and dead) where I expect them to be, even if they aren't there at the moment. I guess it is sort of a deja-vu thing your brain/eyes do together. But instead of feeling something happened to you before, you re-live things that have happened to you.

The last one I've heard about are orbs or glowing sections in photographs. I can't say I've seen things in pictures that I couldn't explain or in the digital age remove by taking a new shot. Lighting, dirty lenses, reflections off all sorts of objects can cause the effects I've seen people claim as signs. Some people pushing an agenda could make these things happen on purpose.

It was said that Houdini wanted to get a sign from his mother after she died. He spent a great deal of time going to mediums and other mystics in hope of the signs. Everyone he went to, he proved to be a fraud. It is said that he had a sign specifically for his wife, if he should die first. There was a log of controversy as to if this happened at all.

In any event, my lovely wife knew of my logical frame of mind, and that the above 'signs' would never pass my skeptical frame of mind. If she can give a sign, she hasn't given one that she knows will get through. I have a couple of small things in mind that would definitely prove to be a sign. My wife did

know of them. In the four 1/2 years since her death, these things have not occurred. And in my mind it's logical...

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## Electrical gremlins

I think that I shouldn't be in the light booth for this show. Electrical gremlins have been following me. It started a couple months ago when two computers had some problems. One was just falling short on the power and would cause all sorts of strange errors when I started heavy processing. The second had problems with the video. I normally can get things going quickly, but it took a little time. Then I had 1/2 of a house circuit go out during a storm. Not the whole circuit with a tripped breaker, just 1/2 of it. Something caused the switch wiring to short.

Now on to the theater. Two bad spotlights were the start of it. Replaced a bulb and one still didn't work. Strange happenings on one set of lights, they just didn't want to work. Got that straightened out enough to run through the show, but it is a bit of a hassle. Today was the biggest gremlin. Our monitor system (let's the booth and backstage hear what is happening) decided to have a lot of massive interference. Then I switched jacks and it would work for a bit, but it mostly gave up the ghost. We were running the lights based on stage locations and actions, not the words. I'm glad I didn't mess up.

The gremlins stopped doing their electrical havoc, and decided the heavy rains needed to come inside. Yes during the middle of the second act, there were leaks over the audience. I hope for the last three performances, the skies stay clear, and the electrical gremlins stay far away.

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# My life as a play

After watching "Little Women" from the light booth for a about a week now, I was wondering what kind of play my life would make. I know right now, if the author of the play knew me at all, it would not be a musical. Then again, some twisted mind would do that, just to get a reaction from me, or think of me rolling in my grave.

Anyway, would my life make an worthwhile play... That may take some thought. First off a good play needs many different features. A good plot is almost essential (there are a few exceptions to this). Engaging characters are required (my life has that). Some humor, maybe a bit of tragedy helps round everything out.

In my life, you can usually skip everything that happens at my place of employment. Yes, the characters there would be wonderful, but the plot, or day to day happenings are not going to engage an audience. Who in there right mind would want to watch people sit a computers all day. While I've worked in a number of offices, they are not like the sit-coms. To watch would be boring.

Now, on to the rest of my life. For most of it I am a father of 4 daughters. I'm thinking the play could be written around the marriages of each. While only two are married, I think if the weddings progress in any way, there may be a story to tell.

So for this I've developed a cast of characters...

Father

Daughter 1

Daughter 2

Daughter 3

Daughter 4

Son-in-Law 1

Son-in-Law 2

Son-in-Law 3

Son-in-Law 4

GrandMother

GrandFather

Various other family members needed to round out the story (I'll let the writer worry about this, and any directors worry about the huge cast size □ ).

Act 1 – Wedding 1

Widowed father joins rest of males of the wedding party in wearing a Kilt. Is the groom late? Will the bride ever calm down? Will the music play? Will the wind blow and we find exactly what is worn under Kilts? It was an interesting day.

Act 2 – Wedding 2

Widowed father drives across many states to get to second daughter's Florida Wedding, in AUGUST!!! It is hot, and muggy, and the wedding is outside. Will the alligator in the pond climb up on the dock! There is no electricity by the dock for the wedding. The batteries in the boombox are dead. Play the music from a Car? Who will pass out? Who will get a sunburn? Who gets bitten by the gator?

Act 3 – Wedding 3

Not sure on this it hasn't happened yet. Star Wars theme and the Wookie Best man trips on his own fur? Lord of Rings theme and the Orcs attack during service. Take your pick, or it may be something else.

Act 4 – Wedding 4

Let's leave this one in the future. Dream like. It hasn't happened either, but as the father, I can't think of my baby girl getting married just yet...

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And then again maybe the play of my life would not be these weddings/future weddings.

Maybe a play about my married life? The fun and warmth of the early years. Kids growing up, the bond between two people growing stronger. Tragic death, grief, and finally growth continuation of life.

May be too much of a downer for some...

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And lastly, my life as a member of a community theater. The follies of live performance. Things not working in the light booth, problems of set building. This may not have a wide audience, but any person who ever acted in, directed, helped put on a community theater play may get a kick out of it.

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Well, it was fun thinking of this anyway. There may not be a play ever written about my life, but I know that everyone's life is a stage. We perform live everyday. We are the actors, and the audience.

Give it your best, people are watching...

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## Coffee nerdiness

Yes, I'm a coffee nerd. I like good strong full bodied coffee. I of course have my favorite roasts, beans, blends, and coffee shops. But I really want to talk about the coffee shop experience. Today, a lot of people consider Starbucks to be the coffee shop of all coffee shops. They are almost everywhere. I will admit that their marketing is wonderful. They've taken the country by storm. Their coffee is good, but

by no means is it the peak of coffee perfection. Their shops are nice and clean, but they are missing a little bit of charm.

Now to go back a few years, about 11 or so, to when I knew nothing about coffee. If you called it coffee and it was hot, I would drink it. At that time, my youngest daughter was in Kindergarten, the oldest was 15. My wife and I needed someplace to go to start re-connecting with each other. The children were all growing up, and didn't need quite as much attention. We also had a built in babysitter. So we started to look around for something we could do together, but wouldn't break the bank. We found a little coffee shop. It was a charming little place where we could get a light lunch, or a desert, or just a cup of coffee or tea. We started going week after week, sometimes more than once a week. From that time on, we would even look for coffee shops on our vacations.

The local coffee shop (before Starbucks was a nationwide brand) was a place to find good coffee and good friends. It was a gathering place. In some places you would find little reading corners. Some shops would have music, some poetry readings. Some places to play chess or backgammon. But in everyone there was a place to meet people and talk. They was always a quiet corner you could go to even when the place was busy at the early morning rush. They were places designed to slow down, smell the baked goods, and of course the coffee.

Then we get the fast food of coffee shops, the national brands. A hurry-up kind of place where people seem to be full of caffeine before they have their first cup of coffee. The coffee may be good, but the atmosphere suffers.

One of my daughter worked in 'our' little coffee shop, and it closed shortly after she graduated from college. Just two short years after my wife died. I still miss that atmosphere. There are other places to get coffee in the area. For a time there was even a shop that had a bit of atmosphere. But in

today's world those places seem to be few and far between. You can find them if you look, but you do have to look. It may not be a coffee shop, it may be a little restaurant, or donut shop, maybe even a candy shop, or an old soda fountain. There are places to find, where you can slow down to smell the coffee, or the roses, but always smell and experience the sweet breath of life itself.

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## **The Play's the thing...**

In 1997 I was in my first play for the (then) Williams County Playhouse. It was "Arsenic and Old Lace". I played one of the beat cops. That show was one of my favorite plays to watch, the movie wasn't bad either ;). Since then I've been involved in many different shows, from comedy to drama. I skip musicals, except to run lights or help backstage. I've even been in a Magic Show. After 11 years with the theater (changed its name to The Williams County Community Theater), I can honestly say I've been bitten by the theater bug.

I've done almost everything in the theater except direct a show. I tried to assist on one, but due to actor shortages, the director and I both had roles in the show. It was a wonderful show that very few people saw. I'm in the light booth for what looks like another wonderful show. I hope it is a show that everyone sees.

I'm always amazed at the amount of talent our little community (our theater, other local theaters, and High Schools) find to be in the performances. From the 4 counties in extreme NW Ohio, I've been able to perform in and watch many wonderful shows. There as been Musical (Godspell, Jesus Christ Superstar, Fiddler on the Roof, Chicago, Les Miserables,

Beauty and the Beast), Dramas (Wait Until Dark, Death of Salesman, 12 Angry Men, Proof), Comedies (Harvey, The Foreigner, Escanaba in the Moonlight) and even Melodramas that have been put on by various schools and play companies in our area. Williams County OH has a population of around 39,000. Defiance County has close to 40,000. Henry and Fulton counties 42,000 and 29,000 respectively. In this area there are numerous High Schools, and around 4 or 5 community theaters. The High Schools put on at least 1 musical a year, the community theaters put on 3 or more shows (each) a year.

Now proudly for the Summer, the Williams County Community Theater, (Montpelier OH theater) is going to present the Musical "Little Women" starting Friday June 20th at 8:00. This is a show not to be missed. The cast has a group of wonderful singers (don't take my word, come and see them), and excellent directing, a great set, period costumes, and a good story to boot. This is a small, intimate 100 seat theater call for your tickets early, check out the [theater website](#) for information on how to get reservations.

Come and see this show, you don't want to miss it.

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## Lights, Let there be lights

I'm running the light board for our community theater's upcoming performance. It has been a challenge to get the stage lit just right. First when we were setting it up 2 spots were burned out, and we didn't have any replacement bulbs. Now these aren't bulbs you can go down to your local hardware store and pick up, no they have to be ordered. I'm not even sure where to order one of them. I've never seen its kind before.

Anyway, we are getting it together, but there is still a spot on stage that I can only call cold. It just seems a little darker than the rest of the stage. I'm trying to figure out if a bit of color in that area would help, but I'm not sure at this point. I guess I'll have to go back early tomorrow and check again. Oh well.

The show went much better tonight. Pace was very good, and the lines were almost there. The songs, well they sounded good to me. I'm no singer, and I'm no judge of singing. I can't tell a flat from a sharp, a good note from a bad, except when I see the face of the singer cringe. There was no cringing tonight, so it must have been good.

It is absolutely amazing how a show comes together so quickly. They are worked on for weeks, and that final week of rehearsals you can really see the shows start to jell. A lot more fun watching from the outside. I know from experience, it isn't as much fun for the actors, until everything falls into place.

Here's to more place falling tomorrow.

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## A good Father's Day

I only got to see one of my 4 daughters today. I did get calls from the other's and my granddaughter in Florida. So it was a good day. My eldest is waiting to take her old man to dinner, but since I was working on a play, it will have to wait. I am glad to be doing the lighting for "Little Women" at the [Williams County Community Theater](#). If you have a the time to see a show in the next couple of weeks, give this one a shot. Our little community theater does a very nice job on all the shows, and this one will be no exception. If you read this blog, stop by the light booth and say hi to the guy with the

beard. That will be me. I'm still trying to reach the many lurkers here, you know who you are...

My youngest has a small role in this. Theater is one thing I share with my two youngest daughters. I'm glad we were able to do that. Running the lights gives me a chance to see her every performance.