

Computers, sometimes I just hate them.

Over the weekend I was updating the hardware on one of my computers. While I had the case open, and my hands busily putting in many different parts, my daughter told me that the family computer wasn't working. Grumble Grumble. I seeing it I thought that the video card was a goner. It looked like the hard drives were still working, the key pad would display the proper lights when hitting the NumLock and ShiftLock keys. So I took out the card and swapped it with another. Still nothing. I think after 2 1/2 days of tinkering with the stupid machine, I found the problem to be a bad install of DirectX. Grumble, it wasn't the hardware at all.

Why don't I just use linux????

Movies I watch (that others don't?)

I've been told I have a different taste in movies. I know that I watch and like some movies that others do not. The reason for this is simple, I go to movies to be entertained. If I lose myself for 1-4 hours (Lord of the Rings was at least that long on the extended DVD) and come out feeling entertained, I feel the movie did its job. The kicker on this is if I think the movie has a chance of entertaining me again. There is where I get my choices for good movies. Now for the movies that have been dumped on by critics, friends and family, but I still like them...

#1 on the list, but not in my favorites, this has just been dumped on by almost everybody, even the lead... Catwoman. Yes, the one with Halle Barrie. I knew from the start that this movie was not going to follow any comic book ever written about Catwoman. It wouldn't even be close to any of the Batman movies, TV or cartoon catwomen. But Halle looked real good in the leather jump suit. Hell, her male stunt double looked good in the leather jump suit. I heard that she had a male stunt double for some of the fights, flips and other stunts but I had a hard time believing it. I was finally able to pick out the double, and CGI catwoman most of the time. Other than that, the character they developed for Catwoman was interesting to me. In knowing cats they came up with a good human characterization of the cats qualities. I found the transition from the mousy woman at the beginning of the show to the proud feline at the end was a good use of what this type of thing could do to a person. The beginning story line trying to find what was poisoning people, and the classic business cover up was good to. What I didn't like was "Stone Faced" Sharon Stone. For 1 it was a really bad pun, but I don't think that Catwoman needed that kind of adversary. It would have been better to put more mystery in the story and have the "Cat" stalk for it. More cat like in my opinion. I could go on but there are other movies to list...

2) League of Extraordinary Gentlemen. Just a fun flick. See how much they took advantage of the characters, and they did stretch them a bit, was pure enjoyment to me. The story was so-so, the acting was iffy, but it all worked as a whole for me.

3) DareDevil. Again, the story just kept my attention and I walked out in a better mood than when I went in.

4) Electra – Same for this one, I just enjoyed the movie.

5) The Shadow. I grew up listening to these on a little transistor radio hidden under my pillow. The show brought back

fond memories of staying up late and not letting my parents catch me.

6) More B movie sci-fi fantasy than I can remember. Beast Master hits me as one of them. There was another, that I can't remember the title of, but it was fun watching the heroine's dress go from torn to whole to torn to dirty, to clean to whole in about a 15 minute period. I don't think she ever had time to change.

... More to come I just can't remember all of them.

Reading a speech

Quite a few years ago my wife gave a speech about being hard of hearing. I found her hand written speech today. I wasn't looking for it, but I was cleaning out a drawer looking for an old "Windows" disk. For those who know me and my safe places, it is amazing that I found the disk.

Anyway, today I held in my hands something my wife wrote. That is a very strange feeling. In reading her words, I can hear her voice, I can see her smile at certain parts of the speech. I can even see parts of this speech where I'm quite certain her anger/disappointment would show through. I never saw her give this speech, but I did today.

From her speech these words I remember because they were said more than once.

[Quote from SJ0]

... Over the years I have become quite adept at conversation by reading lips and body language, anticipating what will be said, filling in blank spaces in a sentence with the correct

word or phrase based on subject matter, number of syllables in the words, and placement in the sentence.

Certainly, I am wrong frequently. This causes embarrassment and confusion, but the alternative is silence – no conversing because of fearing embarrassment. I don't enjoy embarrassing myself, but I am not afraid of embarrassment – it does no permanent damage. ...

That last sentence, if my girls would have learned only one thing from their mother, this would be right at the top of the list. We don't enjoy embarrassing ourselves in any aspect of our lives, but as my dear wife said "it does no permanent damage.

To SJ0 1962-2003. A life not long enough, but lived fully.

Multitasking

As I sit here typing away at this blog, I have three other computer related tasks going on. I'm transcoding/burning two DVD's, I have a load of laundry going, I'm re-installing some software on another computer, and finally checking out a laptop to make sure everything is working properly. If you include the fact that one of the DVD's is being burned on a Linux box, you could say I'm learning a different OS too. Why am I doing all of this now? Good question, and it is one I asked myself. I spent the better part of this evening installing some new and improved hardware on my main computer. It is the one I do most of my DVD work on, and I was just bogging the system down. I noticed I was able to transcode and burn a DVD faster on my laptop, than the main box. Something isn't not quite right there. I knew I had a problem with the

video card in the main box, so I swapped that out.. I also put in a dual core processor, since that is what my laptop has in it. After all that work I had to put the machine through its paces, didn't I? And Now I think the box with twice as much memory, a faster processor, and more disks space finally catches up with the laptop. I don't think my hard drives on the desktop are nearly as fast, and I think that is what is slowing the desktop up this time...

Dryer buzzer, time to get the laundry.

More on the movies

I was just wondering why movies based on comic books always start with the character introduction. Why do we go back to Superman getting sent to Earth? Why see Batman's parents shot over and over again? Why see Peter Parker get bit by that spider? Why go into all of this?

I realize that not everyone has read the comic books that these characters are based on, and they do need to know a little about the character, but can't there be a better way?

What got me thinking on this was one of my favorite movies has a larger than life hero. In the first movie, we weren't given a big background on his character. He was just there, larger than life and doing many things just in the first 5-10 minutes of the movie... It took Peter Parker 1/2 the movie before he even became Spiderman. The first Batman movie with Michael Keaton was actually good in this, but Batman Begins went to the Introduction again...

Why can't we have a Super Hero movie, where the first time we see the character he is already the Hero. (Again, Batman with

Michael Keaton did this, and so did “V for Vendetta”.) If we really need the back story, it can be filled in with short flash backs or dialog on screen. I think it would be more fun for the general audience just to see the characters unfold. To learn their strengths and weaknesses as the movie unfolds.

Until putting these thoughts down, I never really understood why this is now the standard practice for all “Superhero” movies. I now have a theory. Superhero movies are done in this fashion for the main purpose of selling the sequel. We get an “introduction”, and the design is to leave the movie wanting more. The last 20 minutes or so are filled with the big fight scenes and mass destruction. The audience is left with many unanswered questions (not in that introduction). They are left wanting (maybe subconsciously) more. Then the next movie is released. Just my thoughts.

Oh, that hero that just started doing his thing at the beginning of the movie. The one we didn’t really know much background on until the third movie was released? The one where another movie is soon to be released? That would be Indiana Jones...

Comic Books, Movies and things I think about them

I’ve been watching the Animated Superman DVD’s I picked up. I also went to see [Iron Man](#) last night. So I thought I would try and explain what I like and don’t like in movies/shows based on comic books.

For some insight, I’ve only purchased comic books on rare occasions, most of the time I would borrow them from somebody

else. My college roommate was/and still is a collector of comic books. I still go to a sight or two to try to keep up with what is going on. I generally liked most comic books I've read, but have really come to appreciate what they can do in the movies. Finally the movies can make the heroes of the comics do all the things they were able to in those comic pages.

My first objective to any movie, comic book based or otherwise, is very simple: When I leave the movie, did I enjoy myself? Nothing other than that. After that I will start look for other things in the movie. If based on a book or story I know, did it follow the thing it was based on. If not, why not? Was the acting good? Did I see the actor, or the character? That's it, not much deeper than that. This does explain why I've liked movies that other people just can't stand.

For comic book movies, I add one more item. Based on the technology of the day, did the comic action seem real? Why say based on tech, well the latest Superman film released had much better tech than the Superman movies with Christopher Reeve. But for its time, the older Superman movies did as well as they could, they were some of the best SFX during that time frame. I expect more from new movies than I do from older movies.

Now onto the movies...

Most of the Superman animated I've watched have been decent shows. The story lines on some of them would have made better movies than anything released to date. These seem to follow what I remember from the comic books better than any movie has done. In short, I am entertained by them. Well worth the money spent. I will tend to watch some of the shows more often than others, but as a set they are at least a 3 out of 5 stars.

Ironman... I left the movie and could honestly say I had enjoyed

it. There were parts that made me do some thinking (planned by the filmmakers of course), but that is what I expected going into the show. As with most of the comic book movies, there is a need to introduce the character to people who never read the comic. There is the big 3 of course (Superman, Batman and Spiderman) that could have gotten by without the "introduction" movie, but it seems that most others have to have that. Ironman was an introduction movie. We are given a background of the character, and how he became "Ironman", then the major "comic book" action sequence takes place. Without giving too much away, I found that the actors became the characters. Even though I knew most of them from other movies, they became the parts they played. Good writing and acting all around, I give this movie one of my better reviews scores.... I'll buy it when released.

My review scores for movies are (from best to worst) Both See it again categories will mean that I get the DVD later.

See it again (At the high priced place)

See it again (Cheap seats)

Buy the DVD when released

Rent the DVD when released

I'll watch if someone else has it

I don't ever want to see it again

Can I have my money back?

Leave the theater, and never tell anyone I saw it (you won't ever see this review mark, but if you ask about a movie, and I say I haven't seen it. Well I guess I could have, but it was a real stinker in my estimation.)

Recent Movie Ratings...

Spiderman I II and III all were See it again (cheap seats)

Superman Returns that was really a rent when the DVD comes out, but I bought it for my DVD collection of Superman movies
Fantastic Four – same as Superman Returns. I'm collecting Marvel Comic Movies too.

Batman Begins – See it again (cheap seats)

X-Men I, II, and III – See it again (cheap seats)

If you have comic book movies you want my long version review of, just ask

Thoughts of High School

My youngest was inducted into the National Honor Society this evening. And the Senior class gave their heartfelt thanks to a person who helped them in their young lives. I'm curious as to how many of these young people will remember what they said during this evening. Some will remember, because they truly felt that the individual mentioned made a very big influence on their lives. Some will not. Those that will not make me a little sad. They have to spend a few minutes at least thinking about what they can say about these people, and say something that at least sounds sincere. But in a few short years this will be a silent memory or blank page in their lives.

Many people have said that High School are the best days of your life. I, for one, am glad that they were not. I've had many better days since then. I have very few people I consider friends that I met while in High School. I did not do any long term bonding with any high school classmates. I still see a few around, and I'm friendly to them, but we are not good friends. My good friends I've met since High School. Once I was grown up enough to see what is actually good in people, and they were able to see it in me.

Back to the National Honor Society... I was never in it. I was invited to join both my Junior and Senior years, but turned it down. I felt that it was more of a "click" than

anything that would do me any good in my future. Did I make a mistake? Maybe, but I will never know. That person that had an influence on me... Yes, I had one. My High School Math teacher. I almost became a math teacher because of him. Since I didn't have his patience, I went into computers. He is still at the school, retired from teaching, but coaching the golf team. One of the students chose him as their inspirational person. He still has that touch.

Baseball again

My favorite team had a horrible start for the year, but they are finally starting to look like a ball team again. Not that this is anything new to me, I watched and followed the Tigers for all of the losing seasons. So many years it was like fielding a minor league team in the majors. So very hard to watch, but I did. Tonight I'm just rubbing it in a little that the Tigers beat the Yankees two games in a row now!!!. They haven't won many series (I'm thinking this is the 3rd with two ties), but it is very sweet every time they win the series against the Yankees. Can you tell I know a Yankees fan?? I've been a Yankees hater as long as I've been a Tiger fan. When the Tigers are out of the pennant race, I start rooting for anyone who is playing the Yankees (hee, hee).

Superman...

While I was heading to my eldest daughter's place last Saturday, I did a bit of shopping in the Toledo area. I was

looking for an animated Superman series on DVDs. I found them. What got me started on this, was finding Superman DVDs in the cheap section of some local stores. Anywhere from \$1 to \$8 for 4 stories. The animation was ok, but most of the story lines were very good. Not at all like the Superfriends that were on TV when I grew up. The producers of these shows seemed to put a bit of thought behind each story. I was happy with the few shows I had.

Then, I watch the complete Justice League on DVD. I'm fairly certain I have all the episodes. And there were references to things that happened in the Superman Series and maybe even Batman. I just had to get them to find out what went on. I tried looking to rent, but I figured out, I was just going to have to buy them. Lucky for me there was a special that day. I now own seasons 1 through 3. I watched Season 1 and will watch the others soon. A very good way to pass the time.

Now I have to see if I want the complete Batman and Batman Beyond series.....

Voices in the air

I'm sitting downstairs at the [theater](#) while tryouts are going on for "Little Women". My youngest is one of the singers/actors trying out. I'm sitting down here to get out of the way, and to make sure they don't ask me to try out. I don't sing, I don't dance, don't ask. But as I sit here we have some very lovely voices filling the air. I'm not sure who is who, but I think I heard my daughter once or twice. Me, I would hate trying to determine who would be in the show. For a small little theater in rural Ohio, we have a lot of very talented people. I'm sure the director will have a tough time

of it, but in the end this will make a better show.

Fun stuff theater. I've been involved in almost every aspect of it. I do stay away from musicals, except to run lights or back stage stuff. I've had lots of fun with all of it. This is sometimes my second home. So check out the [dates of the show](#) and come on by.