

# Limping along

For the past week I've been limping along on my sore foot. Silly injury caused by yours truly. I'm still hoping that this makes me a bit more careful while doing household chores, but only time will tell.

I had play rehearsal tonight and I limped my way through the paces. I desperately need to get the script out of my hands. Time is moving quickly, and the show will be here before I can blink twice.

It does have the makings of a very good show. I'm looking forward to having an audience. It has been a while since I've felt that way about a show I've been in.

In other areas, things have been changing. Life is getting interesting. I do believe I like the changes. It should be fun.

And one other different thing this September, the Tigers are doing very well. Right now they look to be playoff bound. I'm looking forward to it.

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## **20,000 Leagues to Dearborn, MI**

Give or take a few leagues.

Last weekend, Sunday to be exact, I was attending my first Steampunk convention. To explain what this is, I tried to come up with all sorts of analogies. The best I could come up with is to think of Disney's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. From the

time they board the Nautilus, the movie turns to what is now known as steampunk. Other movies of this genre are League of Extraordinary Gentlemen and Frankenstein. All of the Victorian era clothing, marked by advanced inventions powered by steam or clockworks.

I was thrilled to spend the day with my oldest daughter, her husband and my lovely step-granddaughter. I was able to pick up some steampunk garb and blend into the convention a little more than my jeans and t-shirt allowed. I know I will wear the coat more when the weather is appropriate.

Now, I have been asked why I would want to do anything of this sort. Easy answer, it was a lot of fun. Going to the events themselves is an eye opening experience, going in "garb" makes it a total immersion. I know I will never get to the point of digging local garage sales and flea markets for pieces of brass, but the theater nut in me will complete at least one set of clothing to wear next year.

It was a step out of my usual comfort zone. And I enjoyed myself that day. Maybe next year a comic book convention. I always wanted to be a super hero, or villain.

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## **Just when I thought I expanded my vocabulary,**

I found out that I did not know what the letters "NO" mean when put together. I really thought I could put those letters to good use. I really thought I was able to grasp the meaning. I thought I would be able to find some time for this or that. I'm afraid I haven't. Available time? poof! Not showing up at a theater 3 or more nights a week. Sure!. What were those

letters again? I need to look the up in my Funk and Wagnalls. OF Course I will help out a friend or two...

But on to the good news. I'm only in the light booth. Only 3 or so short weeks. No lines to memorize. And I have my youngest daughter there to help me out. Not a bad deal. On top of that, I get to see every show for free and that is in some of the best seats in the house. Ok, maybe not the best seats, but they will always be there. Cute show, so I shouldn't get tired of it too quickly. On top of that, it really changes every night.

But I'm not sure of all these Christmas Carols before Thanksgiving...

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## **An Evening at the Theater**

I'm at a bit of a quandary. On one hand I could put this post in my personal blog. On the other hand I could put it in the theater blog. I guess I will write it up and see where it goes.

I just saw the WCCT's very own Denver Henderson give his performance as Samuel Clemens or as he is more commonly know as Mark Twain. Denver has performed a Mark Twain monologue many times, but this was my first chance to see it. I'm kicking myself for not having the drive to see it at the earlier performances. I missed out on a truly enjoyable time.

I've seen the Hal Holbrook version of Mark Twain on TV once or twice, and I've seen a PBS special on the life of Mark Twain. Denver has the mannerisms and timing of his subject down cold. Since I am a fan of Mark Twain's work, I have been exposed to most if not all of the material from tonights performance.

There was nothing new. The wonderful thing about that is this. This was 100+ year old stuff. It was as fresh, timely and as humorous this evening as it must have been during Twain's life time.

My only complaint is that the show just wasn't long enough. I could have spent hours on end listening to the stories and watching an actor I know become Mark Twain. Until the question and answer period after the show, I wasn't watching my friend Denver on stage, I was watching Mark Twain. This show took me back to the time of river boats and crooked politicians (Oh wait, the politicians never left). I really want to go back.

I've been told that there will be another performance in the spring. I would strongly recommend that if you see it advertised, clear the date. This is one performance you should not miss. To paraphrase Mr Twain and Mr. Henderson, I just like to hear him speak.

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## **Where everybody knows your name.**

I don't often mosey into a bar, plunk down my cash and drink a beer or two. In fact, going to bars is generally foreign to me. Before the Ohio smoking ban, I couldn't stand to be in one for more than 30 minutes. But, I occasionally enjoy a quite evening at a local establishment. The reason is quite simple, I know the bartenders. Since we have all been involved with the theater, I've known them for years. I knew them before they tended this specific bar.

Anyway, every once in a while, I will stop, get a bite or two to eat, and enjoy a drink. Then more often than not, I sit

with a water while watching Jeopardy. I happened to be there this evening, since after my eye exam, I wanted someplace dark to sit. It started out as a nice quite early evening.

Then one theater person came in, and shortly left. We talked a bit, but he couldn't stick around too long. Then another theater friend came in, and we talked 'shop' for quite a long time. More theater people came by and everyone ordered their dinners.

To me the surroundings seemed like a friendly family dinner. We laughed, sighed and some even shared a song or two. Yes, I was in that place where everyone knew my name. Fun evening.

Now for me, this will never be a weekly event. I still tend to like quieter places. I have been, and probably always will be a 'small group' person. The fewer the people, the more I like it. Yes, that goes down to sitting by myself. I've never had a problem being alone. I guess growing up in a larger family helped me cherish the alone time. Good thing that I honestly like myself. □ From the years I spent with my wife, I learned to like that one on one time. Time to get to understand and know one other person. Time to listen and sometimes to share. Smaller groups allow some of this sharing, as we can all be part of one conversation. Everyone can be included

Larger groups, the conversations scatter in the wind. They tend to break up into those smaller groups. The unfortunate thing is that sometimes people are left out of any of the small groups. And no one seems to notice it. Except those that are left out, and those that choose to remain aloof. This happens in many large gatherings. No known cure, it is human nature. The extroverts have no trouble adapting. The introverts have trouble joining the gathering or like to observe. And then there are those, like me (now), I can join the group, or I can sit on the outside looking in. I have no trouble joining a group (after many years of theater), but I've always enjoyed watching people.

(I think my randomness tonight is flowing well. I went from a topic of dinner and bars on to personality types.)

Back to the bar...

I was a joiner/observer this evening. I enjoyed my salad (yes, I was slightly healthy tonight, ordered deep fried mushrooms later), my drink and the company. I watched, I listened and I learned a thing or two. I interjected, talked and shared one or two things.

I enjoyed the similarities and shared the differences. I said many times that my theater family helped me in troubled times. I was not troubled today, but the theater family gave me an hour or two of fun. Today was a good day to live.

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## **I found it...**

But then again, I knew I would. I started to look for a version of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" after watching a very poor version from 1959. As such things go, I found more than what I set out to find. A complete set of Jeremy Brett's Sherlock Holmes stories from the BBC. I remember watching these with great fascination when they were shown on PBS many years ago. In the short time I've watched again, I still think that Mr. Brett gave one of the best performances of the great detective. Great fun this.

I normally do not watch programs of plays I am in. I tend to want to give my own performance as a character, instead of bringing what another actor did at an earlier time. In this case, the character in the play is a bit different than those of the movies.

Movies in their magic, can go more places than we can go on

stage. That allows characters to be developed more fully. It is a wonderful thing that we do on stage to bring our characters to life. And I look forward to doing it one more time. Back on stage with one of my favorite characters.

Should be fun...

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## Mid May? Really?

Take 2?

Cool weather for mid-May, and I have a fire going in the fireplace. I have had no other heat since the some time in April and I will start a fire in the evening if needed. The cool damp weather calls for that fire.

Started the fire a bit later than I normally would since I had to rehearse today. I just found out that the Dinner theater I am in on the Weekend of the 22nd is sold out. A week and a half before the show. Wow!! It has been a while since I've been involved in a sold out show. Should be fun.

I also found out that the last show I was in is destined to go to regional contest. I'm not sure about this. I liked the characters, but I was ready to let the show go when it was over. Can't really say I am looking forward to this. That is two years in a row that a show I was in was elected to go to our regional contest. Last year I had a good excuse not to go. I don't think there are any weddings planned for this year's contest (there better not be...) But maybe a family party? Something that I could use? Is that the weekend my youngest has to move home from College? Hmmm.

Oh well, the fire needs another log tossed on it.

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## **Finding a way**

I'm involved with another theatrical production, as I've stated earlier. I've only been to a few rehearsals, and I'm tired of it. I don't think it is the show, or the actors in the show. I have a good time when I am there, but before I get there and after I leave I experience a feeling numbness. I'm just tired of the whole thing. I really wish I would have stayed on my theater break. I don't want to study lines, learn blocking or any of the other things needed for this show. I have other things I feel like doing instead.

I wonder how long this feeling will last. I need to learn how to say no. I need to focus on projects I am really interested in and ignore the ones that I have just a passing interest in.

Oh well, the show must go on, and I will soldier through.

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## **You're doing what?**

Well, I received an email last Friday. It was a request for my 'acting' ability. I have been on a self imposed hiatus from theater, so I didn't think I would be doing any sort of acting in the near future. I was wrong. I will be the understudy for one of the actors. He can't do all of the performances, so I will do the one he will miss. I'm just lucky it is a small role with very easy dialog. I get to be a love struck honeymooner. I've done that role once in real life, I think I can handle it. I played that role for 20 years.



This will be a little different. It is a dinner theater with audience participation. I'm looking forward to it. The audience will be sitting around and in the middle of our acting. Should be fun. The character I have doesn't have too much interaction with the audience, but I do have to be aware of where they are located during my various scenes.

I will have to get some information as to the cost of the performances. Should be interesting.

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## **A special place in 'MY' acting hall of fame**

One line in a response pushed me to write this post. I don't think I've written about it before, but I remember telling a friend or two, so if you've heard it before, just be patient with me.

Way back in 1997, somebody asked me for suggestions on shows for the play house to do. I was a rank newbie to the theater, but I gave a suggestion or two. The play at the top of my list was "Harvey". It seems that the playhouse did this show before, and they were not ready to do it again. Year after year, I suggested that show. Finally, after a lot of persuasion, and maybe just to shut me up, the show was scheduled for some time in 2006. I tried out for the show and was given the lead role of Elwood Dowd. A dream come true for me. I would have done anything on that show just to be able to watch it, but I was able to be in it. I was thrilled.

One thing did put a damper on that. My lovely wife died in 2003 and would not be by my side during the rehearsals and production of this show. This was a bit of a stress for me

during the early rehearsals of the show. Finally something changed. I needed some props for the show. One was the cards that Elwood was so fond of passing out, another a notebook of his favorite watering holes. And the third an billfold with some cash and other peoples calling cards. The little notebook, and many of the 'calling' cards belonged to my late wife. From that time on, I had a little bit of her on stage with me.

Then came my largest discovery. I was able to think of Harvey as my lovely wife standing on the footstool in the kitchen. This would have put her at the exact height needed for Harvey. So from the time of that thought, until the end of the run, every time I looked at Harvey on stage, I was peering into the eyes of my wife.

Many times she said she never wanted to be on stage. She never wanted any recognition for anything she did for the theater. She wanted to remain anonymous. Well except for in my eyes, she was never on the stage. Her name was not listed in the bios, but she was on stage with me for every performance. I gave my all to that show. I pushed myself farther than I ever thought I could. And every night I looked into the eyes of my wife, shared a drink or two and was finally able to say "Where have you been, I've been looking all over for you."

No matter what comes after that show, all things pale when in that light.