

# Have truck, will deliver

Or the continuing story of 1 guy and his truck.

I have a small bed pickup (2004 Chevy Colorado, crew cab), and I do use this thing as a truck. I bought it to be a truck, and to move people (hence the crew cab), and that is how I use it.

A couple of weekends ago it was used to carry 5 people to an animal park and haunted house. Approx 4 hour drive (not including the animal park) and everyone got home safe. Today it was used as a truck. Moving a few pieces of furniture needed for the latest stage production, I visited 3 houses and pick up 1 coffee table, 1 stereo rack, 1 couch, a couple of posters and 1 folding table. Not all in one trip, the couch took up the rear bed with the gate down.

This is not the first time I've used my truck to move various things for the theater, or myself. Over the past four years, I've moved lots of firewood, plywood, refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, stuff from my daughter's apartment, equipment needed for a magic show, stage flats, and almost anything else that could fit in the bed.

After 4 years, I still like this truck. Even with gas being \$4.00 a gallon, I like this truck.

I hope to keep the truck for a good long time, and I plan on driving it until it drops. Still get around 25 miles to the gallon on the highway (no load), so it isn't really too bad to drive to and from work. And I guess for the next few years, the people I know will say, I know somebody with a truck, and he doesn't mind moving things....

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# Another take on Haunted Houses...

I've always been a big fan of Halloween and Haunted Houses, so when our little theater started to look into doing something like this, I jumped at the chance. The very first "Haunted House" I went to was actually someone's house. Just for Halloween they would bring in a real casket, and the owner of the house was dressed as Dracula. The candy dish was placed on his chest. Every so often he would move to grab a kid. Sent you right through the roof. Of course you wanted to be that kid he moved on because his wife (a witch) would give you an extra candy bar.

Now on to other haunted houses and Halloween. Believe it or not, there are people who don't like haunted houses. For some it has everything to do with their religion. Now, as long as they aren't out there preventing my fun, my hat is off to these folks. To take a stand, because of their moral views, counter to the societal views is laudable. Others are simply frightened too much by them, and they don't enjoy it. Nothing wrong with that either.

There is a third group. They may or may not belong to either of the two other groups. People who have experienced a loss of someone close (spouse, sibling, parent) may not like the idea of having fun with death. While I've lost a brother and both parents, the loss of my wife made me see this more. The other deaths could be explained away (didn't help the grief, but the logic was there). My wife's death was something out of the blue. Never saw it coming. Generally her family had very long life spans. I could then see how people would be upset and troubled with the fundamental ideas behind Halloween and Haunted Houses. The gravestones, skeletons, zombies, ghouls and ghost can all bring up some troubling memories. I can see where that would really change a person's view on the whole

Halloween event. And that doesn't even go into the sight of seeing something in a Halloween display that reminds you of your loved one's death. That is very troubling.

So I guess because of this, I do draw a few lines. I don't like, and won't go to a haunted house based on a hospital. I don't like haunted houses with a lot of suicide themes. There are other things that can be just as scary that don't touch these areas. It just takes a bit of insight.

Of course, even after my wife's death, I couldn't completely give up on Halloween, it was one of her favorite holidays. I can have fond memories of past Halloweens by carrying on the celebration of the day in the future.

Happy Haunting...

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## **The Sandusky Haunting...**

I was one of the "Brave and foolhardy" souls that went through [Ghostly Manor](#) three times. I really enjoyed my trips through the haunted manor. Now I will admit that there were a few things that startled me, all three times we went through the manor. This is one of the best haunted houses I've been through. The 4 actors in the house did a wonderful job keeping us on our toes. This is a slow period for them, so they could pay attention to the groups that went through. To startle us more, they would pop up in different areas than the last time we went through.

This house is definitely a high budget, top of the line haunted house. The animated figures, and amount of work that went into this house are top of the line. I will have to admit to having a self serving motive for going through three times.

Our Little theater (see links on the side) is in the process of planning our own "Haunted Tour". Not the normal haunted house with dark mazes and tight winding hallways. We don't have the budget or manpower to pull that off. We need ways to scare people that have more to do with theatrics, and less to do with the hardware. If this group of actors can't scare people, I don't know who can.

I think I found a few things that gave me pause during the tours, that could be done on a limited budget. On the second third trips, I was able to concentrate on the hows, wheres and whys of the way things startled me. The first time through I was letting go, just to have a good time. I think we even thought of ways to improve the house we went through. May have to go back to see if they listened.

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## The Phantom ...

Tollbooth.

The current wonderful production by the [WCCT](#) children's workshop, is [the Phantom Tollbooth](#)". Performed entirely by young people between the ages of 7 and 17, this little production is quite charming. While it is the culmination of 1 month of hard work by children and parents alike, the show is not the whole story. The children learn a little bit about the workings of live stage productions (Yes, things go wrong... more on that later) both on and off stage. They get to work at finding some of their own props, costumes. They help build (sometimes) and paint the set. Most of the kids I talked to think it is a great experience and many come out year after year.

They find out, year after year, that sometimes people forget

their lines, and someone else needs to do something to help out (Good life advice there too). They find out that sometimes the props they need aren't there, and they have to improvise something (sometimes this works, other times it doesn't-sounds like real life again doesn't it?). They find that sometimes things break, and you have to get along without it for a while (More life lessons..). It looks like in a one month period of time, they learn a lot about the theater, and even more about life. Most of them don't realize they are learning anything but their lines. Good for them and their futures.

I should have written this sooner, so some of the background readers would have had a chance to see this show. Tomorrow is the last show, and I'm not sure how many seats are left.

I wouldn't be a father if I didn't say the best Humbug I ever saw was the one portrayed by my youngest. Not so young anymore, this is her final Childrens' theater workshop. Now she will have to earn her roles if she decides to stay active in Community Theater.

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## **I'm only a Stage actor, really!!**

Ok, I like playing the part of the villain. I like talking about murder and mayhem. I'm not really like that at all. Really!!

But I just read a [news article](#) where apparently someone was just like that. I guess that if I ever really committed a crime, the last part I would want on stage is a character who commits the same crime.

I think I may follow this story, if I can. I can see bits of it a the basis for a play.. Sick sense of humor, true...

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## Interesting evening

Last night I went to a show, live stage production that is. The show has already been mentioned in one of the other Tangent blogs, but I have a little different take on the whole thing. I happen to like "The Music Man". I liked the movie version, and I've liked most of the stage productions I've seen. There have only been a couple, but that is because they tried doing too much with too little. You need to have a large cast for this, including children. While you don't need a whole town, you do need enough on stage to let the audience believe there is a whole town.

It is a light hearted musical to be sure, most late 1950's to early 1960's American musicals were light hearted. It was the mood of the country.

I'm not sure why I enjoy this show so much. Could it be I remember my father singing 76 Trombones when I was younger? Could it be that I enjoyed teasing my sister about her only career choice (Marian the Librarian)? Did I have a subliminal desire to be in a boys' band?— Nah.. I really don't know. Maybe it is because they didn't play this on the TV as often as they did "The Sound of Music"? It could also be that since I am a big Beatles fan, having hear "Till there was you" in "The Music Man" just made the show more interesting.

Anyway to this day, I enjoy a well performed version of "The Music Man", and Saturday's performance was one of the best I've seen live. Believable actors, good chemistry, nice set design made this show flow. I'll point you to the other [blog](#)

for a more in depth review, I don't need to waste my words, when something is already written. The only thing I disagree on is I like the show, he doesn't. I would like to add that I really enjoyed the young actress who played Marian. It could be some hometown bias here, but I really enjoy watching her on stage.

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## **Just thinking about things...again**

Today was the first day I've been to a play tryout where I didn't read for a role. I was just there as a producer. It was kind of fun just sitting there watching others try out. No worries, no trying to figure out a role/persona. I really enjoyed myself. We had some new people trying out for roles, and it is good to get new blood in the theater. We just can't have the same people in shows over and over again. I'm all for the new people getting parts.

I'm currently listening to the Tigers and Indians baseball game. The big difference is I'm listening to it on the Indian's Radio network, instead of the Tiger's Radio Network. I find it strange that the announcers don't seem to know the Tigers. Maybe it is because I don't know the other teams as well, but I don't think the Tiger's announcers are nearly as bad when it comes to the Cleveland games. I have caught them in other games, not knowing players, but you should know your division rivals. Cleveland/Detroit has been a big rivalry for as long as I can remember. I would think the Indians announcers would do better. The only reason I listen the the Indian station, is that I get it on all of the radios in the house. The Tiger station, I need to be in the car, or get my

daughters battery powered portable to hear it. Even then, it is very touchy as to location, and direction of the antenna. Tiger's just won!

Need to get some time off work soon. I enjoyed the 3 day weekend, but I would like to get time off to see my family all over the country. I guess I need to talk with the peoples in charge at work.

I'm looking forward to a movie or two with my girls this weekend. I'm going to have some time with both daughters at home so it is possible.

Suffering from a sore back for the past few days (it seems like weeks). Not much I can do about it other than resting it. Slow walking, moderate stretching, and making sure my back is supported while sitting are all helping. Not sure what I did to pull the muscles, but it was nagging for a while.

I haven't watched much network or cable TV (other than part of a ball game) all summer. Can't say I miss it. I went a few years, while working 2nd shift, without TV, I am guessing I could continue for a long time. Being in the middle of the woods, I don't have cable (to far in the country) or satellite (too many trees). I don't see myself getting those anytime soon. I really think I could live without TV. Owned or rented movies, well that is a different story.

I really guess that is about it. I am thinking of upcoming days that will be happening in July so I will have more to write about at a later date...

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# waste of time and gas

As a few of my blog readers already know, the meetings I attended this evening were very short. In my opinion they were as waste of my time and gas. I imagine if we were to get compensated for gas on these meetings (ha ha), there would be less of them, and they would accomplish something. That will never happen of course.

If it were not for seeing friends of my during and after the meeting, I would have said something there. I drive over 10 miles to get to the meeting, and I don't make that trip lightly anymore. Any trips I make into town have dual purpose. I'm going to carefully consider dropping my committee membership. I mean it isn't like we get anything done at these meetings. I've been to more meetings now than in past years, and I only recall one thing getting done at these meetings. The producers and directors of the shows for the season were selected at one of them. I think that was the first. Every other order of business could be done by email, or phone calls. I really don't see the point.

The more I write, the more I feel compelled to leave the committee. I guess I could just stop going. According to the rules, if I miss too many meetings, without letting someone know, I should be kicked off. Hmmm, nah I'll just quit after the end of the year. I don't need to be on it next year at all.

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## I thought I was done...

One more post about Little Women.

We left a good portion of 'stuff' on stage after the Little Women tear down. It belonged to various people and places that the director, and set designer knew. They came back this morning to load up a truck with these items. I volunteered to help move it.

After figuring out how to get the various large pieces out the door, and moving all the small stuff into the truck the job was finished in under 1/2 hour. The director of the next show (The Phantom Tollbooth – Children's Theater) was there helping, and getting design help for her show. So our theater will be seeing the designs of a very talented person two shows in a row. I think it is too bad that these shows aren't part of our regular season and will not be up for any awards. I may have to talk to someone on whatever committee decides on that sort of stuff. Maybe we could come up with a special award. This of course depends on what the set looks like for the Children's theater □ . I'm sure it will look great.

In any event, look for more post on the up coming production, I'm in it again doing lights and sound. My complaints, comments and praises will be here.

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## **Life lessons at the theater...**

I'm not going to write about how good the show was (again). I'm just going to write a little bit about some life lessons I've learned over the years at our little theater.

Many hands make light work. After the shows we usually need to tear down the set to make room and clean up for the next production coming in. This is much easier with a large cast. Many people working on various parts of the set will bring it down quickly. Smaller shows, we beg and plead for people to

come and help.

Help others when needed. At times people will forget their lines, or forget to enter when needed. It is up to the rest of the cast to keep the show going. Ad-lib lines here and there, line prompting during a hug, someone else saying the line (if this works), or just smoothly skipping by the flub, are ways we help each other on stage.

Not everyone is a Star. You can't always have top billing. Sometimes you need to support the front people. It is part of theater, it is part of life.

Even the Star needs support. Even in shows with only one actor on stage, usually has many people behind the scenes. From lighting to props there is always somebody looking out for you.

All jobs are important. That backstage manager that never shows up on stage is sometimes seen as unneeded, until the day they can't make the show. Then the props aren't on stage where they should be, and the flow of the show just goes down.

Satisfy the customer. If you don't do a good job, and leave the customer satisfied, they won't be back. Repeat business is essential.

Relax, have fun! One of the most important things I've learned. If you are relaxed and having fun on stage everything flows more smoothly. It works in the real world as well. You can't always have fun in theater or real life (some jobs are just the pits), but you can try relax and make the best of the situation.

Be ready for the unexpected. In live performances almost anything can happen. Be prepared for it. You may never need to know what to do when something on stage breaks, but you have to go with the flow. In life, this makes very good sense too.

Do your best. No matter what job/part you have do your best, it makes it easier for you and for those around you.

Do your job. If your job is telling people what to do, do that. If that isn't in your job/part description, refrain from doing it. Sometimes it is nice for new actors to get a helpful hint from other actors, sometimes not. Make sure that your helpful hints are just that. They should not sound like directives, those should come from the director.

But then again, Share your knowledge. An additional note about the above. Telling someone what you do to help remember lines, or stage directions is a good thing. Helping someone get over a bit of stage fright, also good. Knowledge of any field (except secret stuff) is best shared.

Goodbyes can be hard. We all need to say goodbye to someone every so often. Sometimes you know you may never see the person again. Make the best of the time you have with people, it will show benefits in your life.

Life is a stage, where we are the actors and the audience...