

Late night theatrics

I was privileged to work the light booth for another wonderful show. The time is drawing near when the last curtain will be dropped. In most cases, this is a mixture of joy and sorrow. Happy that the show is finally over, but sadness of a cast breaking up.

It is our custom in this theater for some sort of gifts to be exchanged during the run of the show. Gifts from cast to director and/or director to cast. This show was no exception, except for the type of gift. Most gifts tend to be 'gag' gifts or little reminders of the show. This plays gift from the director was a CD full of pictures taken during a dress rehearsal. So we get to see the costumes and actions on the set. The other gift was a well framed cast/crew picture. It is a treasure.

As the light booth guy, I'm preparing my gift for the cast. A little something I hope everyone will like. As there is a cast member or two that read this blog, I can't give too much information. It's just a little something that can be added to the programs most actors keep.

It has been a good run, and I will miss seeing it every night. From the guy who has seen the show for a week longer than its run, that is saying something. From the light booth, I'm generally tired of the show after the opening night. It is a wonderful show, and some what of a challenge to set the lighting just right.

And next week, I can write about different things, and not pay so much attention to "Little Women"

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....

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.

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 Musicals (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.

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.

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.

Now on to other thoughts...

My youngest is growing up, she is now a Junior in High School, and in her Second to last High School play. She only had a small role, but to me she was the loveliest lady in waiting on stage. I tried to follow her every time she appeared on stage, and every time I felt a pain in my heart. This is another one of those times when I hate being a widower. Her mother should have been there to watch this.

This is not the first show my dear wife hasn't been to, and knowing my daughters it will not be the last. It startles me every time I watch them perform. Every time I feel that same sadness in my heart. Knowing it will come doesn't seem to help much. While I don't break down into tears much anymore, the emptiness is still very real. I can't be both parents, I can only be the Dad. I try my best, but that isn't always good enough, at least not for me. Not a lot more to say on this right now as I wonder what the next time will bring.

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.

Family, Fun and Charlie Brown

One of the things I remember from my childhood, is reading the comic strips of Charles M. Shultz. The Peanuts strip. I read them in the paper, I read them in book form. At one point I even had a Snoopy dressed in a space suit. To this day I will occasionally pick up and re-read one of the books I have, or put in a video of one of the seasonal specials. My wife and I had both liked the Peanuts Characters. And now, I assume my children like them too.

Today with family I saw a theater production of "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown". This is the second time I saw this show. The first was over 25 years ago when I was in College. My roommate played the part of Snoopy. Seeing this show with my youngest daughter, my dear wife's parents and sister, and a young niece was a trip to the past for me.

For those of you who don't know the show, it is a full musical filled interspersed with "panels" almost straight from the funny pages. Of the show I saw 25 years ago, the only thing I could remember was the "Suppertime" song that Snoopy sang. My roommate was blessed with a very fine singing voice, and wonderful acting ability. He was one human who could make you believe he was a dog. Not just any dog, but the one and only WWI flying Ace beagle. The Snoopy of today's show at the point

of "Suppertime" had me re-living that one short segment of my life. Good memories.

As good as the show was, the best part was seeing and being with family. My In-laws are some of the best people I know. Not always perfect, but who is? For my children reading this, of course I know who is perfect. That was a rhetorical question. Back to the family... In the years after my wife's death, I have come to appreciate the good relationship that I developed with them over the years. So many times people treat there spouses family as outsiders. I tried to treat my wife's family as my own, and I hope they treat me the same. When I got married so many years ago, my wife and I decided that we would accept both families as our own. That didn't mean there was always smooth sailing. There were many "disagreements" between various members, but I bicker with my natural family, why should the same go on with the in-law side. The point here is that even today, four years after the death of a wife, daughter, sister, and aunt they are still my family, and that my friends is something to be happy about.