

You've got the what?

I now have permission to write this blog. The news has been spreading and most of the people that needed to know, know. So with this post we will all be more knowledgeable.

Last weekend, my oldest left a message on my cell phone for me to call her. Her news was that she had three bars. Being bit dense, I thought 5 bars was good for cell phones. She was talking about different bars. Apparently my oldest is expecting her first child. So I have a grandchild coming into the world. Great news for this grandfather. I'm rather looking forward to being able to spoil a grandchild within easy visiting distance.

Those who know me, know that my two oldest daughters both have step-children. As far as I'm concerned these are my grandkids too. Unfortunately, I do not get to visit with them as often as I would like. Two of these children are many miles away, and I don't have the time or cash to be able to take off at the drop of a hat to visit. I surely wish I was able to, but right now I can't. My other granddaughter doesn't get to visit very often, situation is complex, as often happens. So now I will have a grandchild only 1 hour away. Great for the child, but I'm not sure how the parents will react. Hee! Hee!

Now for the fun part. My future grand child already has a nickname. When darling daughter was calling people to let them know about the future happenings, she called her grandparents. They were involved in this or that, and wondered if my daughter could call back. My daughter, with her usual humor, responded: "Sure, I've got 9 months." Her grandmother heard: "Sure, I've got the mumps." It apparently took a bit of explaining to get across the wording of "9 Months". Grandma kept hearing mumps. I really would have liked to be a fly on the wall for that conversation. Anyway, my future grandchild's current nickname is Mumps.

It should be a fun time in NW Ohio for the next few months, or even years.

Winter Weather Ahead

I'm all cozy at home waiting for a winter storm. We already have about 3.5 to 4 inches of snow on the ground with up to another 12 inches still coming. I realize that for some parts of this country, that is just flurries, but for my part of Ohio, that is a major storm. We just aren't equiped to handle that much snow. My guess is that if we get that much, there will be some level of snow emergency here. Oh well, I have plenty of food and firewood.

The house is very comfortable, I finished a wonderful bowl of stew, some fruit and a cup of tea. The creature comforts are here. I wish I could say everything was going well, but I'm missing an evening with friends tonight and my youngest is a bit under the weather. That, of course, is the way of life.

As I've said this part of Ohio is not used to this much snow. There are many High School basketball games being canceled. Dance classes canceled. Bingo Canceled. And the biggest thing that indicates bad weather, the outlet mall nearby will be opening later in the day than normal... Shock of all shocks!!!

Planned events for the weekend – canceled or postponed, but I'm home safe and fairly sound. That my friends makes a good evening for me. Now off to study my lines....

Late night thoughts

I usually spend Saturday evenings at my oldest daughter's house. This is 1 hour away from where I live, so it is a bit of a drive to get home. We go late into the evening playing all sort of games, the normal game is some sort of 'role playing' game. The games are always fun for me, but that is not the focus of this post.

Nope, the focus is my thoughts on the drive home, and the 45 minutes to an hour I need to spend to 'unfocus' from my drive home. Driving late at night, I push my body awake. Kind of like a coffee kick without the coffee. I can just force myself to be alert, unless I'm really very tired. This comes in very handy on long drives, or other activities that need my full attention. It is a 'gift' I've always had. As with all gifts, there is a downside. It does take some time to unwind.

Anyway after all this, I was thinking on the drive home about where I am in life. I am an only parent, but my daughters are growing up. Two are married and out of the house, one is engaged to be married soon, the youngest is now a senior in High School, just months from turning 18. They don't need their dad as much as they did 5 short years ago. I've been a widower for 5 years, so in most peoples eyes I would be considered single. I won't go into the ins and outs of all the differences with this label, but for me, I prefer the widower label to the single label. I never made the choice to be alone, it was kind of forced on me. That in and of itself is enough for me.

I now know of some people trying to 'set me up'. Dating, while it has crossed my mind, isn't my main concern. I'm not out there looking. If someone falls in my lap, so to speak, I guess I wouldn't mind. But looking for someone to be with is not my primary goal right now. I have good friends, wonderful daughters, somewhat strange, but likable family, and hobbies

that keep my mind occupied. I've been busy trying to find out who I am. For so many years I was part of a well oiled team. That team got split up, and now I'm a solo act. I'm just starting to find out what is important to me. There really hasn't been any time to spend dating. I'm not even sure I want to go through the hassle of getting to know someone again. Never enjoyed that when younger, I'm fairly certain I won't now. My wife and I kind of just clicked together. Not from the first meeting, but within a few dates, it was like we knew each other forever. Spent 20 years both knowing her and getting to know her better, not a bad way to spend 20 years. Now, I'm not even sure what I would be looking for, but then again, I wasn't sure 25+ years ago either.

I was also thinking about my weekly gaming sessions at my daughter's house. Does this infringe on the time I should be spending with the two younger daughter still (at least somewhat) in the 'nest'? Do they need more of my time, or is this a good use of my time. I tend to enjoy the gaming, and it does relax me. Good point in dealing with the day to day troubles/situations my two at home can give me. I'm thinking I should just talk to the other 2 involved. Yep, that is the answer there.

Also thinking about how much time I should spend with the theater. Yes, I'm currently preparing for a show, I'm on the production board, I tend to volunteer for other projects. Am I spending too much time there?

Do I spend too much time blogging? Yes, sometimes I do. (like now) Could I use time better? Sure. Are other interests suffering from this? You betcha. But this is the place I clear my head, so I have more room to fit all the other stuff going on. Doesn't need to be a daily habit, but the clearing is beneficial.

Yes, all this and more went through my brain on an hour drive. Now I've relaxed and I'm able to get much needed

rest. Read through at the playhouse later this afternoon.

Do you wonder?

A day like today was made for wondering. Warm (for January) and very sunny. A day made for quiet reflection. To sit and see the sun shining through the trees with a fire in the fireplace was most enjoyable. With the warm temperature of the day, the fire has now been allowed to fade. The sun is doing an wonderful job providing extra heat to the house. It is comfortable.

So in these times of quiet reflection, I often wonder about the past and future. More of the future now, than the past, but the past does have a place in my heart.

So today I'm wondering what my future holds. What the futures of my daughters' holds. It is enough to wonder. I don't need any answers yet, the wondering and pondering of this is enough.

My hope is that my daughters are happy in life. I had a very happy life for twenty years. I would hope for at least the same for my daughters.

I don't need to wonder about the past anymore. The past is just that, the past. It is over, the wondering is over. The past is a place to store memories of the hopes of days gone by. A place to keep memories, both good and bad.

Do you wonder about your future? The future of those you love? Today, tomorrow, next month? Do you make plans, or just live day by day? What happens when the plans fail? Do you wonder?

My plans in life are simple. I want to be content. I was happy and sad. Happy is very good. Sad is not so good. Content is restful. Today I am content.

New Year, comfortable habit

New Year's eve and I toasted in the new Year. I've made that toast with the same beverage for the Since New Years Eve 1983/1984. My future brother-in-law brought some Piesporter with him. My future wife did not care for wines at all really liked this wine. From that date on, we shared a bottle of some type of Piesporter. It has been a holiday tradition for a long time.

After her death, I kept buying that type of wine for both New Year's Eve and our Anniversary. I have not shared the bottle with anyone until last night. In the past few years, if I was out for the evening, I would save my toast until I got home. I didn't feel like sharing this wine. This year I spent the evening with some good friends. I did share my bottle with those who wanted it.

If they enjoyed the wine, that was wonderful. If they didn't care for it, it doesn't matter. I also shared a bottle of the same wine with family and friends on the anniversary of her death. This is the first year, I've shared the wine. It may not mean a lot to those who shared with me, but in mind it had a lot of meaning.

To those who shared, thank you for accepting a gift from my heart, and helping me remember the good times I did have for many years.

Happy New Year.

All this and something more

Did you every have a day you thought would have turned out differently? Did you ever expect one thing, and have something else happen? To answer those questions, yes, I did. Yesterday was one of those days.

It was decided earlier that my daughters and I would go to the Zoo to see the Christmas Light display before it closed for the season. As a family we've always enjoyed visiting the light display. As a family we were members since 1984. The Lights before Christmas started in 1986 and has been our family tradition since that date. We took our small children in strollers, pushed grandfathers (due to health or injury) on wheelchairs. We took relatives from warmer climates on very cold evenings. We even went on cold rainy nights. It was a winter escape. As a family we enjoyed the evenings together.

Since 2003, we have not been able to attend as a complete family. My wife was too ill to take the cold weather in her final month, and I stayed with her. She hasn't been there since that year of course. The years following one daughter or another has not been there as we toured the lights. This year my daughter in Florida was not in Ohio to attend. I am very sorry she missed it again.

So three of my daughters, my son-in-law, some friends when to the lights, on the 5th anniversary of my dear wife's death. I thought a melancholy day was in order. I forgot who much I enjoy the company of my family and friends. I also forgot the magic of seeing hundreds of colorful lights. A day of memories and togetherness. Not really a sad memory last night at all.

After the evening of lights, we went to my eldest daughter's

house and shared a glass of wine and bit of dinner. A toast to her memory and more conversation. A wonderful night. I needed that. It was another healing effect on my life. Family is wonderful.

So what did you get for Christmas?

Sometimes it isn't the gift, it is the thought behind it. Sometimes it is the gift. Sometimes it is both. Over the years I've had plenty of wonderful gifts. Sometimes they are things I specifically ask for. For the gift giver, it is very easy to get me exactly the gift I wanted. Sometimes the gift I want is very extravagant, and should be out of the range of anyone getting me gifts. Sometimes this is where have four daughters really pays some benefits to me. While I only get 1 gift from them, it is something I really want, and would never buy for myself.

Take two years ago, all for girls went in on an "official" Indiana Jones Fedora. I would have made to with any nice looking brown fedora, but they got me a very well made replica. I realize I should have put in in a case just to look at but I wear it almost every day. Fedoras are not made for heavy winds. They will fly off heads. That is why some hats have strings on them. ☐

This year they did it again. Something I wanted, and probably would never have spent the money on. Years ago, first on Showtime and then on PBS, there was a wonderful show called [Shelley Duvall's Faerie Tale Theatre](#). It was a wonderful show, and as soon as I had a VCR, I started taping the shows. When I

could no longer get them we had the girl's grandmother tape them. Fast forward to now, and the tapes we had of these shows wore out, were misplaced or just got re-used. I never did own the complete series. The girls knew I liked the shows, so they went together and bought the DVDs of this series. So now I have hours of faerie tale enjoyment ahead of me. If asked nicely, I would even be willing to share.

From the very first faerie tale "The Frog Prince" with Robin Williams and Terri Garr, to the very last show "The Dancing Princesses" with Leslie Ann Warren, these shows had big name stars from the 80's. The shows were made so that parents could watch them with their children. I'm not sure about any other family watching these, but after some of the shows, we would dig out the original faerie tale to read to our children. A wonderful family time and now memory.

So what did I get for Christmas this year? About the same as every year. I was given much love, wonderful memories all wrapped up with paper and bows. This was hidden in a gift given from the heart. Or in this case four very loving hearts.

5 years ago... Final chapter ??

I don't know that I will have much time to blog in the next few days and I wanted to get this down. 5 years ago this weekend, I spent as much of the weekend (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) with my wife. The two youngest were spending time at Grandma's house (with Mom), so The oldest and I were back and forth taking care of the multitude of animals.

I really don't remember anymore what we did on Friday or Saturday. Those days were lost in the many days traveling back and forth from home to Toledo. But the final Sunday I remember

very well indeed.

I took my oldest in to visit (Again, I don't know what day), and that Sunday my in-laws took my youngest 3 out for the day. I spent Sunday the 28th with my wife. We didn't do a lot. She sat and did some word search puzzles and a crossword or two. I was reading various magazines and books. A nice quiet time. Around lunchtime I found out that the movie [The Incredible Mr. Limpet](#). Sarah and I both liked that movie, so we watched it while eating. We had Campbell's Vegetable soup and some crackers. I drank coffee, she had some hot tea. She dozed on and off while watching the movie. When it was over she said she was very tired and wanted to get some rest.

She leaned on me walking down the hall, so she wouldn't lose her balance. I tucked her in gave her a hug and kiss. She slept the rest of the afternoon and into the evening. The rest of the family came back. I took my 2nd daughter back home that evening. Late in the evening my wife went to the emergency room with breathing problems. Shortly after that she was transferred back up to the Ann Arbor Hospital.

That Monday I found out that the cancer had grown back to more than the original size. She had developed pneumonia. She had very little time. That night (early morning really) at 3:55 she passed away. That will be 5 years this Tuesday morning.

For the first few months, I would wake up every morning at 3:55. Then it was every Tuesday at 3:55. Then it was the 30th of each month at 3:55. Finally it was only on the 30th of December. I'm not sure what will happen this Tuesday, it doesn't matter really. The memories are different this year. The anniversaries are more introspective than really sad and depressing.

Many things have helped over the years. Wonderful family, good friends, theater therapy and many other things. I've been lucky and blessed.

There is one other thing to mention. The night after Sarah's death my three youngest were at home. We tried to welcome in the new year. Not a joyful evening, but one of shock. The thing I remember of that night is seeing all the girls in their mother's Eeyore sweats. Bittersweet, yes, but again I remember feeling blessed with my daughters.

So this is the final entry of what happened 5 years ago. Starting the 31st it is the 6th year of being a widower, I have no idea where that journey will lead.

Home and kind of in the dark...

I was scheduled to go to my sister's for a family Christmas dinner/gift exchange. Unfortunately, I am unable to go. I had the unfortunate luck to hit a deer on my way to work. I'm very sorry for the deer I hit, and my poor truck. While it is still drivable, there are some problems.

The inspection by the Highway patrol went fine, the insurance was no problem at all. This was the good part of the day

The passenger side head lights are out. The driver side seems to come and go. So no driving at night. So now I am sitting at home, and not going out.

There was also a game night scheduled at some good friends. After getting home, even with good lights, I found our back county roads very, very dangerous. I was slipping and sliding at 20 miles per hour and less. The rain that fell during the day made the road worse than they were this morning.

So here I am, sitting at home and blogging away...

Sigh....

Traditional Dinner??

Christmas

We had none of the normal trappings of a Christmas dinner. No ham or turkey. No yams or potatoes. No green beans or corn. Not even a goose or pudding.

We did have family close and dear. Cousins and siblings, parents and grandparents. Good food, good conversation, good times. We met early and stayed all day. Presents were exchanged. More conversation, some more food, and a cup of coffee or two. More conversation, more laughs.

What did we have?

Homemade pita, Greek salad, homemade hummos, Kafta, Gyro meat, sliced vegetables, Grilled Kabob chicken. Yes, a Greek dinner. It was wonderful. And for our family it was completely normal. We've had everything from pizza to Chinese food for Christmas and other family gatherings. Eating new foods is a way to celebrate life and love.

Merry Christmas.