

As the children grow older

They used to set cookies out for Santa, and a big carrot or two for the reindeer. A big glass of Milk could also be found for that jolly old elf.

Then bright and early, actually more dark and early, they would wake up. Anticipation filled their eyes. Waiting, ever waiting for Mom and Dad to say it was Ok to go to their gifts.

Christmas morning was always the time for that 1 big gift the girls wanted. Christmas eve was passing gifts out from our own little family. Even after the existence and identity of Santa was discovered, the girls waited for the Santa gifts on Christmas morning. We did well at hiding the gifts, or even how we were able to get them. Our oldest thought for years, that her Grandparents were helping Santa. Not true and it never was. Save a dollar or two every week and the presents could be found.

This year there are less presents in the house. The girls all know were Santa gets his gifts. They don't wake up before the crack of dawn anymore (Ok, well 1 still does, but that is her everyday wake up time). No cookies, no carrots, and no glass of milk was waiting for Santa. Of course Santa joined the gym and is trying to loose weight. ☐

Later today, much will be the same. On to the grandparents to celebrate the day. Much will not. 2 daughters are married and on their own. One many states away. Another daughter engaged, but she, and her fiance will be with us this day. One in her last year of High School. Their mother has been gone for 5 Christmases now, she is missed.

Again, may you find hope and peace during this season, and through the entire year.

Five Years Ago (Part 6)

Christmas Eve 5 years ago was not an experience I would ever want to go through again. My dear wife was very sick and feeling bad from the latest round of radiation. Snow was falling heavily, and it took much longer to get to Toledo than anticipated. On top of all that we were going to put our dog in a kennel so we could spend the holidays with family in Toledo.

It snowed so hard, that I could not find the kennel. It was my first time there, my oldest sister set it up for us, our Christmas gift. Road signs were covered with snow and we spent a long time trying to find the right turns. The dog never made it to the kennel. There was no room for him at my in-laws, and a cold cramped basement for him at my sister's, were Christmas Eve dinner was.

Tired and angry, I took my daughters to dinner with my side of the family. After dinner, I dropped the two youngest off at Grandma's and took the dog and my second oldest back home. With about 8 hours of rest, my daughter and I went back to Grandma's to have dinner with my wife's side of the family. For me, it was a very tense day, but I put it behind me as much as possible to make sure my wife had the best day possible.

We really didn't know how much more time she would have, and I didn't want to know.

After that Christmas, I tried to forget the events of the night before. I was never able to. 5 years later I remember almost every word. Words said in anger and frustration. If I could take them back I would. Little did I know how they would

haunt me. That Christmas Eve was not the one I would ever have wanted for our last one together.

Twas the night before Christmas

With apologies to C. Clement Moore

Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house
There was bedlam galore and it frightened the mouse.

The children were bouncing up and down on their beds
As the sugar from candy rushed straight to their heads.

Mamma she was screaming, and I hit the roof,
I went for the bottle marked 70 proof.

I started drinking the stuff, in a very swift manner,
And I fell off the chair, hit my head with a spanner.

While down on the floor under the dining room table
I rested a bit and moved when I was able.

When what to my wondering eyes did appear,
But little pink elephants with plenty of beer.

Now I knew not to mix high spirits and low
'Cause you'd just get sick and possibly blow.

Now I know that there should be more to this poem,
But I think I am finished, cause I can't find my comb

Merry Christmas! I hope you find peace and hope during this
season, and the rest of the year too.

The real Grinch and other Christmas adventures

Just finished watching the animated version of Dr. Seuss's ["How the Grinch Stole Christmas"](#). This was a fairly faithful adaptation of the Dr Seuss book. With Boris Karloff (Frankenstein's Monster, The Mummy and other horror stories from the black and white era) as the narrator and the voice of the Grinch. I watched this show as a child, and with my family when the girls were much younger. We do tend to watch the old standbys year after year. The stories hold up for young and old.

My lovely wife used to love all these Christmas animated classics. Charlie Brown's Christmas, the Grinch, Frosty, Rudolph and I may be missing one or two. With a version or two of the Christmas Carol, our holiday view was full.

This all culminated, not with another movie, but with dear old dad reading "A night before Christmas". I'm not exactly sure when it started, but when my oldest was 18 she still wanted me to read it.

I'm going to try to do it a little different this year. Future blog notes will let you know if I am successful. But I have some additional members of the family that haven't heard this story from me yet. We will see.

Baby it's cold outside...

Temperatures dropped below 0 degrees Fahrenheit, that is about -18 degrees Celsius. That is cold folks. It is cold enough that I don't want to be out in it too long. It is cold enough that the old fireplace is working overtime just to get up to heat. The breeze is bone chilling.

To top all this off, we were without power for a few hours this morning. Since I have electric heat, that meant I woke up to a cold house. Since I have a well, it also meant no hot showers. Conserve water, get a fire going and report the outage. Actually, I found out I didn't need to report the outage. It was widespread enough to alert the local electric company without my call.

Days like today are made for playing games, and drinking hot tea or cocoa. I was able to heat a kettle of water on the wood stove and made some instant cocoa. My youngest and I played a few games and had a good time until the power came back around lunch time.

Still going out and getting firewood was an experience today. I guess I'm just not used to the cold yet. I remember, not too long ago, going out on days like today and playing games with my girls. Just last year, I remember going to the [zoo](#) with most of my family. Walking around and admiring the many [lights the zoo](#) puts up for the holiday season. Our family has been [members of the Toledo Zoo](#) for many years, and will probably continue as members for many years to come. I have yet to see the lights this year, but will before they close by the end of the year.

So for all in places that are cold right now, find some way to stay warm. I will.

Theater award night...

An annual event for our [little community theater](#) is our award banquet. Fun time with good food, fun skits, and of course, awards for the actors and shows.

It is always fun to be involved in a show. At the time it is a lot of work and it takes up quite a bit of time. But when the show is over, there is always a let down of sorts. For me, this award show brings back all the good memories of the shows, but the time and work involved is a lot less (unless you are setting up the show).

I won't go into all the awards won. My memory of who won what and what show it was for, and how to spell the names is lacking at this hour of the evening. Even with that, I would ask them first before putting their names in my blog.

Me, I wasn't in any shows this year. I didn't design any sets. I wasn't a director on any show. I wasn't expecting to win any award. I did!! Shock of shocks. It was an award that is decided on by the president of the playhouse trustees. Big honor I will have to say.

Winning this award got me thinking. I have strange thoughts all the time, so this was no exception. After the show was over, everyone was congratulating everyone with an award. The common phrase heard was: "You deserved it." Of course most if not all were well meant. But in common, polite society would we ever say anything else? Would you say: 'Why the heck did they give that award to you? So and so did much better, they should have won.'" (of course behind the scenes, they are saying those words to so and so.) No, polite society will generally refrain from those remarks, until enough booze is

swallowed. □ Polite society will refrain from making comments other than the 'congratulations' if they feel the award was not deserved, or they won't say anything.

Why did I think of this, well I got a large number of those "You deserved it." comments. Being the humble person I am (no that isn't meant to be a joke), I was caught off guard again. Then again, thanks to the training my wife gave me, I can read body language very well (my secret is out now, oops). The language of the bodies, and the words said were matching up. The people saying the words, meant the words. Wow again, I was humbled.

Over the years people have done more for the theater than I've ever done. This year there were people that did more than me. But the big thing for me is this one little fact. The theater has done more for me than I've ever done for the theater. Little things here and there, now and then, have kept this old soul in good health. The people in the theater were there at my darkest moments. Outside of my daughters and others in my family, the theater was an anchor to sanity. For me, that was better than any award they can give. I cannot say thank you enough for that.

All this from one little theater group. Wonderful therapy for a grieving widower, and good shows too. Is it any wonder I keep going back?

Self imposed weather day

I decided this morning to take a day off of work instead of trying to travel the snow and ice covered roads. I'm fairly certain that if I took it easy, I would have been able to make it to work, but it didn't make sense to me to risk it.

My truck is covered with about 1/2 inch of ice and snow, mostly ice. This type of precipitation continues to fall even as I type this. I guess I'll build a fire in a bit, sit back with a cup of coffee or cocoa and just relax.

Maybe time for a holiday movie or two. I do have a few versions of "A Christmas Carol" I could watch.

Winter weather...

Happy Birthday to my daughter who loves the snow. We had a good amount of snow. It started early yesterday evening and continued on into the night. Of course the schools the had either delays or closures. This doesn't affect my work schedule, but I sometimes wish it would. I do work in a school building, and the only good thing about no school is no students. I don't teach or work with the students, so for me they just get in the way.

Anyway my daughter wanted two things for her birthday. One was snow. Well we got that. The other was to be able to swim. We went to our local "Y" last night and got some swimming in. I can't see the thrill in swimming during the middle of a snowstorm, but it was exercise, and I do need that.

Even with the snow, which I do not like, I had two decent days. I'll take all the decent days I can get.

We are scheduled (if the weatherman can do that) to get more winter precipitation later this week. I'm sure hoping it clears up a little on the weekend, mine is booked solid again. I would like to be able to get where I need to go.

Day of family, friends, fun

Went to a show today. The [WCCT](#) put on their version of “Don’t Hug Me”. I can’t remember the last time I laughed so much and so hard. Our little theater knows how to put on a good comedy, and this show just hit the right cord for me. I don’t think there was a time during the show I was without a smile, and most of the time I was laughing.

Now most of my family and a lot of extended family was there. Three of 4 daughters, 1 son-in-law, 1 fiance, 2 grandparents, and my sister-in-law enjoyed the show. I was able to see friends before the show and during intermission. Fun time and a good show, good friends and family, can you ask for more?

After the show the family went to the local Pizza Hut and enjoyed more good times and food. We spent over an hour sharing Pizza, and family stories.

We then went to a Christmas Cantata that was being performed at my daughter’s church. I’m not the most religious person in the world, but I do enjoy watch my daughters sing. The youngest two daughters have a wonderful presence when they sing, and it all starts with a smile.

So my day was full of family, friends, fun and music. Not a bad way to end the weekend.

Look to the top

For those interested in Dungeons and Dragons, or Role Playing games in General, I started a new page to detail the adventures of a character I have in a game run by one of my son-in-laws.

It has been a lot of fun getting back into role playing again. I did it years ago when the girls were very young. I even taught my eldest daughter how to play.

The trials of raising a family brought an end to my role playing days. Well that and the fact that the game was changing and I didn't want to spend more money on it.

There was a time when I spent some time playing with a local group, but that ended when some people moved away.

Well, now my daughter and her friends run a game or two, and they kindly invited the old man to sit in. I have and have had a lot of fun doing it.

Just in case you miss the link on the top, you can [click here](#).