

# This and that with other things in mind

A somewhat mindless post of things I'm thinking about.

Took my youngest to a movie and to play putt-putt. I always enjoyed the time I could spend with my daughters. I'm sure they're getting a skewed view on life without their mother in it, but that is what it is. They get this skewed view, because my view is somewhat skewed. Not doing as well as I would like on putt-putt. On the little course closest to us, I have made a hole-in-one on all 18 holes. I should be able to get 2 on each and everyone of them. I get a little down when I get 3's on some of the holes. Most of the time I don't keep the putter down.

Stopped at a Coldstone Creamery. Wonderful stuff. Ice Cream, Sorbet mixed with stuff right in front of your eyes. It is very good ice cream.

A fourth of July weekend is in front of me. It is nice to get an extra day off of work. I'm looking forward to spending time with family and friends this weekend. Happy Birthday wishes to my oldest sister on the 4th. Never did get to put the sparklers on her cake instead of candles.

Tigers are on the radio right now. I don't have cable, so I don't get to watch much ball on TV, but Gameday on the Computer, and a radio near me, works well. Tigers are winning in the 7th.

I need to take the time this weekend to do the things I wasn't doing during the time my daughter was in "Little Women". I wouldn't trade that time for anything, but I need to do more around here.

I saw a movie trailer today. It looks like they are making a

remake of a wonderful Science Fiction Classic. A new "The Day the Earth Stood Still" is coming to the big screen again. This was a classic, and from the trailer, I think they found a way to ruin it. I'm planning on going just so I can really rag on the film. You are warned. Normally I don't get preconceived ideas about movies, but this was a wonderful short story, a very good movie (classic in my mind), and it will now become a standard Hollywood space invasion movie... Grrr.

I'm waiting for the new Batman movie. One of the favorite comic characters, because he is a normal person. He was also a troubled hero. It makes the comic book a little more real when the hero has normal problems.

Should be a good 4th tomorrow. Getting together with friends for food and socializing, maybe some fireworks.

I need to try to schedule some additional time off work. It may be tough since we are in the middle of a major software change. Maybe I can get 1 day off a week for the rest of the summer.

That should be about it, for now

Tigers still ahead in the 8th.

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## **My life as a play**

After watching "Little Women" from the light booth for a about a week now, I was wondering what kind of play my life would make. I know right now, if the author of the play knew me at all, it would not be a musical. Then again, some twisted mind would do that, just to get a reaction from me, or think of me rolling in my grave.

Anyway, would my life make an worthwhile play... That may take some thought. First off a good play needs many different features. A good plot is almost essential (there are a few exceptions to this). Engaging characters are required (my life has that). Some humor, maybe a bit of tragedy helps round everything out.

In my life, you can usually skip everything that happens at my place of employment. Yes, the characters there would be wonderful, but the plot, or day to day happenings are not going to engage an audience. Who in there right mind would want to watch people sit at computers all day. While I've worked in a number of offices, they are not like the sit-coms. To watch would be boring.

Now, on to the rest of my life. For most of it I am a father of 4 daughters. I'm thinking the play could be written around the marriages of each. While only two are married, I think if the weddings progress in any way, there may be a story to tell.

So for this I've developed a cast of characters...

Father

Daughter 1

Daughter 2

Daughter 3

Daughter 4

Son-in-Law 1

Son-in-Law 2

Son-in-Law 3

Son-in-Law 4

GrandMother

GrandFather

Various other family members needed to round out the story (I'll let the writer worry about this, and any directors worry about the huge cast size ☐ ).

### Act 1 – Wedding 1

Widowed father joins rest of males of the wedding party in wearing a Kilt. Is the groom late? Will the bride ever calm down? Will the music play? Will the wind blow and we find exactly what is worn under Kilts? It was an interesting day.

### Act 2 – Wedding 2

Widowed father drives across many states to get to second daughter's Florida Wedding, in AUGUST!!! It is hot, and muggy, and the wedding is outside. Will the alligator in the pond climb up on the dock! There is no electricity by the dock for the wedding. The batteries in the boombox are dead. Play the music from a Car? Who will pass out? Who will get a sunburn? Who gets bitten by the gator?

### Act 3 – Wedding 3

Not sure on this it hasn't happened yet. Star Wars theme and the Wookie Best man trips on his own fur? Lord of Rings theme and the Orcs attack during service. Take your pick, or it may be something else.

### Act 4 – Wedding 4

Let's leave this one in the future. Dream like. It hasn't happened either, but as the father, I can't think of my baby girl getting married just yet...

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And then again maybe the play of my life would not be these weddings/future weddings.

Maybe a play about my married life? The fun and warmth of the early years. Kids growing up, the bond between two people growing stronger. Tragic death, grief, and finally growth continuation of life.

May be too much of a downer for some...

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And lastly, my life as a member of a community theater. The follies of live performance. Things not working in the light

booth, problems of set building. This may not have a wide audience, but any person who ever acted in, directed, helped put on a community theater play may get a kick out of it.

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Well, it was fun thinking of this anyway. There may not be a play ever written about my life, but I know that everyone's life is a stage. We perform live everyday. We are the actors, and the audience.

Give it your best, people are watching...

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## Coffee nerdiness

Yes, I'm a coffee nerd. I like good strong full bodied coffee. I of course have my favorite roasts, beans, blends, and coffee shops. But I really want to talk about the coffee shop experience. Today, a lot of people consider Starbucks to be the coffee shop of all coffee shops. They are almost everywhere. I will admit that their marketing is wonderful. They've taken the country by storm. Their coffee is good, but by no means is it the peak of coffee perfection. Their shops are nice and clean, but they are missing a little bit of charm.

Now to go back a few years, about 11 or so, to when I knew nothing about coffee. If you called it coffee and it was hot, I would drink it. At that time, my youngest daughter was in Kindergarten, the oldest was 15. My wife and I needed someplace to go to start re-connecting with each other. The children were all growing up, and didn't need quite as much attention. We also had a built in babysitter. So we started to look around for something we could do together, but wouldn't break the bank. We found a little coffee shop. It was a

charming little place where we could get a light lunch, or a desert, or just a cup of coffee or tea. We started going week after week, sometimes more than once a week. From that time on, we would even look for coffee shops on our vacations.

The local coffee shop (before Starbucks was a nationwide brand) was a place to find good coffee and good friends. It was a gathering place. In some places you would find little reading corners. Some shops would have music, some poetry readings. Some places to play chess or backgammon. But in everyone there was a place to meet people and talk. They was always a quite corner you could go to even when the place was busy at the early morning rush. They were places designed to slow down, smell the baked goods, and of course the coffee.

Then we get the fast food of coffee shops, the national brands. A hurry-up kind of place where people seem to be full of caffeine before they have their first cup of coffee. The coffee may be good, but the atmosphere suffers.

One of my daughter worked in 'our' little coffee shop, and it closed shortly after she graduated from college. Just two short years after my wife died. I still miss that atmosphere. There are other places to get coffee in the area. For a time there was even a shop that had a bit of atmosphere. But in today's world those places seem to be few and far between. You can find them if you look, but you do have to look. It may not be a coffee shop, it may be a little restaurant, or donut shop, maybe even a candy shop, or an old soda fountain. There are places to find, where you can slow down to smell the coffee, or the roses, but always smell and experience the sweet breath of life itself.

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# 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.

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## 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.



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# Another dream sticks all day

Two dreams stuck with me all day in a very short time. This could be an indication that I'm sleeping better, or just my mind needing to work things out. Not sure if anyone got much out of the last dream but since I started blogging to clear my mind, here it is.

Started out as a very mundane dream, I'm driving my daughters (all four of them for some reason) to some University. The name of the University was never brought up, but we were going there to install the youngest in her first dorm room.

While driving I suddenly knew I was going to California. This was because we drove across the old "Iron" bridge around home. The one that "C" would never drive across. For some reason the story of "C" never driving across that bridge made us all laugh. (Side note – This bridge no longer exists in real life, in fact it was torn down well before "C" moved to the area, he never saw it.)

So in California we start setting up the youngest in her dorm room. All the girls are having great fun trying to decorate the room to make it seem a little like home. I tell the girls that since we are there and have a bit of time to spend together we should do a little site seeing. We come across an arts and crafts fair in the city the college is located. Now for some reason, the three oldest girls are no longer in the dream. I'm with my youngest still getting ready for school and her mother and we are touring the arts/crafts fair. Now to steal a line from Dickens, Her Mother "was dead to begin with... this you must remember"... This of course did not seem at all weird in the dream, it was only when I woke up that I remembered that.

Well the three of us our touring the crafts and my dear wife takes us to her table. She always wanted to do a craft table in such a fair, but we never did get around to it. All of her various needle work/sewing, knitting, crocheting were on the table. There were things I remembered, and new things I never saw before.

We are really enjoying ourselves when my wife says it is time to get "B" ready for college.

Here I wake up suddenly. It is almost time to leave to get my daughter to her ACT test. No alarm has rung, and my daughter is still asleep. I wake her up and we get to the test in plenty of time... And still the dream is with me...

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## What a day...

This day actually started some time yesterday evening. During a thunderstorm in the area and a tornado close to us, 4 outlets in our house went out. I'm thinking something in the storm caused it, because to was only part of a complete circuit. Looked like I would have to replace at least on outlet. I couldn't tell from a exterior glance as to which outlet shorted out. So I put a trip to the hardware store on my Saturday to-do list. The first thing on the list was getting my daughter to her SAT testing.

Now on to Saturday Morning... Storm damage from the previous night's storms caused some rough driving. A normal 40 minute drive took closer to 1 hour. We just made it just in time to the SAT testing site. Hmm, day not starting off well...

I had to wait around for at least an hour for the hardware store to open, so I stopped for coffee. Those who have known

me for a while, know that my favorite coffee shop closed for good a little over 2 years ago. This was the place my dear wife and I spent many happy times, just getting away from the kids, planning for future things, getting to know one another again after 4 children. Good memories in that little place. I have yet to find any coffee shop that comes close to the atmosphere, quality of the coffee, food ect. and the people who frequent the shop itself. The place I stopped in today had a very nice atmosphere (except for the big screen TV, but I went around the corner from that). The coffee was very good. The food I had ok, but nothing special.. Not many people there, so I couldn't say anything about that. Too bad it was a 40 minute drive... Too far for a once a week type of thing.

After the coffee, I could get the things I needed to replace at least 1 outlet. I got 4 new outlets just in case. I still had at least 2 hours to wait for the SAT to finish. Stopped at another store and was able to find some water filters for our office at work. I installed an older water filter on the tap at work, but the filters have been hard to find. I try to pick up extra whenever I see them on the shelf. Filtered water makes better coffee ya know... Now only 1 1/2 hours for the test to let out...

Got a call from my daughter in FL, we talked until my Cell battery almost died. Then I got a notice that I had 3 messages... Two were from the day before!!! They weren't there when I got up in the morning, I checked... Storm must have hit a local tower or something?? Anyway a friend wanted to get together to (in his words) "just get out of the house". Great!! How does one decide what to do when I was already invited to oldest daughter's place for fun and games... Hmmm. Well, I was expecting a call from the oldest earlier in the week to finalize the plans. It never happened. I let my youngest test goer decide... Friend won the toss.

So after a good lunch youngest, and I head out for some fun. We played games (all sorts), and just had a lot of fun. We

played a miniature bowling game. The balls were slightly larger than a softball, no holes, and the pins were on strings/wires. If you ever see one, try it out. They are very fun. We also played indoor mini-golf (black lit area with dark black 'greens', and glowing colored bumpers and obstructions). This was fun to, but it did make it hard to 'read the greens'. I ended up with a hole in one on the last hole. We also played a number of arcade games for 'tickets'. It was a fun afternoon/evening... Good idea C...

Now I'm tired and ready for bed... What a Day...

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## **Friends, Family, Both?**

When do friends become family? When do family members become friends? I've heard many times that you choose your friends, but are born into your family. Is there ever a time you choose your family as your friends? Do you 'adopt' friends as family?

All deep questions, to which I have very few answers. I know how I feel about some family, and some friends. But that can't be the same for everyone, can it?

I was born into a large family. When I came into this world, I had 1 brother and 3 sisters. A younger sister came along just a few months later (22.5 or so). I liked to think I could be friends with all of them. At times I was, at other times we were just siblings. I married into a family and got 2 more brothers, and 1 more sister. Yes, this is the way I thought of them. Time and distance prevented a normal 'friendship' but I felt it could be that way if distance wasn't an issue. My sisters married and I got more brothers. My brother married and I had another sister. Marriages came and went, so did some of the new siblings.

Now I have four daughters. Two of them have husbands, so I now have sons. I don't know how they think of me, I tend not to pry, but it doesn't really matter. As long as they treat my daughters well, they will continue to be sons to me. It will be this way for all my girls and their spouses. I don't buy the in-law route. You're either family or not. And I'm beginning to think my family are also my friends. Different from my chosen friends, but to me they are friends on some level. This allows me to give that quality of concern that should be expected of family.

Now for friends I choose. Yes, some of them are very much like family. The brothers/sisters/cousins/strange-aunt or uncle □ that I found instead of being born into the family. Friends are the family I choose.

And when the weather turns cold (figuratively or realistically), it is good to have friends and family, or both.

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## Family and the calendar

I used to have a very good head for dates and numbers. I can remember all sorts of birthdays, anniversaries, phone numbers and other such stuff. Somewhere along the line my head got full. I can't seem to remember a lot of dates that I should.

Let's see. I can remember all the birthdays of my brother and sisters. I can remember birthdays of my children, parents and even get close on most of the in-laws. I definitely remember all the important dates that occurred in and around my marriage. I remember my oldest sister's phone number, even though she hasn't had that one in years. I even remember the birthdays of my best friend in grade school, and the first

girl I had a crush on.

Things I can't remember... Birthdays of my daughter's husbands and children. Anniversaries of said children and their spouses. Dates that specific bills are due. Dates for Drs. appointments. Dates of the next show one of my girls is in. Dates of the next show that I'm in... Dates set up longer than 1 week away. My cell phone number. My desk extension at work. Hmm a pattern is forming...

These dates are all more recent than the dates /numbers that I can remember. Maybe my mind is filled up with dates and numbers that I don't need anymore. If there was only a way to replace the numbers I remember with the new numbers I should remember. If I could bottle that, I'd make a mint.

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## **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.