

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.

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...

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.

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?

Not much movie watching today

My weather day turned into a day to install my new router. This now allows all the computers in the house to access the cell modem at the same time. Yes, this does slow down from the direct connect speed just a bit, but if only one person is on, I didn't notice any difference. But I will be able to work, my daughter will be able to do homework, and I'll finally be able to get to the internet from my linux box.

I also found out that I can IM multiple daughters at once. Could be fun if they are ever online at the same time.

Things just moved fast when I was able to get my high speed cell modem. And the speeds are getting faster every day, well almost every day.

Then on to a party with the people I work with. It was a fun time.

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.

It was a dark night...

You are all alone, and there is a light, from what looks like a campfire, in the distance...

That is how the evening started. As I expected, the group of theater regulars were up to the task of playing a character. In that there was never really a doubt in my mind. The problem for all came when the small polyhedrons were needed (variety of dice for those not in the know). The comments, "Do I use

this? No, that one. This one? No the one just in front of that." were in common usage the entire evening.

All of this is common when starting this type of game. There are 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 20 sided dice used in this game. Knowing how and when to use them is a bit of a learning curve. It seems that teenage boys and some young adults are much better at learning this, just like video games. □

Well, I think most of the group had fun. I certainly had fun. It has been than a few years since I ran any sort of game, and I certainly had fun doing it. Thinking on the fly, running people through a part of a world I created are enjoyable to me. But the complexity of the characters, and multiple dice rolling, sometimes slows down the game play. What to do, what to do?

Me, I started thinking of games with no dice at all. There are a few on the gaming market, but the character creation is just as complex if not more complex. How do you determine winners and losers of confrontations without randomizing effects of cards, spinners or dice... How complex do you make your rules?

Well, I'm thinking of just such a game. Role Playing for the actors in all of us, and no dice to confuse the situation. Designing it in my head as I write this. In few weeks, I will be looking for a group of volunteers to run through this game.

For those who want to know the setting. Think current time period, and ghost hunters...

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](#).

A different type of game

One of my friends and blogging buddy posted some [notes on a game we played \(click to read\)](#). These were written by they guy running the game, so they were an overall view, as if someone was watching the action. I was thinking of writing something like that from a player's (character's) point of view. Just not with that game. I'm thinking of a game I'm a bit more familiar with...

Dungeons and Dragons... My Son-in-Law's campaign. But first a background of the character whose story will be told.

A short history of Calinth Knight of Deinir

Calinth of some temple in some town was orphaned at an early age and raised on the temple grounds. The Clerics there were good to him, and taught him their ways. All there thought he would grow to become a priest in that temple.

When Calinth reached the age of 11, the town and temple were attacked by a large band of orcs. Calinth was weeding and hoeing the small herb patch behind the living area when he was attacked. He drove his hoe blade deep into the head of the first orc, and then picked up the orc's sword and shield. He was able to make it to the Temple stairs by fighting his way there. Cut and bloody, he fought side by side with the holy warriors of the temple. Both clerics and knights were side by side to prevent the orcs from the worship area.

A great knight was knocked down by what could only have been an Ogre. (as seen by the eyes of an 11 year old. Actually just a very large orc.) Calinth jumped into the path of the Orc's sword, blocking the killing blow with his shield. This blow broke his arm and threw him over the downed knight. The Orc was furious that his blow was stopped. He raised his battle ax high over his head to kill both of the temple defenders. Calinth saw his chance to save both himself and the knight under him. He pushed his sword up just under the Orc's breast plate with all his might. After that blow he passed out.

The next day he found himself in the infirmary, with the knight standing over him.

"I am Bahoson, and would like you to be my squire. I am a Paladin of this temple and I think you are also called to serve."

A warm feeling went over Calinth at that time. His arm was no

longer sore. He felt a peace he had not known before. Yes, he would do that. He would be whatever a squire was.

Years passed, and Calinth learned the ways of the sword. He learned the ways of all that is right and good. In his 18th year, he became a knight in his own right. In his 22nd year, he saw the injustice of his own service. His master, mentor and friend, Bahoson, was driven out of town by a corrupt and power hungry official. Rumor has it, that Bahoson was assassinated on the outskirts of town. The law of the land and his calling prevented Calinth from interfering. A priest in the temple told him of "another way", and he was given directions to look for Kandomere in some other town. This started him on the path of the Grey Guard. There were all kinds of evil, corruption and chaos in the world, and now Calinth had a path to follow that could fight these problems at the closest source.

Calinth traveled far and wide fighting evil at its most foul. On the way back home from a successful campaign, he stopped at a strange Inn for a light noon meal. In the middle of town far from any sea, a large ship stood. The ship itself looked as though it could sail at any minute, except for the doors cut into its hull. Here is where Calinth's next adventure begins...