

Home Alone

So... now that I have the house all to myself for the next two weeks while the parents are in Alaska, I have found that I am not at a lack of things to do. Of course, there are the hours I must spend at work. Friday night, I did something I have never done before: Monster Jam at the Toledo Speedway. Megan, Carol, and I drove and met admin and family. It was really a fun night even if Superman got jipped (not biased, even if I was decked out in my Man of Steel Cap... maybe I should have worn one of my t-shirts) in the freestyle portion of the evening. I think obvious local favorite, Gravedigger was at only a slight advantage as I found his performance less than thrilling. I have seen ads for the show in the past and remember Gravedigger announced prominently. Very fun and Vera got the three of us to and from the event quite nicely. And we did not have to make any pit stops along the way ☐ Plus in the 4 wheeler event, the Ohio team was beaten by the Michigan team (B00000!!!!) I have a feeling a bit of proximity favoritism was in evidence.

Sunday... short work day, cleaned the beauty shop, ran to B-town to pick up a few things. Then, I did something I have not done for years. I brought the X-Box downstairs, had my 9 year-old niece and another friend come over and play. **And play we did!** We started at about 5 and it got darker and darker and by the time I knew what time it was, it was midnight. **HOLY COW!** About 2AM, we decided to call it a night. Elizabeth was asleep in the chair, anyway.

Monday... great fun day. I had some friends over for a pizza/movie night. We started at Munchkin Junction. Later, I had Elizabeth stay to play with the kids while the adults watched the totally captivating movie, *The Island*. I don't know why, but I kept thinking *The Beach* with Leonardo DiCrapio (never seen that one either) but I am S000 glad it was not. This was a somewhat typical but nottoo typical

Michael Bay production with lots of action. I REALLY liked it... futuristic sci-fi with Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansson (whom I just learned will be in *Iron Man 2*... scheduled for release next summer).

Soo... the start of my two week adventure has been fun. More to come. And yes, the house is still standing.

A Potter Pot Head

I noticed two decidedly absent characters from the latest Harry Potter film. I believe there was only a passing glance or two of Draco Malfoy's partners in crime Crabbe and Goyle. Well, it seems that [Jamie Waylett](#) who plays Vincent Crabbe in the films was charged with growing 10 marijuana plants in his mother's England home. The 20 year old actor was sentenced to 120 hours of community service after pleading guilty to the charge on July 7th. The judge went easy on the malefactor after deeming the botanical exercise "small scale."

Actually, I have been noticing a limited amount of screen time for most of the supporting cast. Very little of Professors McGonagall and Snape and Hagrid was only in one major scene. One scene in which the head of Gryffindor House appeared brought a chuckle. Once again, Harry, Hermione, and Ron were once again in the thick of trouble and Minerva ever so eloquently pointed this out:

[Professor Minerva McGonagall](#): *[to Harry, Ron, and Hermione] Why is it that, whenever anything happens, it's always you three?*

[Ron Weasley](#): *I've been asking myself the same question for six years, Professor*

Maggie Smith (who plays Prof. McGonagall) is definitely starting to show her age. It has been nearly 20 years since she got into the habit as the Mother Superior in *Sister Act*. Surely the supporting cast will all be front and center for the final 2 installments.

Also, the concluding two films better be made quick or the young stars who are entering their twenties will be too old. As one commented, by the time Harry Potter graduates from wizard school he will be collecting Social Security.

Gremlin Be GONE!

Apparently, there was some type of gremlin caught up in the works of our happy little site but I see that it has been irradiated. The past two has has been a relatively busy one in our small little neck of the woods. Friday and Saturday was our town wide garage sale in which over 60 homes participated. Quite remarkable considering the size of the town. Not only did residents of the community but businesses also came out and put some of their products on display. The local, weekly newspaper gave out homemade ice cream... well, they accepted a free will donation. The grocery had a Produce Tent Sale. It was called Tent Sale but nowhere did I see a tent only a bunch of displays full of watermelon, cantaloupe, peaches, nectarines, lemons, green peppers, and other goodies. We also had a hot dog, chip, and soda/water for \$1. I was lucky enough to man the sale for an hour Friday afternoon (would have enjoyed spending more but I was only covering for a break). But, of course, who had to haul in the pallets at the end of the day?

But once again, I had a Saturday to myself so I took my nephew

and a “tag-a-long” (his words, not mine) to see Harry Potter. We left with 15 minutes before show time and thinking ahead decided to go the back route to save time. However, I had forgotten that the 3 mile bridge (or a small section of 576) is closed for the next week or so. In any event, we were about 5 minutes late for the movie and had to sit in the next to front row. Joshua enjoyed the movie... our companion did not think so highly of it although he has assured me that he has read all the books and seen the previous 5 movies. He thought it was a waste of time and he is going to see it on IMAX next week?!

Before returning home, I needed to stop by my old stomping grounds and pick up a present. While there, our 18 year-old friend decided that he wanted to buy something that he has always wanted: a cap gun. He was like a kid in a candy store. Cap guns have changed since I last had one. They used to operate on straps of paper. Today, they use rounds of small plastic pellets. Nate was occupied quite well on the 12 mile trip back to E-town.

All in all, a pretty fun few days. Made even more so by a pair of Yankee victories (sorry, [justj](#)) and a Red Sox loss. STILL 2 behind the Stockings!

Viewus Potterius

I have been eagerly anticipating the premier of the newest Harry Potter film. It was SUPPOSED to be released last holiday season but for whatever the reason (most likely Daniel Radcliffe’s Broadway debut in a play about a boy and his horse... anyone for charades ☐ was postponed until today. Last week when I learned that the movie would be showing at

midnight at the nearest cinema I could find, I KNEW I would be there. Sunday night, I asked Megan if she would like to come...Kwel she said.

So, I headed over and went to see what time the doors opened. 11.30 so we still had 45 minutes to get there. There were about five young'uns in line so no big deal. We left Megan's about 11.20. The doors were open and the two screening rooms were nearly full. When we found two seats, we were surrounded by some fellow thespians who seemed to be dressed to watch *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Before the movie began, I saw wands brandished with shouts of "Wingardium Leviosa," "Viewus Potterius," and other such whimsies. FINALLY, 10 minutes after it was supposed to begin, [*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*](#) rolled. I will not divulge too much only to say that the movie did not disappoint one bit! Even the 2.5 hour length flew by. I happened to glance at my watch and it read 2:15 (NO WAY). Magical action, lots of humor, teenage angst aided by various love potions, a few tears (especially if you are only acquainted with the movies and have not yet read the books), and [QUIDDITCH](#) (no matter how limited) helped make the young wizard and company's return to the screen well worth the wait. I have not read the sixth Potter novel in some time so I was surprised to find myself surprised by a few things I had forgotten... I Like that! There was one scene in particular in which I knew something exciting was going to happen. I kept waiting, and waiting. I whispered to Megan: "Don't jump." I let my guard down for a millisecond and all of a sudden... "WHAM!" **I JUMPED!** I love it when a director plays with his audience and at just the right moment gets you. The adrenaline was palpable.

Like the book, the movie set up perfectly the climax of the series which will be divided into two films. I don't know that any singular book has ever been divided into two movies but I will definitely be there when the first half of *Harry*

Potter and the Deathly Hallows opens. I just cannot express the wonder and fun that both the books and movies bring. Lots of fantasy, excitement, fun, the power of friendship and bravery in the face of mortal danger. Life's little lessons found in extraordinary places. If you have never experienced either media form I HIGHLY, **HIGHLY** recommend doing so. One minor quibble: on the Hogwart's Express, Harry used something from Fred and George Weasley's Joke Shop to turn himself invisible. Did he not use his cloak in the book? A minor detail.

Although getting to bed after 3AM and going to work from 12-9 made me a bit worn, it was worth every minute of sleep lost! I'm sure others had to be up earlier ☐

“Only One Thing I Want Ya Fellas Ta Do...

Talk me out of it!”

This is my favorite line from one of the most classic movies of all time. If there is one person within posting range who has never seen the 1939 version of *The Wizard of Oz*, I would seriously have a hard time believing it. The scene involves Scarecrow and Tin Man attempting to bolster the Lion's courage as they are about to enter the Witch's castle to rescue Dorothy. Just as he is on the verge of charging into the Lion's den, the feline returns to his old ways.

Back in the days when cable television was in its infancy, I remember well a Friday night around Halloween when the movie was played annually. Friday night because *The Dukes of Hazard* and *Dallas* (ho hum) were preempted. Tonight, it was shown on

Turner Classic Movies so this was my yearly trip down the Yellow Brick Road. It's funny, I can almost remember where all the commercial breaks were inserted. Yet another classic I wish I could see again for the first time. A five year old screamed with delight and a four year old hid her eyes whenever "the green witch" was on screen.

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of assisting in the production of the musical for EHS. Although very faithful to the cinematic version, there were a few additions. There was a covered bridge that the quartet and Toto attempted to cross; however, the Wicked Witch of the West enchanted the bridge making it revolve so Dorothy and her companions got nowhere fast.

Another addition was the Jitterbug sequence which was actually cut from the movie. On screen, the Witch makes mention of the insects as she sends her army of winged monkeys to the Haunted Forest. The dance sequence was filmed and put on the cutting room floor.

I know there is at least one person who would possibly (if not probably) agree that Oz would make a good addition for a community theatre season. If we are looking for famous, well-known name shows, is there any more famous, well-known, sure to get butts in the seats and people to audition (ahhem). Just a thought.

More Than Met The Eye

Tonight, as promised, a friend and I took in *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*. I was NOT disappointed (although we both felt the need to visit the facilities as soon as the final credits began to roll). Nearly non-stop action,

brehtaking effects, comic relief (at times) all created a perfect summer blockbuster. The battle of the Autobots and Decepticons returned to the big screen. I WAS a big fan of the toys and cartoon of the 80s and weel remember the battles of Optimus Prime and Megatron. The live-action sequel again brings the alien robots together with humans led by Sam (Shia Labeouf), Mikaela (Megan Fox), and Major Lennox (Josh Duhamel).

Sam is on his way to live the ordinary life of a college student when the action kicks off. The young man learns the truth about the origins of the Transformers and the Decepticons return to Earth to capture him and draw out Optimus Prime for a confrontation.

At times, I was not sure who the movie was aimed at. There were a few scenes in which I thought it was playing to the more adult viewer (it is PG-13 rated for a reason) who is old enough to remember the beginnings of the franchise. A scene in a dorm room involving Sam and a young lady who is more than she appears created a chuckle from a young child in the row behind us. Then there was the playful bits geared to the kid in all of us which were really fun.

Again, the main robots all had distinct personalities of their own. The leader, Optimus Prime, the emotional Camero transforming Bumble Bee, and the hilarious twin duo of Skids and Mudflaps.

Like all summer popcorn flicks, this is in no way geared to the intellectual demanding audience. As with any Michael Bay production, there are huge explosions, limited conceivable plot lines, and a great deal of fun. And, IMHO, any film starring Shia Labeouf is not going to be confused with Shakespeare.

Another Midnight Screening

This time, the actual viewing did not involve me. Monday night, before I left for a theatre meeting and later to watch a movie, I was conned into sitting with my nephews and niece while my brother went to see [Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen](#). I had a feeling this was happening... why else would you need a sitter at midnight (well...)? How nice of him to ask if I wanted to go along... which I would have. We could have easily taken the 13, 9, and 4 year-old, especially when the youngest wanted to see it. We even made a suggestion that the kids go to their mother's for the night

So, I went out about 10.30 after watching the Yankees lose AGAIN... come on... jees and watched *My Bloody Valentine* (no 3-D but an enjoyable movie and no kids... definitely not one for the young). After the movie, I watched a few episodes of Michael Scott and Co. on the DVR then fell asleep. At 3, I was awakened by the screaming of an excited 18 year old who proclaimed his pleasure with the action-packed thrill fest... excusable since the couch was really uncomfortable and knowing the 18 year old as well as I, the awakening could have been worse. I will have to go Friday when I have another day off... two movies in one week? Don't know if I can handle that... but I will try.

Andy Outside The Office

Here there be spoilers!!!

A friend and I went to see *The Hangover* last night. Going in, I was not expecting much: undoubtedly an unremarkable plot hopefully with a few laughs. Not expecting a big award winner, I did have a good time. Three of the actors I was familiar with: Bradley Cooper (from his days on *Alias*... I didn't know he was in it going in), Ed Helms (from [The Office](#)), and Heather Graham.

The movie centers around Doug (who is two days away from being married) and his trio of buddies traveling from LA to Las Vegas for the bachelor party. Doug is entrusted with his future father in law's Mercedes (hmm...). The morning after arriving, three of the four wake up and discover that they remember almost nothing that happened the night before and learn that one of the companions is nowhere to be found. Hilarity and some groans ensue as the three go on a whirlwind search for their friend and their lost evening through the streets of Sin City.

At times, some of the situations reminded me of a combination of *Three Men and a Baby* and *License to Drive*. As with most buddy comedies of today, there are a number of gross out moments (one involving a tiger... one of those groan inducing segments). Another memorable bit takes place at an LVPD precinct in which the three are subjected to some police brutality at the hands of a group of youngsters on a school field trip... don't remember seeing a teacher.

The best part was the three leads themselves. Each of them had a distinct personality that was rarely dull. Cooper plays Phil (rhyming with Will... his *Alias* character.. coincidence?) the leader of the band of partiers and must have been quite the ladies man back in the day before getting tied down. [Zach Galifianakis](#) plays Alan, the loner of the group who is along because he is the brother of the bride.

Helms is the highlight of the movie. Stu is a doctor who is in a relationship with a domineering woman who thinks the

little getaway is to Napa Valley wine country. I really enjoy seeing some of the actors from my favorite comedy on television on the big screen. John Krasinski is in a limited release this summer called [Away We Go](#). Wonder why the distribution was not wider.

Overall, I thought *The Hangover* was fun. It had lots of laughs even if there were moments of mindless ridiculousness. Any movie featuring more than a cameo by Mike Tyson (even playing himself) is not going to be the greatest movie ever made.

Don't wait. Guarantee your seat before you go and avoid a sold out show. Skip the box office lines and buy movie tickets at [Fandango.com](#).

Before He Gets Too Old

I just learned that another [Indiana Jones](#) sequel is in the formative stages. Speculation abounds concerning the macguffin, the casting, direction, writing, etc. To me, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* was fun if a bit far-fetched. Transporting the intrepid archaeologist to the 1950s and the era of Area 51, nuclear test sites, etc was a good way to age the character. However, I was not keen on the whole happy family dynamic: even giving the son a canine nickname. It seemed like a passing of the torch to a new hero and I say NO. I also do not see it possible to recast Indy. It may have worked (for better or worse) over the course of the James Bond films but to me no one could capture the essence of Dr. Jones like Harrison Ford. I think that as long as Ford is willing and (more importantly) able to carry the whip, the franchise should continue but everyone grows old.

As far as the relic, I really don't think that the religious aspect is all important. The three original films dealt with religious artifacts but each one had a mystic quality to them. While reading some comments about a fifth movie, people have mentioned items such as the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the lost continent of Atlantis (which was actually bandied around the last time), Excalibur, and other relics.

Ok, tangenteers and other interested lurkers... what say you? More Indy? Recasting? And what famous device should be the catalyst for the show? However, they better get cracking, the three masterminds behind the franchise are likely to be in wheelchairs within the next 20 years.

How To Murder A Ferrari

Have you ever seen the 80's movie responsible for Matthew Broderick's big break called [Ferris Bueller's Day Off](#)? I'm sure it was popular everywhere, but growing up in the 'burbs of Chicago, we watched this movie over and over recognizing new locales each time since it was filmed in our backyards. If you've seen the movie, then you are most likely familiar with the scene where Ferris' friend, Cameron Fry, has a major meltdown and pushes his dad's Ferrari out of the glass wall of his garage. This scene was filmed at an actual house in the upscale Chicago suburb of Highland Park, and the [house is now for sale](#). For a cool \$2,300,000, you can buy the house and reenact the famous "Ferrari Murder" scene from Ferris Bueller's Day Off. Even if you don't have that kind of money or don't want to live in Highland Park (your neighbors would be Michael Jordan, Gary Sinise, and Harold Ramis), it's still kind of cool to check out the real estate listing which has details and other pictures of the house besides this:

