

Computers, sometimes I just hate them.

Over the weekend I was updating the hardware on one of my computers. While I had the case open, and my hands busily putting in many different parts, my daughter told me that the family computer wasn't working. Grumble Grumble. I seeing it I thought that the video card was a goner. It looked like the hard drives were still working, the key pad would display the proper lights when hitting the NumLock and ShiftLock keys. So I took out the card and swapped it with another. Still nothing. I think after 2 1/2 days of tinkering with the stupid machine, I found the problem to be a bad install of DirectX. Grumble, it wasn't the hardware at all.

Why don't I just use linux????

Reading a speech

Quite a few years ago my wife gave a speech about being hard of hearing. I found her hand written speech today. I wasn't looking for it, but I was cleaning out a drawer looking for an old "Windows" disk. For those who know me and my safe places, it is amazing that I found the disk.

Anyway, today I held in my hands something my wife wrote. That is a very strange feeling. In reading her words, I can hear her voice, I can see her smile at certain parts of the speech. I can even see parts of this speech where I'm quite certain her anger/disappointment would show through. I never saw her give this speech, but I did today.

From her speech these words I remember because they were said more than once.

[Quote from SJ0]

... Over the years I have become quite adept at conversation by reading lips and body language, anticipating what will be said, filling in blank spaces in a sentence with the correct word or phrase based on subject matter, number of syllables in the words, and placement in the sentence.

Certainly, I am wrong frequently. This causes embarrassment and confusion, but the alternative is silence – no conversing because of fearing embarrassment. I don't enjoy embarrassing myself, but I am not afraid of embarrassment – it does no permanent damage. ...

That last sentence, if my girls would have learned only one thing from their mother, this would be right at the top of the list. We don't enjoy embarrassing ourselves in any aspect of our lives, but as my dear wife said "it does no permanent damage.

To SJ0 1962-2003. A life not long enough, but lived fully.

Multitasking

As I sit here typing away at this blog, I have three other computer related tasks going on. I'm transcoding/burning two DVD's, I have a load of laundry going, I'm re-installing some software on another computer, and finally checking out a laptop to make sure everything is working properly. If you include the fact that one of the DVD's is being burned on a Linux box, you could say I'm learning a different OS too. Why

am I doing all of this now? Good question, and it is one I asked myself. I spent the better part of this evening installing some new and improved hardware on my main computer. It is the one I do most of my DVD work on, and I was just bogging the system down. I noticed I was able to transcode and burn a DVD faster on my laptop, than the main box. Something isn't not quite right there. I knew I had a problem with the video card in the main box, so I swapped that out.. I also put in a dual core processor, since that is what my laptop has in it. After all that work I had to put the machine through its paces, didn't I? And Now I think the box with twice as much memory, a faster processor, and more disks space finally catches up with the laptop. I don't think my hard drives on the desktop are nearly as fast, and I think that is what is slowing the desktop up this time...

Dryer buzzer, time to get the laundry.

Thoughts of High School

My youngest was inducted into the National Honor Society this evening. And the Senior class gave their heartfelt thanks to a person who helped them in their young lives. I'm curious as to how many of these young people will remember what they said during this evening. Some will remember, because they truly felt that the individual mentioned made a very big influence on their lives. Some will not. Those that will not make me a little sad. They have to spend a few minutes at least thinking about what they can say about these people, and say something that at least sounds sincere. But in a few short years this will be a silent memory or blank page in their lives.

Many people have said that High School are the best days of your life. I, for one, am glad that they were not. I've had many better days since then. I have very few people I consider friends that I met while in High School. I did not do any long term bonding with any high school classmates. I still see a few around, and I'm friendly to them, but we are not good friends. My good friends I've met since High School. Once I was grown up enough to see what is actually good in people, and they were able to see it in me.

Back to the National Honor Society... I was never in it. I was invited to join both my Junior and Senior years, but turned it down. I felt that it was more of a "click" than anything that would do me any good in my future. Did I make a mistake? Maybe, but I will never know. That person that had an influence on me... Yes, I had one. My High School Math teacher. I almost became a math teacher because of him. Since I didn't have his patience, I went into computers. He is still at the school, retired from teaching, but coaching the golf team. One of the students chose him as their inspirational person. He still has that touch.

Voices in the air

I'm sitting downstairs at the [theater](#) while tryouts are going on for "Little Women". My youngest is one of the singers/actors trying out. I'm sitting down here to get out of the way, and to make sure they don't ask me to try out. I don't sing, I don't dance, don't ask. But as I sit here we have some very lovely voices filling the air. I'm not sure who is who, but I think I heard my daughter once or twice. Me, I would hate trying to determine who would be in the show. For a small little theater in rural Ohio, we have a lot of very

talented people. I'm sure the director will have a tough time of it, but in the end this will make a better show.

Fun stuff theater. I've been involved in almost every aspect of it. I do stay away from musicals, except to run lights or back stage stuff. I've had lots of fun with all of it. This is sometimes my second home. So check out the [dates of the show](#) and come on by.

Lost a post...

I really don't know what happened to it. I finished a post, and was sure I pressed the publish button, but it is gone. I typed it so fast it didn't seem to have time to save a draft copy either??? Oh well, it was only electrons.

Another blog got me thinking about security. As children we carry blankies, have our favorite stuffed animal or something else we just won't part with. Our parents can also give us a sense of security. They hug when we aren't feeling well, the kiss to "make it all better" are ways we feel secure. Then we grow up.

In our high school days being part of a group can make us feel secure. You may be surprised how many students have a favorite book, pen or key chain. Little things they can hold to make them feel better.

As we get to be adults, different things give us security. Money in the bank, a good car, a cell phone, a good job, the lock on the front door, your SO or spouse. Just losing one of the things that make you feel secure as adult can be a life altering blow. Some people never find their way back to normal when they lose their security blanket. Cases of

depression can be caused by lack of secure job, being robbed (that lock didn't work), losing your money, getting in a car wreck, losing a loved one. And then we, as adults, wonder why our children don't want to give up their blankies... Just food for thought.

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.

That time of year

Today was the day for my yearly review at work. In the past, I've dreaded these conversations with my supervisors. I'm never quite sure why, since in all my years working, my reviews have never dropped below a good review. I've even had some outstanding reviews. Now in my old age, or maybe after all the years I've had on the job, I don't really pay much attention to the whole review process. Yes, I'll make my views known, and I will listen to any constructive criticism my supervisor has, but that is all I get out of it. I don't get super excited about excellent reviews, or down over the just good reviews. I imagine the only review that would bother me is a poor review, and I would hope I see that one coming before it happens. If I don't see it coming than I deserve the poor review.

I think another part of not paying too much attention to the whole review process, is that for the past 4 years, I haven't had my sounding board. I would talk with my wife about my self review and then again after the supervisor's review. This made the review, and my input to it more real (if that makes any sense??) This lack of discussion with someone who really knew me makes the whole thing seem like a dream. Maybe so, but then some of the last four years has a dreamlike quality (mostly the nightmare type). Such is life. After typing this, I feel that this may be a big part of my current feelings.

In case anyone is interested, I had a good review.

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 their 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.

Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match

No, I'm not going to write about "Fiddler on the Roof" or small things used to start fires. I'm talking about the past, present and future dating world.

Now a very long time ago, or in other countries even today, you had arranged marriages. At some point in time, the girl's family would get in contact with the boy's family and the marriage would be set. When the dowry price was met, or a certain age was met, or some other condition. All well and good, but not always a happy match.

In another age, you had the major courtship ritual. You get introduced, meet social in groups for a time, and finally you ask permission to "court". Usually this was done in the house of the girl under full supervision of her family. Usually slow, but it must have worked, the human species survived.

I never did any of that. I didn't date much before I got married. I had 2 or 3 'girlfriends' in College. None before that. College dating (at least for me) was lots of hanging out in each other's dorm rooms. Maybe a dinner off campus every once in a blue moon – cash was tight. After College, I spent almost a year working. I had a few dates after college. My sisters were kind enough to set me up a few times. I would say, that after the 1st date, I had fun. I never did like that first date feeling. Then I finally got my own place. I had a small apartment warming when I finally got furniture for people to sit on. One of the people that came to that event was my future wife, – we just didn't know it at the time. About 1 month later we had our first date. I still remember what we did, even though I can't remember the name of the restaurant, if it was still there I could take you right to it. Unfortunately it is long gone. We went out to eat, to a movie (Return of the Jedi) and stopped afterwards at a Dunkin' DoNuts. In less than 1 year we were married. We liked the first date so much, we did the same thing on our wedding weekend. I went from someone who had very little dating experience to a married man in very little time, but it felt right. My feelings weren't too far off, since we spent 20 years together, and would still be together except for a beast called cancer.

On to now. Four years after my wife's death, I find I may be ready to date again. I'm not 100% convinced of this, but the feeling is that it is almost there. Now I'm quite sure that I could live the rest of my life with that almost there feeling. I hated the initial dates that much. I'm not sure I want to go through that routine again. However, it is what it is.

Now onto how dating is done today. Most of what I've heard is that you go "online" to find a date. I guess that is a possibility, but it doesn't seem right for me (more on that in a bit). I don't go to bars, so I don't think I'll ever find someone through that route. There are also people who go to

church just to find a date. Hmm, on that one, something just doesn't seem right there... My big social events seem to revolve around a small little community theater I where I tend to hang out. Some of my closest friends were met there. But I know the people there, and I can't see myself dating anyone I've met so far. Not that they aren't nice people, but I know a connection when I feel it, and that hasn't been there. My other activities are mainly things I do by myself, so meeting anyone interested in my hobbies will be difficult at best.

That is unless... There is always that... Come on you can type it. Ok, that internet dating route. There are any number of dating sites popping up on the internet. It seems like there is a new one every week. Some you have to pay for, some are free. Some are free and pay, but you can only send messages if you pay. Some do "Scientific" personality profiles to get your perfect match. Others are like on line supermarkets for dating. And there is probably everything in between and farther along on each side. I've seen add for dating a specific race, religion, occupation, location and there are plenty of other qualifiers. For some reason, none of this appeals to me. I get a little freaked out over the thought of putting anything out in a dating site. I'll blog, or visit boards for specific talking points, but a dating site? Am I just someones bit of data that goes through hundreds of personality profiles, or a slab of meat waiting to get checked out? Or worse, am I the shopper looking over those cuts of meat? It just seems like a foreign world to me, and I really don't want any part of it.

Now back to my title... I knew a matchmaker. Shortly after I was married, we lived near a lady who took it upon herself to find the perfect match for everyone. She knew people from all over the area and then some. She would make sure that certain people were introduced. And she wasn't above getting in there to push things together or pull them apart. Maybe that's what I need. A real live honest to goodness matchmaker. Do they

still exist? But then again, not for me.

My best bet is to get a new place, have a house warming and see if lightning strikes twice. Or not. Maybe I'm not ready after all. I guess I won't really know that until I take that first step. For me, there are days when I still feel married to that lovely lady I met at my first place. There are days when I think she might be walking in the door. The next person I meet will have to be willing to take on those days. I don't think they will ever go away.