

# A Smurfin' Good Time

I was so pleasantly surprised by how much my family liked the new Smurf movie that I was inspired to write a short review. Going in, I thought I would hate the movie because it didn't look funny. And I was a fan of the Smurfs as a kid, so not only did the movie look stupid, but I couldn't figure out why it took place in our realm rather than the Smurf's realm – wouldn't fans of the little blue mystical creatures, kids, and everyone else want to see Smurf village on the big screen?

Don't worry, we get to see Smurf village, and it's pretty cool. Especially the scene where Gargamel breaks in!! Ok, so I guess that's kind of a spoiler, sorry about that... but this is a kid's movie we're talking about. And kid's movie it is – my kids all really liked it (ages 11, 7, 4 and 3). The Smurfs have screen time for pretty much 100% of the movie, and there aren't any boring scenes with a lot of dialogue – these tend to lose the attention of kids. There are some Smurfy jokes – in this case I'm using "Smurfy" to describe inside jokes written for fans of the Smurfs from decades ago. Much like the Brady Bunch movies are actually enjoyable parodies of the hit tv show and poke fun at it, The Smurfs movie has gags about such shout-outs to the 80s cartoon as their names reflecting their personalities (a hilarious joke in the movie that I'm still chuckling about), cracks about how Smurfette always wears the same dress (although more than one joke about this was overdoing it and took the humor away), and multiple references to creator Peyo.



*(the Smurfs as I knew and loved them)*

From the previews, I thought Gargamel was going to be a bumbling bafoon, one of these over-the-top characters who might be ruined by the actor portraying him as he flailed around aimlessly in a ridiculous looking costume. But Gargamel as a live person in today's New York City was actually quite entertaining and even hilarious at times (If you grew up watching the Smurf cartoon like I did, watch for the way Hank Azaria runs as he portrays Gargamel – he imitates the cartoon character so well that it made me laugh out loud!). I especially liked the inclusion of the little details from the cartoon – like seeing the Smurf cages that Gargamel always had lying in wait for when he finally caught the little guys. There was backstory explained; everyone knows by now that Smurfette was actually created by Gargamel as Smurf bait, right? The story line was cheesy but not unbearable even while it made several futile attempts at teaching positive life lessons to kids in the audience. I could have done without the Katy Perry song reference (is “I Kissed a Girl really a song for kids? I’ve never heard the song and don’t want to know), and Katy Perry as Smurfette’s voice didn’t really give any personality to the character anyhow – she was just a girl Smurf and nothing like her character in the cartoon. Clumsy Smurf on the other hand, was a perfect 3d replica of his cartoon counterpart – both in voice and graphics. I did stop watching the Smurfs sometime after the Smurf cousins (Smurflings) came in, so I have no

idea where Gutsy Smurf came from (seems to be a brave Scottish Smurf complete with red sideburns and a kilt?). I would have liked to see my personal favorite Smurf, Jokey, get more screen time in the movie. On that subject, I don't understand why the group of 6 Smurfs with the most screen time (the ones who get to go to NY) did not include such series regulars as Jokey, Greedy, Handy, Vanity or Hefty. Actually, I didn't see those Smurfs at all, but then again, we arrived late to the movie so maybe I missed their appearances. The production staff also did an excellent job of utilizing aspects of modern technology to make funny jokes involving the Smurfs. Case in point: see the wikipedia reference.



*(My favorite Smurf, Jokey)*

Overall, Smurfs was an entertaining film for the entire family – and there was a huge gap between my low expectations and my high level of enjoyment of this cute movie! A must-see for anyone who has kids to take to a movie – bonus if you are a Smurf fan!

One more note – here is a list of characters I would like to see in the sequel:

Hogatha, Johan and Peewit, Clockwork Smurf, and Baby Smurf. But please, NO SMURFLINGS!!

And oh yeah... I did a search on my own blog to see if I had written about the I'm a Pink Toothbrush song from the Smurf's 1979 album. Turns out, I did include it in a [blog post that I had written in March 2010](#), and my kids (and me still!) are big fans of this adorable tune. It was really fun to read about my speculations on the Smurf movie in this blog post given the limited info I had that time on this "in production" project! (if you read it, you should know that Quentin Tarentino was

originally cast as Brainy Smurf, but both actor and studio are quiet on why the pairing did not work out...) So apparently I HAD heard of Gutsy Smurf – and wrote about it in my own blog a year and a half ago!



*(modern Smurfs from the 2011 movie)*

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## A Feudin' Festival

The end of a weekend full of fun and excitement. Saturday was the final day of our annual Festival of Flags. Around 10AM, our street was being bombarded by fire engines and police cruisers from surrounding communities as well as sporty cars that would travel the parade route. Being right on the main route, our house is a wonderful, shaded point from which to view the extravaganza. I must say that this year's parade was very enjoyable. It featured 3 area high school marching bands (two more than the last several years, the traditional pageant contestants, Citizen of the Year (who according to the local paper was born in 1984 yet graduated with my mother in 1966), various floats, and handfuls of candy. I saw more adults run up the hill in front of the house than kids. The three nieces all went down the street to the unshaded library lot. I did not understand why because we were getting just as much candy thrown our way. Ah, well...

After the parade, the sibs and I had a few hours to kill before the second round of Family Feud. For whatever reason,

our preliminary round was the only game played on Friday night. I would have thought that it would be more beneficial to play the entire first round (8 teams in all) and continue with the semi and final rounds the next day. It definitely would have been a little cooler. We were told not to expect to play our second round game until 3-3:30. However, the host breezed through the games and it was probably 2:15 when we took the stage. Jeff printed out a huge banner and name tags complete with a symbol indicative of our own unique personas.

His was an OSU emblem; Chad had a Cubs logo; I had a Star Trek insignia; Christi had a NASCAR auto; and Charnel had a baby bottle.

We played a team made up of employees of a local factory. The three questions:

- Name a beautiful breed of dog.
- What does a fancy restaurant have that normal restaurants do not?
- And the third escapes me.

We had control of the first question; however, there were 8 answers and after going through the line once, the responses got more difficult. Daschund and shi tsu are beautiful? Unfortunately our rivals won on a steal.

We got control of the second question as well. I blew my turn when I said "menu" was something fancy restaurants have that regular one's do not. My thinking was that the menus are at the tables and not on a board ala McDonald's and the like. A bit of controversy... Chad said "waiter" which got an X. Maitre D' was a correct response. For whatever reason, my second brother thought that the two were synonymous... Sorry, Charlie.

Our fate was sealed when I faced off at the podium for round three and for the life of me I cannot remember what the question was. I did get the number three response but my

opponent came up with the number one and they never looked back. A fun experience bonding with the siblings and there is always next year. However, I wonder if a different host could be found. Not that his honor did not do a fine job... We did stay and root on as the Perry family was crowned champions after they defeated Team Matsu (the team that dealt us our defeat).

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## **Bittersweet**

Bittersweet: Producing or expressing a mixture of pain and pleasure.

That is one of the definitions of this word and the topic of this post.

In June, my life started heading in a new direction. A lot has happened in the past few weeks. Most of the events were extremely pleasant, but there is a touch of sadness involved.

I am now in the middle of a growing relationship. The wonderful time learning how two people can fit their lives together has been occupying a good portion of my days. I must admit that the start of the journey is most enjoyable. I am looking forward the continuation of the time we have had. But other things took me away from the experience.

I had a trip partially planned for quite some time. A daughter and her husband were expecting their first child together. After the birth, my departure to the sunny south was a certainty. I made this trip alone. The preceding sentence is filled with sadness. I could not take any of my children, or another special someone with me.

I got to Florida and was able to hold my newest granddaughter for the first time. As with all of my grandchildren, it was love at first sight. The only difference is that with this little girl, I was able to see her weeks after her birth, not the years needed for my daughters to meet their husbands and the children that came with them. My thought as I held her was how sad it was that her maternal grandmother could not be here to see her. Another bittersweet moment.

I've been spending time with my family, and the older two grandchildren went to spend the weekend with their birth mother. Time for them to bond with another parent, sometimes life can be so complicated for our young. There will be a few days without their smiles in the morning. I am grateful for any time I spend with them.

In a few short days I will again be on the road. I will be leaving behind a family that I love dearly, and going back to the rest of my family that I love with equal passion. I am torn with leaving, but I am looking forward to seeing the others again.

I am also looking forward to spending more time getting to know someone new in my life. We have grown quite fond of each others company. It is a very good feeling. That is tinged with another bittersweet feeling. The history of our lives and why we were able to meet and start a relationship has some sadness and pain. There were difficult times in the past, and these experiences will influence our futures. It will be a journey of learning for both of us.

Bittersweet: Producing or expressing a mixture of pain and pleasure... A taste that is both bitter and sweet...

As long as the bitter and the sweet do not overwhelm the senses, this feeling or taste can be a fulfilling experience. Our lives are filled with these types of feelings. We must learn to take everything we can from these situations. They

are part of life and they make it worth living.

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## **July 2011 (part 1)**

The July 2011 page on my calendar has been filled since spring, so I knew we had a busy month ahead. Organizing everything I had jammed into those little squares on the calendar was going to be challenging enough, but then we were even able to add a few family mini-vacations to the mix! It's been a great summer so far despite the challenges of sometimes trying to be in 2 places at once, and I wanted to chronicle everything to enhance the wonderful memories we made as a family this summer – but be prepared; this will be quite the manifest when I'm finished!

June 30 and July 1 – We began the month with a last-minute trip to an indoor water park that's an hour away. After a sudden burst of cabin fever, my husband found a super internet deal that afforded us some much-loved family time. The kids loved the indoor water park, and Christopher was old enough this time to go on some water slides which he found to be a blast!



Best of all, the constant lower back pain that had been making me short of patience, irritable and tired all the time seemed to be remedied by my getting to sit in water for 2 days. I should note for future reference also how interesting it was to pack different people for 3 different trips at the same time. Simultaneously, I was packing 6 people for an overnight stay (with a separate bag for changing into street clothes from bathing suits, I might add), 1 little girl for a 4 day stay at camp, and also for a 3 day trip for 6 people. It felt hectic at the time, but not unmanageable – due to the fact that my wonderful family did much of the work for and with me. And you know what? I don't think we forgot anything!!

July 2, 3 – After the water park, we got a day of rest (and unpacking, re-packing, laundry) before we set out Sunday for the 4-hour drive to Nashville Indiana – with one small glitch: Hubby had food poisoning. He had to miss church to rejuvenate, and then we were off – well, after packing up the car and some other in-town odds n ends.

July 3-6 – We spent the 4th of July in Nashville – a yearly trip Hubby and I take with our 4 kids, my parents, my uncle, and my sister, her husband and their 2 kids – there were 13 of us staying in a large house in the middle of the Brown County woods. It was a beautiful place, and we're torn on where to choose to have next year's gathering. Last year, we had a beautiful house where each family had their own bedroom and bathroom. The few downsides to this house (called The Oaks) was the large steep hill that led down to the pond and fire pit – it proved to be dangerous last year when someone took a nasty spill (but was uninjured), so we didn't want to gamble with it this year when we have an adult who is practically incapacitated (me being 5.5 mos. pregnant). Also, the kids have to be watched constantly down by that pond, so it was a nice break for the adults this year to not have to worry about who was going to take them down there. Also, there wasn't really any yard for the kids to play in at The Oaks. There

was a swingset, but really only the two 3-year-old boys were of the age to enjoy a swing set this year, and that leaves 4 other kids with no yard to run around in. Both houses had pool tables inside and hot tubs outside (which became little swimming pools for the kids since we didn't want to turn on the heat in 90° weather), and The Oaks had tons of dvds, board games, and a foosball table, but then again, this year we brought our own dvds and games and the kids had TONS to do and were never bored. Another plus to this year's cabin vs. The Oaks: the large dining room table that fit almost everyone at the same time so we could enjoy meals together. The Oaks had only a small breakfast nook that seated 4 people or about 6 kids, so the adults had to eat elsewhere. Given these pros and cons of each cabin, it's going to be a tough decision next year on where to stay!!

The kids' favorite thing to do this year was to go down to the creek that ran around the property (this cabin was called "Ginley's Gulch" for future reference). There they would walk the creek, hunting for crawdads, geodes, and minnows, and they found quite a few of all of the above. As I said, this property had a larger yard, and also 85 acres of forest, and in the future I would like to explore the gorgeous property more since I wasn't quite feeling up to that this year. I did enjoy walking down the cleared path into the forest though – there were many beautiful butterflies, cool looking insects, and birds to see and hear. And oh yeah! I forgot to mention another huge plus of Ginley's Gulch – the screened-in porch! It had a ceiling fan, so it was a wonderful, mosquito-free place to spend our Brown County evenings together. A great trip!!

July 6 – We arose at the crack of dawn to pack up the car and get the kids roused for the 4+ hour drive to Michigan to drop daughter #2 at camp. We were all exhausted, and the kids slept much of the way. We did stop in Fort Wayne for something to eat, and we finally tried a little cafe where we had always wanted to try their eggs benedict since reading an

ad for them years ago. The eggs benedict was a bust – sauce from a packet, don't you know, but they did have one of my seasonal favorites that's very hard to find in the northern part of the country where I live: fried green tomatoes. And they were yummy! We dropped Sammie off at camp just a little late, and we were excited for her after seeing what a great place [Camp Selah](#) is (Camp Selah is a Christian camp in Reading Michigan, and both of our kids who went had a SUPER time!)

July 7-9 – These next few days were a bit quiet without the whole brood together, and we fit in another family min-vacation: since Sammie had to be picked up in the morning in Michigan, we took the other 3 kids to the drive-in in Coldwater Michigan and spent the night there – lots of fun! Saturday the 9th we picked up Sammie, and she said she had a good week during her first ever time at camp.

July 11 was the 3rd birthday of a very special little guy, and we took him out to dinner at the local Mexican restaurant where they sang to him, put a sombrero on him, and dabbed his nose with dessert. I of course forgot my camera ☹ but he liked it all the same. It reminded me of last year when the staff at Bob Evans sang to him, and he dove into my shirt to hide – the year of experience helped him to enjoy the attention more this year. And in the morning of little dude's birthday, I had to drive Taylor to camp in one of the nastiest storms of the year. We made it there without a problem, but the ride home was dicey with driving rain and wind. I was glad I didn't have any kids with me which would have made me nervous, and as you can tell I made it just fine – even if I did arrive sopping wet and very late to Bible study. In the newspaper the next day, I saw a picture of a power line that fell into the road which turned out to be the same road I had been driving down during that storm. Just goes to show you what kinds of things to look out for when driving during inclement weather in the middle of desolate farm country, and I feel blessed to have made it safely.

July 11-14 – So with our eldest away at camp, the week flew by... even though we missed her (I especially missed having someone old enough to have a normal conversation with me during the day). We had 3 days of doctor appointments (me and our youngest-for-now had his 3-year-checkup) and meetings, and then... freedom!

July 15 – Hubby and I met my mom in South Bend, and she took “the littles” (our family name for the younger kids in our family; in this case it meant our 3-year-old, 4-year-old, and 7-year-olds) to Grandma’s for a vacation – which left Hubby and I kidless for a whole day! So Hubby took me to the Potawatomi Zoo in South Bend, and the amount of walking and the weather was perfect for me even while pregnant since it was just the two of us. What a great idea as I was just starting to get zoo withdrawl! After the zoo, we decided to take the scenic route home from South Bend and fell upon a perfect date purely by accident: in Middlebury Indiana, there is an excellent Amish-style restaurant called [Das Dutchman Essenhaus](#). We were driving by on a day when they had a buffet, so we could sample many varieties of their very delicious food. Even better, there were some Amish men offering carriage rides in the parking lot, so we took one! It was so romantic, the grounds of the mini-resort were beautiful, the weather was perfect, and hearing the history of the grounds as told by our Amish guide was wonderful – best date day ever!!

*(below is a picture of a horse and buggy like the one we drove in (ours was more of a carriage than a buggy). I had to take the picture on the way home since I had forgotten my camera and couldn't take any pictures while on the buggy ride!)*



July 16 – This was the day we picked up our oldest from camp, and we got to hear every detail about her awesome week while driving from Michigan to Fort Wayne to see... the new Harry Potter movie ON IMAX IN 3D!! Yes, it was as cool as it sounds, and it was fun to take Taylor out for a fun day with only parents and no younger siblings – dinner was at Golden Corral, one of her favorite places since she loves steak. I'm thankful that the awful nausea I felt earlier in the day did not persist through the movie, and the cause of it that day still perplexes me... such is a mystery of pregnancy, I guess.

July 17-18 – The 3 of us tackled the huge project of cleaning out our spare room – what a mess! I wish we had taken some “before” pictures, but the most important thing is that it got done, even if I felt like I was going to fall over in exhaustion by the end of it. I'm so proud of Hubby for all the hard work he did for this project, and especially that it was his idea to tackle it earlier than we had scheduled – we began Saturday night after Fort Wayne rather than Sunday after church as we had planned. But it looks GREAT, and as I'm writing this at the end of July, our family has gotten so much use out of it already. We made it into a craft / hobby / school room, and it has a computer, Taylor's new sewing machine (a present from Grandma), all kinds of paper, crayons, glue, etc, and all the many, many arts and crafts kits and supplies we had been saving (and losing) for the past 5 years.

*(July manifest to be continued – need to give your eyes a*

*break! But first, here is a pic of a creative, cute fire hydrant in downtown South Bend Indiana I snapped while sitting at a stoplight – look for it near the silver van's rear bumper)*



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## Grumpy dog

Currently on my blog page, there is a picture of my little corgi. He is an old grumpy little dog. In the past, when I have to leave town for any length of time, I tried to take him with me, or in the care of family. If that was not an option, I would board him in a kennel, with some trepidation. I never liked the kennels, because the little guy always seemed to be a bit nervous there.

I'm in Florida now, and the grumpy pup is staying with friends. I've heard he is still being a bit grumpy, but I've also heard that he is getting some love and attention. This has allowed me to relax just a bit on this vacation. It is a welcome relief.

Mere words can never express the gratitude I feel. This is coming from the same person who threw a fit when the dog arrived in the house 12 years ago. He wasn't really my dog

until recently. He always preferred the oldest female in the house. I let that oldest female take care of him. But with my youngest daughter being out of the house, he became my dog.

No, I really don't have the words right now. My heart felt thanks are fully given. He is, after all, a very special grumpy old dog.

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## Official?

Well, I saw it on facebook. Doesn't that make it true? OK, you don't believe that line, good. Not every thing you see on Facebook is true or, real. Same goes for most of the Internet. I like to make sure I let people know important things face to face or at least on the phone.

Important news should be delivered to those it affects. As you go farther from the center the news does not need to be direct, but where and when does Facebook become an acceptable way of spreading the news.

I've delivered some important news to those that needed to know. After that the news was placed on Facebook. Yes, I guess that made it official. I never thought that I would be placing important information on any social network. I never dreamt of putting it in this type of information in my blog.

I guess important news can be shared in this type of format if that is the only way it can be shared.

I just noticed that I spent a good portion of this post writing about important news. I have shared that news (slightly) in an earlier post, but in my own obtuse way. People who know me, knew what I was talking about. I guess I

should, at some point, I should state this in a bit more extensive format. Then again, I won't be doing that now.

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## A Shower In Indigo

Today was an extremely busy fun day I had to run to Btown for my monthly poke and got a call this afternoon informing me that all is well and they'll see me in another 4 weeks. From there, I set off to find decorations for a small baby shower, Lutz and I were preparing. Around 4:30, I went to the shelter house to decorate. I hope the guest of honor was a LITTLE surprised?! Fun while I was there briefly, as always. I had to bolt shortly after the festivities began as my siblings and I were set to compete in our hometown festival's version of Family Feud.

The set left something to be desired. Our oldest commented that he could have done a much better job... I would have to agree. Have you ever played Family "Fued?" I don't think I would want to. Our revered mayor played host. He did a fine job but could have slowed the pace a bit. We were done in 20 minutes. I was going to ask if he was going to kiss the girls on the teams, but decided against it.

The Shaf siblings took on the team of Main Stop. We were relentless. We won each of the three rounds. "Name a place where you meet obnoxious people." "Name an expression with the word HEAVEN." "Name an activity teenagers engage in when they should be studying."

After some debate, Jeff and I played Fast Money. Since I went last, I was driven around the grounds in a cart so I couldn't



hear the questions and answers. It would not have hurt too much to hear the answers since the smart one only got 81 of the 200 points needed.

- Name a vehicle named after an animal. J: Mustang; Me: Cougar (number 1)
- Name any color of the rainbow. J: INDIGO?!; Me: Red (number 1)
- Name a College that generally has a good basketball team. J: Ohio State; Me: Notre Dame (first thing that came into my head)
- Name a Cable Network beginning with the letter "C." J: CNN; Me: C-SPAN
- Which President has the most streets named after him. J: Washington; Me: Lincoln (tied for top answer).

Indigo may be a color of the rainbow but apparently not a very popular color of the rainbow. In fact, I think I read that it had been downgraded. In the end, we totaled 211 points and move on to round two! The rest of round one begins tomorrow at 1PM. Six other teams play (3 games total) before we take the stage sometime between 3 and 4 o'clock! Would be nice to see some Jamiahsh fans come and cheer us on!

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## **There's No Place Like The Merry Old Land Of Oz**

Yesterday was quite the busy day. It began around 9AM as I went to the area chamber of commerce office to sell tickets for FCF's production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Quite an experience (fun but at times busy). Answering phones, waiting on the line of theatergoers, marking charts, getting the tickets, running credit cards, and attempting to keep an accurate count

of sold tickets was fun. Of course there were down times, but by 5PM, each of the 4 performances were really close to 300 with Friday night just one ticket shy of 400. I found it amazing that Thursday night's opening is the second strongest. Sunday afternoon is a typical slow day but Saturday night?! Ah well... it was only Tuesday.

After selling tickets, I had a few hours before I needed to be at the Arts and Ed building to sit and review said show. I must say that it was much easier to review Oz since it remains one of my perennial favorites than it was my first time doing a review for (Cr)OKLAHOMA! It certainly took less time... or maybe last night's show ended sooner. I must apologize for any omissions to the cast as I attempted to include everyone including the adorable Toto. At review time, the programs had not yet arrived and a full cast list was unavailable. However, most of it was available on the theatrical group's [website](#). So after completing my task, and forwarding it on to the President, my second review will soon be on the printed page, if not on the screens of cyberspace. Hopefully, it will appear before the show completes its one weekend schedule.

### There's No Place Like The Merry Old Land Of Oz

by Jamy Shaffer

In 1900, Lyman Frank Baum published the novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* having no idea the impact that the little children's book would have on the world. Twelve sequel novels, stage plays, and silent movies followed. However, it was the 1939 beloved classic motion picture starring Judy Garland that would catapult the tale to atmospheric proportions. This weekend only, under the very capable direction of Beth Schweitzer, Fountain City Festival presents the most faithful stage adaptation of the cherished film.

McKenzie Frazier leads the cast as Dorothy Gale, the young naïve farm girl who dreams of going "Over the Rainbow" and

escaping the dull, lifeless Kansas prairie. Miss Frazer who is in her late teens does a fine job of portraying the young dreamer by use of subtle body gestures and a childlike voice that give Dorothy just the right mix of naivete and, at times, fear.

As in the movie, the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion each are characters from Dorothy's Kansas life recreated in more colorful, dramatic fashion. Brian Coon is exceptional as Hunk who, in Oz, becomes the man of straw with no brains. Coon's agility on stage is phenomenal as he falls down, picks himself up, and puts the stuffing back in.

Casey Wood delivers a dramatic Hickory/Tin Man. Even for a character with no heart, Wood does a fine job of portraying the emotions he lacks. His stiff movements on stage are wonderful as he stands as if posing for his statue.

The third friend Dorothy encounters along the Yellow Brick Road is hilarious slapstick at its finest. Adam Coon is brilliant as the Cowardly Lion. Even as Zeke, Coon is remarkable as he runs away in the face of danger. Once in the costume of the fearful king of the forest, he goes all out with his perfect comedic timing and fabulous stage presence.

Amy Vondeylen is hideously delicious as Miss Gulch/Wicked Witch of the West. Her over the top, extremely melodramatic, villainous portrayal is sure to draw hisses and catcalls from the audience.

Caprianna Parrish brings a delightful, airy quality in her portrayal of Glinda, the Good With of the North. Her costume, like many of the other characters' is almost a direct replica of the original film version.

The Great and Powerful Wizard of Oz himself is brought to fine life by Tom Schweitzer. His showman approach to the character is just the thing needed to portray the humbug who is a good man but a very bad wizard. Hopefully, this comes as no

surprise to anyone.

Anyone who has ever seen Keith Day in action knows what a fine character actor he is. Mr. Day displays a great sense of warmth but befuddlement as Uncle Henry along side Sarah Schaper as Auntie Em. Later, he brings the same greatness to his role as the Guard at the Gates of the Emerald City.

What is Oz without the adorable munchkins? There will sure to be a collective sigh and laughter as Marlee Yoder, Katherine Seaman, Vivien Ewing, Hannah Goodrich, Kayla Arnold, Veronica Nichols, and Lizzy Canield portray the female variety. Austin Damrod, Cory Yosick, Jesse Short, Seth Short, Milo McRobbie, Logan Purny, Mason Frazer, Mason Bassett, Wyatt Short, Keegan McCashen, and Micah McCashen play their male counterparts.

The three apple trees who seemed to have a larger on stage role than in the movie are played by Jeremy Scott, Jared Wigent, and Thomas Vandal.

Some of the Witch's Winkie guards ("O E O Yo Ah") are played by Cameron Lyons, Austin Teegarden, Mason Bassett, Wyatt Short, Evan Raub, and Jeremy Scott.

Other Emerald City Ozians are played by FCF stalwarts Ron and Linda Jinks, Noelle Goodson, Sara Yosick, Nanci Frazer, Briana Gearhart, Megan Fry, Maddi Heisler, Kathleen Walsh, Remy Cousino, Emma McCashen, Chloe McCashen, Heather Teegarden, Edwina Phillips, Sandy Bowers, and Faith Stambaugh.

So... take your own journey along the Yellow Brick Road and go Over the Rainbow as FCF presents *The Wizard of Oz*. Thursday July 28<sup>th</sup> – Saturday July 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm and Sunday July 31<sup>st</sup> at 2PM. Unlike years past, the show runs only one weekend at the Bryan Arts and Education Building. Tickets are \$10 each and may be purchased at the Bryan Chamber office or by calling 419-636-2247. Don't miss this cherished family-friendly show!

*(Jamy Shaffer is a veteran community theater performer who has*

*been involved in more shows in the Northwest Ohio region on and off stage than even he can count.)*

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## **I'm Thinking... I'm Thinking...**

Some comic relief in the title of this post to distract me from quite an overwhelming day today:

Received some devastating news (for us, but don't worry – it's great news for some friends of ours) prayed about it, and examined the possibilities that may arise from it. There's also been several intriguing and exciting doors being revealed to us lately, and we are praying on, thinking about, and waiting to see which ones will open and where they might lead. We've been contemplating a huge decision in the past few months regarding our family, and it's time to finalize that decision. We spent some time with friends today gathering information and establishing a support system for this possible lifestyle change. I'm excited but for the lack of sleep wearing me down and making me feel overwhelmed – it's all a lot to process. I will write more in a bit – as you can see, I have a new keyboard. I have a whole July manifest half-written that's kept me busy – I want the kids to be able to read about our family's stellar July 2011 on my blog someday, so I'd better get around to it. Same thing with my chronicle of the Florida trip we took in January that still has the last part missing 6 months later – oops. I don't know what my problem is – the only thing that distracts me from blogging is doing homework for my Bible study class – and the fact that I found my Zoo Tycoon game; that's really distracting from productivity. And oh yeah – the 4 kids running around the house because it's been too hot to play outside; that can make blogging a bit difficult.

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## May I Return...

What a day! I took two of my nieces to Journey Oz as the cast and crew prepared for what is sure to be a [WONDERFUL](#) production next weekend. I once again will be playing reviewer Tuesday night. Today, the cast and crew provided an on and back stage experience tailored to the entire family.

Munchkins, Winkies, the Wizard, Wicked Witch, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, Tin Man, and Dorothy were on hand for photo ops and previews... and "her little dog, too." Alyssa and Sydney were both quietly excited at the site.

After, Megan texted me and asked if I would like to accompany her to an area production of [Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat](#) which starred two thespians I have had the honor of performing with previously. So after grabbing a bite to eat and dragging her to church as I had to sing, we headed out. Tim has really grown as an actor and delivered a FINE performance. Crystal as always was stellar as one of the trio of narrators. This is the first time I have known of a production utilizing more than one narrator and it worked nicely. The entire cast looked like they were having such an outstanding time. In every show, it is important to believe that the people on stage are actually enjoying what they are doing. Joseph perhaps a bit more than any other because it can easily slip into "cheese." The gentleman portraying "Levi" is the husband of a friend of mine who I have known since my pre-school days. Could not find him after the show to congratulate him. Just one of many shows that never gets old for me either watching or performing in. Nine months is a long time. But soon I will be on stage delivering the list of songs I have been perfecting.

A very fun day spent with loved ones doing things I love to do.



Sydney and Alyssa with the  
Cowardly Lion