

Late night

When everyone is asleep, I feel the need to be awake. I really need to get more sleep, I do have to get to work early tomorrow. This has been my method of living for years and years. I tend to stay awake when I should be sleeping.

For the past four years, I've been blaming it on the fact that I am a widower. While I admit, that sleeping alone after 20 years of sleeping with someone takes getting used to, (not sure I'm used to it yet), I've had this problem most of my adult life. In fact, I would read well into the early morning with my dear wife sleeping next to me. I sure am glad she could sleep with my reading light on. Now I just live with this normal insomnia. I imagine I could get some sleep aids from my doctor, but I really don't like taking medication. I've read where not sleeping can cause all sorts of health problems, so maybe I should look into it.

For me the night is the time my mind is in full motion, I need to read, write and just think of things. The silence of the house seems to push my thoughts faster and faster. I may have to use this time to do something other than read fiction, and type out blogs. It would be nice to get more benefit than just getting a few more trivial pieces of information.

Lounge talk

This is going to be short (sandman is calling) but I just wanted to say something about talk in the lounge. Teachers talk about many things of course, like family, current events, the weather, etc. A favorite topic, also of course, is students. How did such and such student behave today? What

students are failing miserably? Oh, let me tell you of the cavity searches I had to do today. Wait- what?!? *Cavity searches??* One of the gym teachers came down to lunch and started talking about this. I have no idea what was being searched for, and didn't get any other details in fact. Fortunately. This was just so off the wall I had to mention it even without complete information. There was also mention of a student who ran out the front door and a teacher who almost ran after her. The secretary told her to let it go and she would call the police. From what I understand she didn't get very far hobbling along in an ankle brace..

Ahh, middle school. And I have another day of it tomorrow, different school fortunately, and it's getting late so goodnight.

Boy saves bus from major accident

No license? Who cares? Usually this would be a bad conversation, such as an underage child taking dad's car for a spin (my brother has done this before, so has my nephew...). This time however this boy was saving everyone on the bus from experiencing the sudden effects of being hit by a truck. He didn't really drive it, just steered it out of the way. The driver had left to answer the call of nature, but somehow this bus came out of gear and started rolling downhill. This 11-year-old, thinking only of his older brother also on board, chose not to jump off like some others, but instead to save both him and his brother by stopping the bus. [Click link to read on...](#)

Boy, 11, steered bus to avoid semi

So you want a telescope

After finding out I have a telescope, and of my interest in Astronomy, I am often asked "What kind of telescope should I get my (self, kid, spouse, father, fill in the blank). My first thought is to say they can buy mine so I can get a bigger, better, different telescope. But in reality, the best answer is usually to get a good astronomy book.

Unless you are exactly like me, you will need to get a foundation of what is in the sky before you drag out a telescope. Going out on clear nights with just a lawn chair and your eyes will give you an indication if you actually want a telescope. There are many uncomfortable aspects of sky watching and astronomy. If you add to this lugging and setting up a telescope, you may find you really don't want to do this.

Spring in Ohio is a good time to start with your quest for a telescope. The clear nights are becoming a bit warmer from the winter deep chills, and the bugs aren't out as much. If you can take the few mosquitoes and the slightly chilly nature of the spring nights, you can then look forward to the summer nights. In most cases the summer nights in Ohio are quite comfortable for watching the night sky. If someone could do something about all the mosquitoes. Yes, you will be a target of these blood thirsty little creatures. Then there are the numerous encounters with other wildlife. Skunks will generally not spray, unless you scare them. Stepping on a skunk tends to

scare it. Raccoons on the other hand don't fear much. Keep the snacks well sealed, and don't leave your car open. In NW Ohio that is all you generally have to worry about. But I did hear talk of a wandering Black Bear in the area!

Other parts of the country will have their own night time problems. Scorpions, cougars, wolves, bears, poisonous snakes, and the strange people who come out at night in our larger metropolitan areas, are all possible things you could run into trying to look at the night sky. Do you really wonder why I don't automatically tell a person which telescope to buy.

Astronomy and star watching is not for everyone. We are a strange breed. We tend to enjoy being out in the dark (the darker the better), communing with the wild, lugging heavy equipment out for maybe 2-4 hours of finding and studying a specific nebulae or feature on the Moon. Then we will pack up and lug that equipment back in. If you can't spend 1/2 hour after lugging your lawn chair out just to look at the sky, well this hobby isn't really for you. A telescope really won't help.

Ok, you got past the looking at the stars for 1/2 hour, and you enjoyed it. What next? Get a good astronomy book. Take the time to learn what is up there. Before you get a telescope you need to know what you're going to be looking at. Astronomy books and star charts are the road maps to the night sky. You should be able to find at least 1 or 2 constellations before you purchase that scope. Checkout [Sky and Telescope](#) or [Astronomy Magazines](#) at your local library or bookstore. They will have a sky map of the current month.

You say you've done all that and still want a telescope? Now we're talking. Get some good binoculars and come back in a month or two. ☐ No really, I wish someone had told me that at the beginning of my astronomy connection. I still don't have a good pair of binoculars, and my desire for them is growing. 7×50, 8×50 and 10×50 are all good binoculars to start with in

astronomy. Oh yes, the first number is the magnification of the binoculars (7 times, 8 times or 10 times) the second number is the size of the front lens in millimeters. The bigger front lens collects more light, and the higher magnification allows you to see more. 2 big notes!! High magnification may seem like a good thing, but too much causes what I call the jitters. It is hard to hold binoculars steady, high magnification makes this much more apparent. And bigger front lenses may also seem like a good idea. Bigger lenses, means the binoculars will weigh more. Heavy binoculars also cause the jitters.

Ok, Ok you got this far? You should get a 7 inch Questar Maksutov. Make sure you get a well built tripod with this since this telescope needs good support. And when you get tired of astronomy let me know, I may have a home for your scope.... That's just a joke folks. When you find out what that telescope costs you may understand. For the real answer, stop back in the future. I work up a list of good beginner scopes.

Crossing the Big Pond

Planning a trip to London? Let me be your guide to the best the West End has to offer in theatre. Already there are the Broadway hits [Wicked](#), [Phantom of the Opera](#) (ok, ok, it was in London first), and the just opened [Jersey Boys](#). However, there are several productions which have not yet made the leap over to the U.S.

There is the Andrew Lloyd Webber produced revival of *The Sound of Music*. Apparently, Lord Lloyd Webber cannot produce anything new on his own that is capable of making money so he

must revive not only his past successes but also breathe new life into other's works as well (whatever happened to his planned sequel to *Phantom?*). There is also a revival of Webber's [Joseph...](#). In a bit of "American Idol" meets musical theatre, the Joseph for this production was chosen on a reality television show. In 2007, the new Broadway cast of [Grease](#) was chosen in this way on a series called "Grease: You're the One that I Want." Not a very original title.

There is also a new musical version of the classic novel and movie [Gone with the Wind](#). The Trevor Nunn directed production stars [Darius Danesh](#) as Rhett Butler. Darius was seen on "Pop Idol" which is the British phenomenon that inspired "American Idol." I wonder if the judges told him that he was "too theatrical" as Simon Cowell has been known to tell American contestants.

Perhaps the strangest if not the most ambitious show of all is the staging of J.R.R. Tolkien's [Lord of the Rings](#) trilogy. It took three films of nearly three hours each to scratch the surface of the novels. I'm sure Rings purists are left wanting after only one 3 hour musical.

So... if you are in West End or are planning a trip over the Atlantic, consider taking in one or more of these stage hits. Of course many times, today's hits of London become tomorrow's Broadway blockbusters and vice versa.

Mediocrity

Two things I was looking forward to watching today turned out to be disappointing. The first, a new horror movie in theaters called "[The Ruins](#)", I wouldn't classify as a bad movie. It was entertaining, at least... I say that a lot about

movies, I know. But if they hold my attention, aren't boring (like [The Night Listener](#)), and don't disgust me too much (like [Doomsday](#)), then I generally don't consider the movie a waste of my time because I really like watching movies, spending time with my husband, and I just overall enjoy the movie theater going experience.

But as far as horror movies go, "The Ruins" is not my idea of a good one. I won't even go into the acting skills; it's so unimportant when talking about this kind of movie. No one stood out as horrible or unwatchable, and that's all that matters in a movie like this. I did lose a side bet with Hubby about whether or not one of the actors was also in the [Texas Chainsaw](#) remake – he was – but no matter, I really wasn't too sure about it anyway. The premise was interesting; 4 twentysters (people in their early twenties. Hey, I just made that up because as far as I'm concerned, many of them still act like teens, might as well give them a goofy name to go with their attitudes. Maybe it'll catch on...) on vacation in Mexico follow this German guy (actor with a fake accent. Why they couldn't just find a German actor is beyond me, but whatever) they just met on a trek miles into the jungle to see some ancient ruins. When they get there, they end up trapped on top of the pyramid thing by the natives who believe the ruins are cursed. That's basically it. The movie was pretty fast-paced, however, once I realized that the "monster" of this horror movie was plant life, somehow it wasn't very scary... Also, everything creepy was already shown in the previews – I HATE when they do that to movies! None of the characters were very likable, so when some met their demise, it wasn't all that shocking nor disappointing. I don't know why the movie was rated R – I've seen much scarier PG13 movies, they could have cut out the nude scene, and the gore in this movie was all (POTENTIAL SPOILER ALERT – IF YOU CARE) mercy limb cutting. I was thinking the movie could redeem itself with a good resolution, but that was not to be. I can't see any replay value of this movie. Worth seeing once

but not again. One good thing though, it didn't have you leaving the theater feeling like crap about humanity, like Domsday or some other movies I've seen – that's always a plus.

On to disappointment #2 – Secret Talents of the Stars. A show about “celebrities” – and some people who call themselves celebrities who I've never heard of – who try their hand at other talents than what they've become famous doing. What was I thinking you ask? What would *this* shameless attempt at yet another celebrity reality show have that made me want to watch it? The answer – hype. It was hyped so much that I actually fell for it. And I really wanted to see [Clint Black](#) (I'll forgive you this once if you don't know he's a major country music star) attempt stand-up comedy. That was until I actually saw Clint Black attempt stand-up comedy. Not very funny. And the show seems fixed too... ok, what show like this isn't, but still... the “judges” all *loved* Clint Black's comedy... probably because he was the most hyped star of the show, and they wanted to make sure he'd be in the semi-finals. And then there was [George Takei](#), of former [Star Trek](#) fame, now most famous for coming out of the closet, sad to say that has overshadowed his years on Star Trek, but I for one had never heard of him before he came out... So, in between several obvious and Clint Black-ish (meaning not very good) type gay jokes, George sang “On the Road Again”, originally by Willie Nelson. And if you don't know who that is, you're on your own, I'm not going to spell it out for you! Needless to say, he butchered it and got kicked out of the show – big surprise. The other 2 contestants tonight – Sasha Cohen and a singer called just Mya, were trying for talents that were somewhat related to their profession anyway – something I did not think was fair. Figure skater Cohen was being an acrobat, while singer/entertainer Mya was tap-dancing! The show is stupid, the format is obvious, the judges lines are scripted... but why will I be watching next week? Another country music star, [Jo dee Mesina](#) will be

trying her hand at something other than country music and rehab. Low blow there, and I apologize... it's late, and I seem a wee bit crabby, maybe I should have gone to bed instead of staying up until 11 to watch this dumb show...

Ernie the Klepto

If you've been to a movie in the theater lately, you may have noticed a very clever and funny Starburst commercial they play during the previews with [Steve Buscemi](#) called Ernie the Klepto. If not, see it here, but watch carefully, the humor is subtle at first and happens quickly!

Another half day

It happens from time to time that I will only get a half day. Due to the advent of online systems though, it is relatively easy to accept a job and then later cancel when a better one comes up. I don't do that too often, but a half day is one reason I try. Since this half day was for the afternoon I could try even the day of, as long as it's early enough in the morning that they can get another sub easily. As it worked out though no other job was to be found. I was up until about 11 and then woke up just after 6 to try again. Nothing. Finally, at around 7 I decided to give up and go back to bed, mostly due to not sleeping well the last couple of nights. As I write this I am exhausted *again*. I don't know why I usually wait until the end of the evening to write. Oh, well.

So as it worked out, not only was it a half day but it was at probably the furthest school from me, at the opposite corner of one of the further districts. It took me about 25 minutes to get there. It was in one of the mentally impaired rooms, but I knew this at the outset as I have subbed in this school many times. It was easy. Silent reading followed by computer time. Then they wrote a letter to a classmate that had transferred schools (moved I guess) a couple of weeks before. The writing varied, but generally the kids were pretty slow, letters not well-formed- but remember these are mentally impaired kids. One couldn't really write at all, but that didn't matter. It will get sent with the rest to the girl's new school. After that they went to language lab where it should have been a nice rest for me since it is run by another teacher. Nope- I was told I would be needed in another classroom while their teacher went to a meeting. It was another mentally impaired room. I had worked with several of

the boys in that room before, but oddly enough I do not remember ever being in that room. Maybe from last year? I will have to go through my past positions to figure this out. I *do* remember subbing for that teacher in the past so maybe my memory is just bad. Anyway, they cooked some muffins. Well, the boys only got to stir a little, taking turns, but that could be considered a life skill for them anyway. One of the IAs brought them to the lounge to cook in the oven. In the meantime, we played some bingo while waiting for the muffins. The teacher still wasn't back from her meeting by the time the original class was back from the lab, which by the way is simply working with the kids on communication skills in case you were wondering, so the kids actually stayed in the lab a little longer since I couldn't be with both classes and a certified teacher or sub is required to always be in a classroom.

As it turned out the teacher never did come back so I stayed until the end in that one room. I'm thinking the language teacher came back with the other class after a while, but I'm not sure on that. I do know they came back eventually. I pushed one of the wheelchair-bound boys to the bus at the end of the day. It's interesting that at that school there are about a dozen short buses lined up at the end of the day, half of them wheelchair-capable, as the kids come from all over the district. So that was it, end of the day. Until tomorrow folks!

Ordinary People

One of my favorite quotes has always been one for which I have no idea for whom credit should go: "Heroes are ordinary people who make bad decisions at good moments." Surely with my wide-

ranging blog someone must have a good idea from what source this comes from. I have thought long and hard for several years and have come up with nada.

Today, I was fortunate to attend a memorial service for a man who could be seen as a hero in the eyes of many in the very small community I was raised in. I know of at least one individual who considered Mr. Peverly their personal hero, my Uncle Bob.

The memorial service was a bit unusual. The atmosphere was very light and dare I say, fun. The Elementary School gymnasium was adorned with pictures of high school sports teams, trophies, and a batting cage. Over the speakers, music from the 1950s played ("Yakety-Yak," "Rock Around the Clock," etc.) Far from the slow, sober music one might expect for a funeral.

Mr. Peverly taught high school math from 1956-1988. He was perhaps better known as the coach of baseball, basketball, and cross country. Unfortunately, he retired from teaching one year before I entered high school. I did however have him as a substitute for French class; which he told us he knew absolutely nothing about. A good thing for him it was mid-term exam day.

Mr. Peverly and my uncle have had a very long, interesting relationship. My Grandfather Swary passed away when Uncle Bob was 15 years old... years before either of my older brothers were born and before my parents were married. Being the youngest of 3 (and the only boy), Bob needed the guidance of a male figure. Because he saw in Bob someone who was more inclined toward sports than classroom studies, Mr. Peverly took him under his wing and nurtured him into the man he is today.

As one of the three speakers at the service, Uncle Bob told one very interesting story from his youth (one my entire

family knows by memory). It seems that during his senior year, the varsity baseball team lost the Regional finals game 2-1. That night, Uncle Bob and some teammates decided to go and "Break some training rules." They went out and got drunk. The next day, Robert was called to Coach Peverly's office where he was asked (with his mother beside him) if he indeed did "break training." Since Coach was one of the few people he could not lie to, Bob confessed. Punishment included sitting out the rest of the season (there were still regular season games left to be played) and being ineligible for MVP honors (for which he was sure to win and was even scouted by the KC Royals ballteam). Years later, Coach Peverly went to Uncle Bob's house with the MVP award.

Everyone has a hero who they either looked up to in their youth or someone they continue to look to for inspiration. It was very comforting to see someone I have grown to respect give tribute to one of his heroes.

And to prove I do have some prowess in math Mr. Peverly taught math for 32 years at one school. If only he had stayed another 4 years. He must have known there was another Shaffer boy coming and ran.

Me

I have yet to introduce myself and I guess there is no better time like the present. I live in the middle of a forest and I love it. The sound of the frogs in the spring has to be one of my favorite sounds when I'm falling asleep. One must understand that frogs are my favorite animal and has been for as long as I can remember. I am the third daughter out of four, though two of my sisters have moved out and are married,

so it's only my dad, younger sister, and myself. Though in all reality, I am rarely home myself between school and spending time with my boyfriend.

Let's see, other interesting facts about me... I love to write and that is one of the best ways for me to get things off my chest. I have started so many stories, but have yet to finish one and get it published. ☐ I am hoping to do just that this summer. At least, get one finished. I love animals and am hoping to have a husky, hedgehog, rabbit, chinchilla, cat, frog, and any other cute animals I can come up with and get people to let me have.

I have joined a Baptist church last year, though I do not agree with everything that they teach there. There is no way to agree with everything, in my opinion. I may move onto another church, but this one works for me at the moment and I love the people there! I guess that will do for now.