

# 1 a lonely number?

I am a widower. My wife died, from cancer, a little over four years ago. Since that time I've been 1 where I used to be part of 2. Yes, I still have my daughters in my life. 2 of the 4 are still living at home (well at least part of the time – teenager and young adult). For the most part, I really can't say I'm lonely. I do like to spend some of my time alone.

My hobbies tend to be solitary in nature. I am in a local theater group, and that is the one hobby I really can't do on my own. All the rest, you guessed it, can be done alone. Even blogging is a solitary activity.

Tonight I feel very much alone. My daughters are off to various locations, the dog is fed and relaxing behind the couch. I'm here typing thoughts popping up in my head. Not where I thought I'd be 5 years ago.

We've all been told to make a 5 year plan. I've never done that. My lovely wife did. Back in the spring of 2003, she started saving money for our 25th anniversary. When she died, I found an envelope with money in it. Not a lot, but by Jan 2009, it could have made a bit of an impact on our anniversary plans. I didn't even know it existed. There was just an envelope marked 25th. We just missed our 20th anniversary. 21 days shy.

Most of that money is gone now. Most, but not all. I held some back. \$25 dollars to be exact. One dollar for each of the years we would have had. That envelope was in a box on my dresser. I hadn't opened it until today. I knew I had money left over, but I didn't know how much. Odd that there would be exactly \$25 dollars in and envelope marked 25th. I'm going to start putting money back in that envelope. I'm not sure how much I can save by January, but I'll save something. I need to celebrate that special day in January. I've spent that day

alone since 2004, in 2009 I plan to do something a bit different. Maybe I'll figure it out by then...

Well, this has been a somber post, maybe lighter the next time... Maybe not. Just missing S.

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## Another Office Party

This evening, I watched the final three episodes of the premiere season of *The Clinic* (oopsssss... [The Office](#)). I am now absolutely hooked and need to seek out the second and third seasons before April 10 (although I am sure that I will not be able to watch them all.. unless I have an Office party :0). The first segment found Jim jokingly forming an "Alliance" with Dwight in order to investigate the downsizing rumor surrounding the Scranton, PA branch of Dunder-Mifflin. Dwight ends up being taped inside a shipping box to spy on other employees. Hilarious!!!!

The second episode found Michael and the staff taking on the warehouse workers in a "friendly?" game of basketball. Each side places a small bet on the outcome. Michael chooses the players that he thinks will defeat the other team in typical stereotypical fashion and hilarity ensues.

In the final episode of season one, an attractive new saleswoman (Amy Adams) enters the office to sell purses. Michael, Dwight (something strange about that one), and Jim each try to win her affections. Pam's fiance Roy (David Denman) also makes it known that he finds the new arrival very fetching.

After the final segment, I found myself wanting more. I was hoping to hear that Pam finally dumped her jerk of a fiance

(after a three year engagement) and moved on to Jim. Of course, just watching the first season it seemed like a forgone conclusion. Who would be the victim(s) of downsizing? A few of these questions were answered by those who know, but I do want to catch up eventually.

I just cannot believe that I have not discovered this hilarious comedy full of great characters, a fantastic ensemble, and brilliant creative staff before now. I also like the references to other series some of which are not part of NBC's lineup of shows (*Survivor* to name one).

Please forgive my allusion to *The Clinic* at the beginning of the post. A wonderful one-act play which I was part of in January 2007).

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## Stars out at night

Well, I got a small telescope for my birthday in February. I was able to take it out for a short time soon after that, but the weather was too cold to stay out long. The other night, I was able to take it out for a longer period. It wasn't too bad for the size and design, maybe someday I'll write a review for it.

What was really nice about that night was being able to share this night with one of my daughters. Normally I spend my nights alone with the stars, but it was nice to have a little company. It was still a bit chilly, so the night was shorter than it could have been. She's taking an astronomy course and was doing a 'lab' assignment. It felt good to help her out.

This got me thinking of her growing up. Back when she was in grade school, I gave a talk to her class about telescopes and

astronomy. I brought in my telescope, and a few items of astronomical interest. Later that school year, we had a 'star party' for kids at the school. I'm not sure if it sparked any future interest in that class, but it was made my evening. Their questions were intelligent, and they seemed to enjoy themselves.

I was quite a bit younger when I saw my first telescope. I was about 5 or 6, when my dad brought home a small scope. I don't know what we looked at, but I was hooked on astronomy from that very day. Funny how I still remember that day. What in your life changed your outlook on life?

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## **What A Feelin' :) )**

This afternoon I got to sit with some friends at our local Business and Industry show in order to promote our theatre. When we had passers-by inquiring about upcoming shows, it was kind of fun. Even when we had no one to inform, it was enjoyable to sit, chat, and people watch.

There were several people who asked me, personally, what my next role would be. That is really great!. I just finished doing the dinner theatre and am always eager to do the next show. But to have people actually come up to you, tell you that they enjoy your performances, and actually ask what is on the horizon... just indescribable. Even people I do not know approached me about it. It is just soooo cool!!!!!! Then there were a few who found it strange that I would be involved in a theatre group. Apparently, they do not know me very well, do they. Just trying to describe how much joy I get being involved in any way large or small is phenomenal.

What is on the horizon for me? Welllll... I just found out that

there are several male roles in [Little Women](#). I read the novel years ago but did not remember too many male characters, but I will be sure to research the musical before auditions. This summer a local group is also staging [The Music Man](#). I found this very strange because the classic musical has been done so much that it seems stale. I also love the play *The Nerd* which I know I will be trying out for. So there are at least three productions that I have a great interest in.

Just knowing that there are people who see and remember shows you are involved in creates such a fantastic feeling.

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## A Stick Figure Role-Playing Game.

It took me 8 minutes to win this game. It will probably take you much longer.

[swf]<https://www.gigarcade.com/swf/20136.swf>[/swf]

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## So tired

I think my lack of any exercise this winter has caught up to me. I am having a very hard time sleeping lately. I will go to bed, usually at a reasonable hour, and I'll be able to fall asleep, but then throughout the night I will constantly wake up, then lay in a state of semiconsciousness for a bit, finally fall asleep and start dreaming again, then the process

will repeat for several times during the night until I finally get up still exhausted.

I found a site that gave some tips and people seem to have had good luck with keeping a window cracked open for fresh air so I will try that tonight along with turning my fan on. Yes, even though the outside temperature is under 40 degrees. For the long term I guess I will have to start walking more and see if that keeps things under control. I've already told people in my church small group so they will be praying for me as well. Between all of these, emphasis on the prayer, I should be back to normal eventually. I really hope I don't have sleep apnea- I understand my dad had it. If I have developed it then these little cures won't really help. Except for the prayer of course. Well, I'm going to keep this short so I can get to bed sooner. Goodnight..

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## **A Family Easter**

With 3 wonderful kids, how could we not have a good Easter? We started by coloring eggs on Saturday afternoon, and it went so well that I even bought a spare coloring kit at the easter clearance sales today, figuring we can do it again in a few weeks. If colored eggs will entice the kids to eat them, then coloring eggs doesn't only have to be for Easter, I say! Actually, we started our Easter celebration with a visit to the Easter Bunny at the mall on Friday. There was no line, but at those prices, I can see why! But I begged Hubby to buy me a picture of the girls with the Easter Bunny and said it could be my Mother's Day present this year because when we went to do our community egg hunt (candy clean-up), the batteries on the camera died before we could get a picture with the Easter Bunny. It's just something I like to do every

year along with taking pictures with Santa because it's a good way to get them all to sit down together and track how they grow from year to year.

So anyway, back to hiding eggs... I got so tired on Saturday night that I forgot to play Easter Bunny and hide the eggs (can hard-boiled eggs even stay out of the fridge overnight?), but I woke up a little on the way up to bed and did remember to set the alarm. Except that when it went off Sunday morning, we heard the kids were already up, so Hubby and I scrambled downstairs and hid everything in a hurry so we wouldn't get caught. And we had to leave our dogs outside during the hunt, otherwise they would do some easter egg hunting of their own! And of course – every year this happens somehow – there was the one egg that slipped away somehow only to be lost until weeks later when its rotten smell gives away its hiding place. But, learning from the past, we counted how many eggs we had hidden and didn't give up until the lost egg was found! Overall, it was a GREAT Easter. The kids did have some candy comedown, but that is to be expected. Disney – she is 17 mos. – woke up today by asking for candy for breakfast. I think they'll get back to normal soon... just in time to get candy at the summer parades coming up! Hope everyone had a wonderful Easter and were able to share in the love of family and friends!

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## **New Must See TV**

Now... I have another show to look forward to on Thursday nights (one of the few evenings on which I actually find enjoyable shows). [The Office](#) is a hilarious mockumentary based upon a British series. It concerns the everyday workings of the Dunder-Mifflin Paper company. The ensemble cast is

awesome. Steve Carell plays the regional manager, Michael Scott. Rainn Wilson plays Dwight, assistant to the regional manager, . John Krasinski portrays salesman Jim. Jenna Fischer is seen as long suffering receptionist Pam Beasley. Finally, B.J. Novak plays Ryan the temp.

I was lucky enough to become acquainted with the show the other night and tried hard to hold my laughter in as some children were trying to go to sleep so the Easter Bunny would come, but at times it was nearly impossible. I saw the first three episodes of the series in which the characters are introduced.

All three episodes were hilarious, but I would have to say that I enjoyed the health-care segment most. Michael is ordered to choose a new health care package for his staff which will dramatically cut the one already in place. He decides to delegate the responsibility to his assistant. Dwight chooses a plan that is so bad that Michael hides in his office to escape the employee's anger. Michael also attempts to ease the tension by promising a surprise which turns out to be ice cream sandwiches.

Also memorable was a faux-Punked scene in which Pam believes that she has become the victim of downsizing. I also loved the diversity-integration meeting. So much great stuff in only 3 episodes. Unfortunately, it was getting too late before I was able to see all 6 episodes of season 1. Steve Carell is phenomenal as the jerky but hilarious leader of this fine ensemble. New episodes begin April 10 on NBC. Is Thursday night still known as "Must See TV on NBC?"

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# THERE'S NO NEED TO FEAR...

This afternoon after attending Easter services and eating our huge dinner, the kids gathered around the big television to watch what any red-blooded American child would... *Underdog* (ok... so perhaps not that many). I was pleasantly surprised by the live-action version of the cartoon I remember watching as a child. It remained fairly faithful to the cartoon rekindling enough memories for the old and being fun for the young ones who probably do not remember the television series.

A bomb-sniffing beagle is released from the police force after he mistakenly sniffs out a ham instead of a bomb. While roaming the streets, the dog is captured by the evil scientist Dr. Simon Barsinister and is injected with a serum which gives him amazing superpowers. The dog escapes and becomes the pet of a security guard (played by Jim not John Belushi) and his teenage son, Jack and is given the name Shoeshine.

After discovering Shoeshine's powers, Jack decides to keep the secret to himself and convinces the reluctant pooch to use his powers to help those in distress. However as *Underdog* begins his exploits of daring-do, Simon and his henchman Cad continue to hunt for the beagle to use in their own sinister plot.

Ok... while it may not be the most ambitious movie ever made, *Underdog* did keep 7 children occupied for 90 minutes. It also had many tie-ins to the cartoon (Shoeshine, Sweet Polly Purebred voiced by *Enchanted's* Amy Adams, Simon Barsinister and his sidekick Cad, and Riff-Raff who was voiced by Brad Garrett). It was far better than what I expected. It also had a nice nod to another Disney animated film. *Underdog* and Sweet Polly's first date was reminiscent of *Lady and the Tramp's* spaghetti dinner (down to the single meatball).

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# Still More Mini-Golf

In case you haven't read the comments at the end of my Mini-Golf – The Sequel! post, I talked about how much I didn't like the new version I had posted because it was obscenely difficult. The first version was simplistic and easy to play after some practice. The second version I got (which was evidently the 3rd version of the game) turned out to be way too difficult, and the added complications (sandtraps, water) made the game lose part of its charm. Unfortunately, I did not play the game before I posted the link, so that's why I had to comment on it. I suggest you give it a try if you like these computer mini-golf games though, I did appreciate the "bounciness" of the ball off the walls. But, if you're like me, and you think the second game (3rd version) I posted was way too difficult to enjoy, then give this one a try also:

<https://www.gigarcade.com/full-744-Forest-Challenge-2.html>

[swf]https://www.gigarcade.com/swf/20754.swf[/swf]

It has some sand and water traps, but it also has the "bounce-back" reaction of the ball, and the slope grades are depicted in such a way that you can actually tell the difference between them. I think I may have noticed a scoring glitch in the game though. If there's no glitch, then I am very good at this and scored a 3 ☐

Watch out for hole #18 – it's a par 8, so that should tell you something!