

# Names and Ties

Another week, another post. As one of you mentioned in a previous post of mine, this blog lets my friends know about my life even if I don't post often so I guess any danger of this blog closing has vanished as it is a really good point. Anyway, I finally finished the DVD I was working on for my cabin last Saturday- well, mostly. There is still one I am trying to fix because the DVD player I tried it in kept glitching at the menu, even after I changed the video and readded it. Yes, each camper got a DVD with a customized menu- an animation of themselves done with Corel's Painter 4 Essentials. With it, you can turn a photo into something that looks like a painting. Oddly enough, though it goes through an animated process "painting" the picture, you can't save the animation. Luckily though I still had Camstudio installed from when admin was trying to save a video when JibJab was a bit slow in allowing his paid download last year. It did the job perfectly.

Since then, I have been busy or just plain tired. Mondays are back to having no time to post, and I have been getting up early every day this week, today included, so I have just not felt like posting. Today however I had an incident that couldn't wait for a post. Actually, it's the latest in things that have been going through my mind as a post for awhile about names and relations. About names, a couple of recent namesakes have run across my life either personally or in the news. One of them is the CINO (if you are familiar with the political term RINO you will understand this abbreviation considering his recent interview with the local paper) named Milton Bradley. I wonder, is that his real name? I know many entertainers have stage names, but I don't really know if that applies to sports figures. If the name is real, how did kids treat him growing up? Milton Bradley of course was once a big gaming company in case anyone reading this has forgotten.

It's not a big name anymore of course having been absorbed by the gaming behemoth Hasbro, but still when the ball player Milton was growing up I'm sure the company was still known.

On the same topic I met a student teacher the other day when subbing at a middle school. His namesake was a famous inventor every child in school learns, so I am sure he must have been teased mercilessly. His name? Tom Edison. Undoubtedly he is still asked by kids about it, and will be for some time considering his chosen profession. I can attest to this considering my own last name is a common word if not a namesake (though kids did once ask if I'm related to a character on TV with the same last name- yes, a character- not an actor ☐ ) and I get asked about it all. the. time.

Before I move on to today, I should start a bit earlier. Kids aren't the only ones who ask about relations when they encounter a name. When I encounter a child with a particularly famous last name I sometimes ask about it. Of course, most either have no idea who I'm talking about or just say no, they aren't related. Well they are, as we are all related to the first man and woman known as Adam and Eve, and later Noah since he and his family were the only survivors of the great flood. They are related, but many generations removed of course. However, one time when I was student teaching myself, I came across a girl with the last name of Fogerty and of course had to ask about John Fogerty. Instead of the expected response she said that yes, he was her uncle. Pretty old for her uncle I would have to say, but maybe she meant great-uncle. I clarified since John Fogerty could still be a common name and not in fact refer to the former CCR member, but she maintained that he was her uncle. Well, I suppose *someone* has to say yes to this question.

Today's encounter started with a guided reading group. We were discussing a book where a shy boy had a talent for playing the piano. He started out telling no one, even his friends, about this talent but ended up overcoming nervousness

and performing in front of the school in a talent show. We talked about performing and of course I shared that I acted. The kids' eyes really lit up at this, and I mean **really**. When I said this they assumed I meant I acted on TV. I have never met this kind of fixed attention before when I brought up acting, but it turns out they had a reason for linking acting with television. Their teacher is the mother of an actor who plays a major role in Smallville, and even came to visit last year. I probably shouldn't say which one, but his last name is not the same as his mother's, so I might if prodded. I looked up his bio at a few sites and there's no mention of his mother's name so it may not even take much prodding...

EDIT: I guess I should have looked up [Milton Bradley on Wikipedia](#) before I asked my question, as it has this to say about the baseball player:

*Bradley is named after his father, Milton Bradley, Sr., who filled out the birth certificate form without his wife's permission. As Milton's mother says of his father, "He wanted a Junior, and made damn sure he got one."<sup>[1]</sup> Junior, who shares a name with a [popular board game pioneer](#), has always been teased about his name, but has never changed it because the memories it evokes "only drive him harder".<sup>[1]</sup>*

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## Wow, what a show

Now that it is over, I can say that this is one of my new favorite shows. There are two others that stand out in this same fashion, but this show is one of the best.

If I were to pick shows, this would not have been one I

picked, but then one of my other favorites would not have been on my list of plays to do. So my list of favorite shows stands at this

1) Harvey. Big white rabbit and all. I was honored to play the part of Elwood Dowd in that show. My first lead ever, and in my favorite show ever. It was also special to me because I had a special guest star in that show. While everyone else was talking to a white rabbit, I was talking with my dear departed wife. She was on stage with me, in spirit, every night. I had a wallet that I took out of my pocket every night to pay the cab driver. In that wallet I carried my wife's drivers license and some business cards she made for her chinchilla raising.

2) Arsenic and Old Lace. My first show at WCCT. I also enjoyed this show and would love to do it again. We had a wonderful cast for this show and it was a great first experience with the playhouse.

3) Death of a Salesman. Every performance the audience would shed tears. This was a show for the ages until...

4) The Lion in Winter. Yes, a story of the very dysfunctional family of Henry the II of England. A very good cast and a strong play. Actors and audience had an experience with this show, and on every performance the show got better.

What made the Lion in Winter such a good show? Hard work, dedication, good script, good direction, good cast, wonderful crew. Yes this show had all of that and more. We had such fun. Teasing back stage, fun on stage. It was a fun time before, during and after the shows. I'm glad we had the audience we did, but there were so many others that missed a very fine performance. These shows do not come everyday, and I am sorry for all that missed this show.

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# A select group

I was commenting tonight on a select group of actors I would do almost anything to be on stage with. I've been thinking about it since I've said it, and I imagine I can count them on one hand. This does not mean that I wouldn't want to be on stage with some other actors, but there is a select group that have a special presence on stage that makes the time on stage a wonderful event.

A look, an action, a tone of voice that bring out the best in other actors on stage. They are the ones that push you to bring your best. Not by telling or lecturing, but by their actions and style. A select group indeed.

Are they the award winners? Some but not all. Are they the most friendly? That does not seem to matter. Are they the most knowledgeable? Often, but not always. The most talented? In a way, but not. Most comfortable on stage? Some are, some aren't.

But just what makes them part of this group? That is what I've been trying to decipher. What puts one person on it, and leaves another off? I wish I knew. I'll keep thinking about it, because I would like everyone I act with to be in that group. Can it be taught? □

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# Quick Run Through...

We had a quick run through of our show before starting the live performances again. Just something to work off any

cobwebs that may have formed during the two days off. And by quick I do mean quick. A complete show has been running a bit over two hours without intermission. We finished the entire show in under 1.5 hours. Shaving over 1/2 hour from our show was a bit of a feat. Yes, there was fast talking, flying scene changes (only moving what was necessary) and quick moving. But it was needed.

First and foremost we had fun on stage tonight. So many times in a performance, we the actors, forget to have fun. We are concerned with getting all of our lines. Hitting all of our cues. Making all of our entrances. Giving a good show to the audience. All of that yes, but we forget from time to time to have fun. Tonight we had fun. We had fun with the characters. Fun with our lines. Fun with the other actors. That is what community theater is really about. We do this, not only for love of theater, but for fun. It is a non-paying hobby. A passion for some, but it is a way to relax and have fun. From all the plays I've seen in the past 10 or so years, the ones where the actors are having fun are the most enjoyable. If the fun of this evening carries over to tomorrow and the weekend, our best performances are yet to be seen.

The second part of this rehearsal was to get back into gear. Shake off some of the dust that had settled during those last few rehearsals, and the first weekend of the play. Go back and re-visit some of the lines. Make sure we are saying them as close as possible. Always trying to give the audience the play as it was written. Since we are human and this is live theater, we come close, but never quite perfect. We strive, but fall short. Gaffs are made, but we can't let that show to the audience. We take this rehearsal to again get comfortable with our characters.

Fun stuff tonight. This looks like a good omen for this weekend's shows.

Again.. Come see a show, it is well worth it.

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# Just a quick note – Opening Night

Nerves, nerves... Yes, I found out I have them. I've known about them before, but only before a show. Will I forget all my lines? Will I stumble on stage? Will I remember the blocking? Will I miss an entrance? Will I have ALL of my costume? Will my fly be zipped? Oh yeah, I don't have to worry about that one in this show. Will my tights stay up? That's better...

I guess I can't think of anything else that could go wrong for me. But the same things could happen to anyone else on stage. Live theater don't you love it?

Just a few more hours remain until the curtain comes up. The butterflies are floating in my stomach, and that is a good sign. Energy levels will be up, and we get to feed off the audience tonight. Most of the theater folk I know are just big hams. We crave, want or desire to be in front of people. We like the applause and laughter. I don't even mind criticism every now and again. This night is the night when all the hard work and long hours finally pay off.

Come watch a show. We are just waiting to entertain you.

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# Long, long day

Double tech... Dreaded words for most community theater actors in this area. The day to get the whole show down to an audience ready production. Lights, props, backstage crew, sound and of course the actors. Two complete runs of the show. The first usually is all tech driven. Make sure the props are on stage, make sure the lighting is what is desired, make sure scene changes go well. In some shows food is cooked and served. In others some sort of beverage made. This day is hard all involved.

In our little theater, we used to have an even worse day. We used to do two shows on one of the Sunday. When I first started we had two Sunday shows on the last Sunday, and then we tore down the set after that last show. It was not a fun day, very tiring and very long. That day has now been replaced by double tech. Very long, and very tiring.

The good news is that it looks like we have a show. Three more chances to polish it up. Polish the lighting, polish the scene changes, polish the makeup and of course polish up the line and acting.

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:

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# Where is my lion?

In trying to get last minute additions to our set, I was trying to decorate some torch holders with the lion from the Crest of Henry II. Very intricate lion for me to cut out.

I've never had good sissors skills. To top it off, I'm



trying to make it about 5.5 to 7 inches long. Hmm that's not going to work for me.

So what did I do? I passed this project on to my youngest daughter. She must have passed the scissors portion of art in Kindergarten. Since I never went to Kindergarten, I missed that class entirely.

Final projects, line and character touch ups, clean up for the theater are all things we do the week before the play begins.

We need a few additions to our costumes (shoes). Maybe an additional knife or two (yes, sharp, pointy, dangerous things).

And of course a heavy helping of vitamins, cold remedies and anything else you can think of so that the cast remains healthy and able for the entire production.

Crunch week is here, and all I want to know is: "Where are my lions?"

[GO TO A SHOW!!!](#)

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## **Trip to Chicago???**

I received an email from my college roommate. It has been 28 years since we graduated from college, and we still try to stay in touch. He was a religion and history major in school with an avid interest in music, theater and comic books. I was a Math/Computer major with an interest in girls and role playing games. How the two of us ever got along is a mystery to me. I was on stage once and vowed never to do it again.

Today, I'm a computer nerd (yes, I get paid for that), father and theater geek. He is a minister in Chicago and hasn't been on stage since College. I've been in many shows since 1997,

and I'm involved in another as I write this. The email from my roommate today was a surprise for me. He tried out for a local Chicago production of Cinderella. He got the role of the King. He always had a wonderful singing voice and good acting skills. I may just have to make the trip to Chicago to watch it.

Anyone up for a roadtrip?

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## Light at the end of the tunnel

There usually is a point during show rehearsals when the cast and directors know they have a show. Sometimes that point doesn't come until the last dress rehearsal, and there are times it never comes. The show I'm in now had that point twice. Because of our extensive scene changes (they are getting better, and we got more help), we split the show into two nights to work on both acts. Both acts came together this week.

On Sunday, I wasn't sure if the show was going to be there. There was a problem or two that just had things feeling wrong. The hows and the whys are unimportant, but that was a bad feeling for the show. I'm glad things came together this week. Since our show starts in a little over a week, it is nice to feel good about the whole thing.

I'm actually looking forward to our double tech Sunday. For those not in the know, it is the day we work out most of the last kinks. Technical kinks, wardrobe kinks, and even the acting kinks. We run through the complete show twice. It makes for a very long day, but when the show is going well, it goes

by quickly.

First audience will be Wednesday (some school kids I think), and Opening next week Friday. All signs are pointing to an enjoyable show. I hope some of my readers can make it to a show. Check the side bars for the link to the playhouse.

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## Off goes the beard...

Ok, not quite yet, but soon. To prevent too many facial hair similarities on stage, I volunteered again to shape, shave or grow out my beard. The final decisions by myself and our esteemed directors is for me to have a full goatee. Do I mind? Not really. I tend to view the hair on my head and face as part of the character I present to the audience. I've grayed my hair, shaved my beard and even offered to shave my head for one show. Almost anything for the arts. There are a few things I won't do for community theater, but so far no one has asked me to do any of those things.

My only real concern with shaving of the facial hair is the current temperatures in NW Ohio. I am going to have to remove some of my natural insulation. It is amazing how much more warmth I have with a full beard. Why oh why didn't I always have it? The answer to that is simple, I couldn't grow one for many years. My youngest is now 17 and she doesn't remember too many times when I've been beardless. I have what I call a lazy man's beard. I don't shave because it saves me time. Plain and simple. Now that I've had this beard for most of the last 17 years, I am comfortable with it. I feel more comfortable when I have a beard. It has become part of who I am now. As with the characters on the stage, my beard is part of my character.

When it is shaved and trimmed I may have to share a picture

witm my wonderful readers....