

A tale of two gatherings...

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... (Sorry Mr. Dickens)

But then again it was. This weekend families gathered to mark similar yet different events.

On Saturday, my nephew celebrated his birthday. He has reached his teen years, and is more interested in the presents, food and television than the actual gathering. I do believe he 'suffered' through the gathering just to make sure he got his presents. Nothing really wrong with that, I'm sure most young people of his age do exactly the same thing. The gatherings, unless totally oriented toward the youth, are for the adults. We ate, talked, laughed and remembered many of these events during the day. This is what, through the ages, kept families together. We share common bonds and we celebrate those bonds. Be they birthdays, anniversaries, or holidays, times with family and friends keep our bonds alive.

On Sunday, another gathering was held. This was a memorial of the birth and death day of my grandson. He received no physical presents, and he won't be living into his teen years to complain about the attention he is or isn't getting. This was a day to support those who will miss his presence in the world. It was a time for family and friends to gather and support one another. We ate, talked, laughed and remember many events, but we also shared a tear or two. Coming together in the hard times is another thing that keeps families together. Death, sickness and other troubles are also something we all share. Another common bond. Another way to show support and love.

While on the surface, I wish that all we ever had to do was share the happy occasions, I realize that it is the difficult situations that are the true measure of what we mean to each

other. These hard times can show the best humanity has to offer.

So this weekend was the best of times and the worst of times, with the best of times far outshining the worst. Those closest to the sadness may not feel this for quite some time, but in looking back they will eventually remember “The Best of Times.”

An Old Friend, A New Perspective...

A few weeks ago, we learned a friend from way back was going to be in the area on his way from Illinois to Florida with his family, so he came by and brought the fam. That in itself was very unusual – after 10 years of friendship and various business associations and partnerships, we had somehow never gotten around to meeting his family in person.

But on this day earlier this summer, they all stopped in, and his wife and two kids (the oldest was off on some kind of school function) were really very nice, fun, and interesting people – we had a great day together. Their kids, although quite a bit older than my kids, were nonetheless kept entertained by my kids, especially their pet rats. Overall, it was a great visit with a nice family – we really should have gotten together sooner!

And I have some advice for our friend: appreciate what you have, buddy.

I don't know why he does some of the things he does, but he sometimes acts, um, I'll call it restless, and now that I know

how awesome his wife and kids are, it's going to be that much more difficult for me if I continue to hear about any more dumb choices on his part. He seems to be going through some sort of mid-life crisis, so I can only hope that he finds what it is he's looking for without hurting those wonderful people who love him!

Up on the roof

I spent some time at my eldest's house on the 3rd of July. With my two youngest daughters, and the youngest son-in-law we (and a few others) climbed on the roof to get a better view of Maumee's Fireworks. It was a wonderful location. A bit far to get the full effect of the detonations, but close enough to have a full view of the fireworks. It was a good evening.

It started out with food, drink, conversation, music and friends. I met a few more of my daughter's friends, and sometimes I wonder and then I wonder some more. A very diverse group met for the evening.

Our early evening fireworks started off with a few brats burning on the grill. Yes, in the things going on during the party the grill was left unattended for a bit too long. There was still plenty to go around, so all was good.

At the end of the evening, when the group started to break up, I bade my own farewells to get some rest for what was going to be a busy 4th. More on that later...

Of course I want to be a superhero

Derek (another Tangents' Blogger), posed the question ["Who wants to be a superhero?"](#) in his blog. My first thought was about the Saturday evenings I spend with my oldest daughter, her husband, and a few friends. For the past few months, we spend Saturday being superheroes. A fun little [role playing game](#) based on Marvel Comic book characters and settings. Yes, there are mutants, armored, magical, or insect-bitten superheroes running (flying) all over the place.

Our game master has a wonderful gift in the design of the stories/settings the players face. We designed our superheroes and try to bring them to life during our Saturday games. Now as with most groups like this, sometimes the game gets set aside for a while and we have idle talk about this or that. I'm not sure if she knows it or not, but my eldest invited her dear old dad into part of her life she wasn't expecting. On Saturdays, I am not only her father, but I am a friend of her friends. By extension, that does make me my daughter's friend.

Hmm. I think that is a place any father would want to be. She still calls me and talks to me about her troubles. In her eyes, I can still make things better with a hug or the right words. By any other name, I am still her Daddy. And she is still my darling girl. During the past few months our relationship grew. I am more than her Father and maybe a better Father. Maybe I am a superhero in my own life? And by all counts, I will be an important factor in the life of my soon to be grandchild.

Who would have thought of that 25+ years ago...

Audrey Comes to Town

A fascinating trip to bring Audrey to town. Audrey is the name of a carnivorous plant from the show [“The Little Shop of Horrors”](#). We had to bring various sizes of Audrey back from another theater. The trip there was uneventful. No problems, and the GPS unit, while a bit annoying, led us unerringly to our destination.

Then we saw the plants. All I could think of was: “Would it all fit in my truck?” All of the stuff was soon loaded into the truck, and we were on our way. On the way to get some food, I was sure the stuff in back would need to have a tarp to be safe at speeds over 40 mph. We stopped at a Meijer store to locate said tarp. I was sure I had enough cords and straps to contain the load. Everything looked good to go.

Starting down the road, the load looked good. At 45-50 mph things started to come apart. Something came off and the back end of the tarp was flipping all over the place. I started looking for a place to pull over. In looking at our prized load we found that the tarp had ripped, and a one of the bungies broke. We thought we saw some of Audrey fall off the truck, but we could not find any of the pieces. Tying down the load again we took off at a slower speed.

Things still weren't looking good, so I found a better place to stop. I was too close to the road the last time, and tying up loose ends when traffic is flying past you at 55+ isn't something on my list of things to do. We stopped in the lot of a small yard ornament shop. They had some nice things, but we didn't have any room to put them. If I had really found a deal, I wonder if I could have talked one of my fellow travelers into holding a 50 concrete statue on their lap?

Again we go out to tie things down. I do mean tie things down. More straps came loose and broke. We actually had to tie them to the tarp and the truck.

Instead of taking the the roads with higher traffic, I took a less traveled road, hoping to get to a town or village. We did stop 1 or 2 more times before finding a place to get some more things to tie this menacing beast down. Audrey II was threatening to fly off with the tarp whenever our speed approached 50 mph. Not much could be done at this point. We were out of things to tie her down. If we kept losing straps, we would need to go less than 25 mph because there wouldn't be much holding Audrey in place.

Finally making it to Oakwood, Ohio there was a little hardware store that did have what we needed to finish our transport. This place actually had a wood stove to supply its heat. This was common in a much earlier time period, but not so much in 2009 OHIO. When replacing the straps one of the old ones actually snapped in half removing it. Wow!! I think we just made it. If I can find the receipt for those straps, I may take them back. They were supposedly heavy duty bungies. I don't think so.

With more straps and tie downs we were finally able to travel at 50+ Mph without fear of Audrey II taking flight. We made it through Defiance (and a bit of traffic) with out much more than a few strange looks. And finally made it to our prop's final destination of Bryan OH.

The thing about this whole trip is not so much the trouble we had, or the frequent stops. I'm sure given the 'wrong' group of people, this could have been a nightmare experience. Anger and frustration could have reared its ugly head. But for some odd reason none of that happened. We joked about it during the trip. We were also saying it would make a good blog post. Who would write about it first. I'm still waiting for more pictures of Audrey bits on the road, or the each of the stops

along the way. How about one of our Esteemed admin crawling under the truck to look for a place to tie something?

The trip became an adventure. At least on my part, I had a fun afternoon. The three of us on the trip are still talking to each other. □ No fights broke out that I am aware of. And I'm sure whenever the show is discussed, the first adventures of Audrey will be told. Will the story be 'stretched'? (bad pun considering our bungies). You bet, this is for a theater group. We like good stories. Will there be little Audrey's growing on the roads between Lima OH and Bryan OH? I wouldn't bet against it. Will I volunteer for another road trip? If it is with the same people, you bet.

I'm not sure how the play itself will go, but if the first trip of Audrey is any indication, it should be fun. This is a musical, so due to my own idiosyncrasies, I will not be on stage for it. My role, as much or as little as it is will be in an off stage capacity. Theater will be taking a back seat for me. Family is taking over with graduations, weddings, babies and just plain visiting with the daughters, sons and grandkids I don't see often enough. Theater is now taking a backseat.

Anyway, I did once write about me [having a truck and actually using it](#), so I guess that I did it again. Have truck will deliver, maybe I should make a sign?

Knowing I Love You Man

I'm going to take a break from my New York Trip Diary to write up a few movies. All I have left is the World Trade Center site post anyway, so that's just one thing on a trip of hundreds! Besides, writing up these 2 movies should be easy,

since I don't have much to say about either one...

Last week for date night, we saw [Knowing](#), a movie we had been looking forward to. Not that we're Nicolas Cage fans (quite the opposite actually); the movie just looked intriguing. It's about a guy whose son gets a piece of paper with hundreds of numbers on it which was buried in a time capsule for fifty years. After some investigation (and A LOT of liquor!), Nicholas Cage discovers that the numbers correspond to the dates, places, and the number of fatalities that would occur during certain calamities – they have all occurred already; except for the 3 left on the list. And that's about it. Cage's acting was no better than usual (why did I think this would be one of his better movies? Can you tell he is Francis Ford Coppola's nephew?), and I don't want to spoil the ending for you, but I found it cheesy and actually kind of dumb. I was entertained, but barely, and I did doze a tad during this one, although the action sequences awoke me with a start. Feeling unsatisfied after this movie, we decided to make it a double feature and sneaked into [I Love You Man](#) – no, I'm kidding, we went back to the cashier and paid for the movie legitimately – besides, we needed a refill on our pop and popcorn, though the latter was quite regretful.

I Love You Man looked like kind of a dumb comedy, but we've been appreciating the actor Paul Rudd lately (he is SO funny in Role Models and Friends reruns), so we decided to check it out. What we got was kind of a dumb comedy, but actually not as bad as I thought. It wasn't *entirely* predictable, and there were some funny moments that they actually hadn't spoiled in the movie's trailers. If you like silly comedies and Paul Rudd, check it out. It's not nearly as funny as Role Models, but it **is** much less crude.

Thoughts on Random Thoughts

Today marks one year of my blog. More on that in the next post... ☐

I was wondering how random my thoughts have really been in the past year. I've written about a lot of different topics that interest me, but I've seem to have posted most about the things in life that are most important to me.

Family and Friends.

Posts written in times of sadness revolved around family and friends no longer in my life. Posts written in better times revolved around family and friends I share my life with now. Theater posts revolve around plays and my dear friends that I've met through that theater. Even posts on space and science go back to family events I've kept in my mind through many a year.

Just how random?

Over three hundred posts and some posts fit into more than one category, but here is a rough break down.

160 Thoughts on Life (default category could contain anything)

100+ posts on Family

50 posts on Friends

48 on the theater

42 on movies or reviews

37 on Widows and Widowers

24 on Science and Technology

10 to 20 on the remaining categories.

If we add the posts for family, friends and widow/widowers together, that is over 1/2 my post total. Yep, kind of shows were my mind is most of the time. This place is a dumping ground to clear my mind and help get thoughts back in gear.

I've always know what is important to me, and it is good to see that my thought 'dumps' confirm this.

□

The Last Show

It was a happy and sad time today. Our show ended and we ended the day tearing down the set. Life outside the theater can begin again. Things can be accomplished, chores done and life again resumes. There are movies to see, books to read, daughters to tend to. From daughters and their new families, marriages, graduations, starting college life goes on. My life in the theater ceases until after the fall. There will be shows, they will do it without me.

There is talk of taking our show to the OCTA regional competition this June, unfortunately, I will not be able to make it. My daughter is planing her wedding for the same weekend. Family comes first. I don't think I would miss a wedding.

This fall, my oldest is expecting her first child. This will also take up a bit of time or more.

My youngest is finishing her final year of high school, and plans to attend college next fall. This will also take up much of my time.

Life does not stand still, life move on.

More thoughts on our show in another post. It was an event that many enjoyed but it was still too few. I'm not sure how to get the word out to more, but they missed one of the best shows I've been involved with.

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?

The name of the game

What was that game? The one I liked? I remember what it was about, sort of. No that wasn't the game, but it was like that one. I think this is it, but I don't remember that rule.

Ok, has that happened to you? No? I guess you don't play any of the large variety of trivia/knowledge games available.

I've noticed that there are so many of these types of games, it is very possible to confuse which one you played last month, or even last week.

I bring this up because my friends and I play a large number of games. A good percentage of those games are the trivia/knowledge games. There are some that are very fun, and other not as much. Some even have a few of the same questions as other games, but the rules make a difference. I think what makes the game fun is when giving the wrong answer is as much fun as getting the right answer.

But then again the fun of games is that we get to enjoy time with others. Ways to relax, have fun and enjoy the company of others is very important for our mental well being. This week I have two opportunities to share time with family and friends. I'm looking forward to it.

jamaihsh, I found some guacamole pringles....