

# The first night off.

A rather rare treat for this production are three nights off. No rehearsals, no readings, nothing. A day off today, tomorrow and the next day. I'm using this time to get some rest and get a few things done. Tonight was the night for rest.

An old Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce Sherlock Holmes movie, a light snack and quiet time.

Back in the day Basil Rathbone was Sherlock Holmes. I never realized when I first saw these movies that they were set in the wrong time period. Of course, I saw the movies before I started reading the books. Even after reading the Holmes stories, I liked the way Rathbone played Holmes. For years when I thought of Holmes I thought of Rathbone.

Of course, some time ago I saw another actor in a series of shows that put Holmes in the correct time period. On a British and then PBS series, Jeremy Brett played Sherlock Holmes. After watching that series, I often thought of him while reading any Sherlock Holmes story.

There was one other actor I often think about when I think of Holmes. My college roommate portrayed Holmes in a college play. It was my first (and I thought my last), try at acting. This play gave me a line that to this day remains my favorite. "Don't worry, there are ways to inflict excruciating pain and yet leave no marks." Even after 30 years I remember that show.

And finally back to Rathbone. The movie "The Hound of the Baskervilles" is the only Rathbone Holmes movie that was set in the correct time period.

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# Just watched a little football

I took my two youngest daughters to lunch today, and then scampered back home to allow my youngest to get her stuff together to head back to school. On the way to Fort Wayne, we stopped in Hicksville to see a play Jamiahsh was in. About 10 minutes into the play, I mentioned to my daughter that I was guessing Jamiahsh's character would be the murder victim. Not just because he was annoying the 'director', but because, these shows are predictable. At least to some extent. I will admit that I didn't get the 'real' murderer. A very fun performance.

Then off to Fort Wayne with a stop at a Walmart to get pictures developed and some scrap booking supplies. That took some time this evening. A rather late dinner and I got my daughter back to school some time after 8:00pm. Then the hour drive back home.

When I got here, I decided to relax and watch the end of Sunday Night Football. By the time I started watching, the game was just about over and it was only halfway through the 3rd period. At least during the game I did find out that most of the teams for the league championship series have been decided. Only the Phillies and Rockies need to complete their series. And they had a snow out... I think some cities should have domed stadiums (or more exactly retractable domes) if they start competing in October/November. Sometimes it is just too cold for baseball.

I also heard that the Bears won, so we should see another Whatever post... ☐

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# It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...

There is one problem with being involved in the theater. When you plan a holiday show, the rehearsals start well before the actual holiday season. And since our Christmas show starts at the beginning of December, the rehearsal is also earlier. I don't like to do Christmas until after Thanksgiving.

Anyway, it will my job to bring Santa Clause to life in "Miracle on 34th Street". Ok, so I'm not playing Kris Kringle/Santa Clause, but I am playing 2 different Santa Clauses. And some other part I cannot remember right now.

For those of you who do know the show, the first Santa I play is the drunk Santa that loses his job because he was trying to stay warm on the float. One little drinks never hurt, does it?

To make the show even better for me, I get to act with one of my daughters again. This is always a thrill for me. Should be fun.

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## What about them oats.

I was allowed to attend a dress rehearsal of ["Wild Oats" at the WCCT's Little Theater off the Square.](#) (Is that a mouthful?) If you don't have a wedding to attend, a daughter to pick up, or some other things that will take up all of your

time for the next two weekends, make some time to see this wonderful little show.

Yes, this is a melodrama. Be prepared to laugh, boo and maybe even hiss. There were twists, turns and setups galore. Love, laughter and greed. And religion, we had religion too. And of course there was the sowing of wild oats.

I won't give anything away, but I really recommend this show. I would give a run down of the cast and crew, but I didn't see any programs yet, and I wouldn't want to miss anyone.

I really wish I could see this show with a full audience. It is one of those shows that will feed off the audience energy. So go, be prepared to have a good time and join in the fun.

One more word – Take in some canned food for the Food bank. 1 can of food will get you money off the admission. Great way to give to the community. One non-profit helping another. Great idea.

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## 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?

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## **Something Wicked This Way Comes . .**

Strange thing. I remember reading the Bradbury novel, and seeing the movie. But, I am now watching the movie and I can't seem to remember it at all. Oh, I remember the basic story, but I don't seem to remember any of the details. I remember the carnival coming to town, and of course Mr. Dark. What I'm not sure of is how different the book is from the movie. I will have to read it again.

So far the movie is very good. But now my youngest just stopped it to watch a TV show... Hmm, am I going to have to get another TV just to watch what I want? I guess not, she'll be leaving on her own soon enough.

What I did find out is that Bradbury actually adopted his novel and wrote not only the screen play for the 1983 movie, but a stage play and radio play. The stage play was written in 2003... Wonder what the royalties on that show would be. Could it be done on a small stage? Where would the Carousel fit? I

would love to play Mr Dark... Hmm...

Maybe we could do another "Stage" version of this play.

Interesting.

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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.