Wednesday, September 30. 2009

Let's Get Political

I teach a Sunday School class for twelve and thirteen year olds. This past week's lesson was on leadership and we were supposed to be reviewing it in the context of Harold B. Lee's life. We started by discussing current events and how good leaders help us through wars, famine, natural disasters, etc.

As we were discussing what qualities a good leader possesses, I was surprised to suddenly hear scathing remarks about President Obama. One of the students began to recount how his grandmother hates the President, calls him a monster, and even went so far as to say that his biggest problem is that he's still breathing. Needless to say, I was a little shocked. I tried to explain to them that it's ok to disagree with a man's politics, but to wish him dead crossed a line. I also tried to make the point that our job as members of a democracy (yes, yes, AoD, a constitutional republic, I know) is to help our leaders do a better job, not by thwarting them at every turn, but by trying to forge compromises that make life better for everyone. We can't always get everything we want. It's just not feasible.

So today, I found this Op-Ed piece in (yes) the New York Times very timely. Once again, I will quote liberally:

I hate to write about this, but I have actually been to this play before and it is really disturbing. I was in Israel interviewing Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin just before he was assassinated in 1995. We had a beer in his office. He needed one. I remember the ugly mood in Israel then â€" a mood in which extreme right-wing settlers and politicians were doing all they could to delegitimize Rabin, who was committed to trading land for peace as part of the Oslo accords. They questioned his authority. They accused him of treason. They created pictures depicting him as a Nazi SS officer, and they shouted death threats at rallies. His political opponents winked at it all.

And in so doing they created a poisonous political environment that was interpreted by one right-wing Jewish settler as a license to kill Rabin â€" he must have heard, â€œGod will be on your sideâ€• â€" and so he did. . .

What kind of madness is it that someone would create a poll on Facebook asking respondents, â€œShould Obama be killed?â€• The choices were: â€œNo, Maybe, Yes, and Yes if he cuts my health care.â€• The Secret Service is now investigating. I hope they put the jerk in jail and throw away the key because this is exactly what was being done to Rabin.

Even if you are not worried that someone might draw from these vitriolic attacks a license to try to hurt the president, you have to be worried about what is happening to American politics more broadly. . .

Sometimes I wonder whether George H.W. Bush, president â€œ41,â€• will be remembered as our last â€œlegitimateâ€• president. The right impeached Bill Clinton and hounded him from Day 1 with the bogus Whitewater â€œscandal.â€• George W. Bush was elected under a cloud because of the Florida voting mess, and his critics on the left never let him forget it.

And Mr. Obama is now having his legitimacy attacked by a concerted campaign from the right fringe. They are using everything from smears that he is a closet â€œsocialistâ€• to calling him a â€œliarâ€• in the middle of a joint session of Congress to fabricating doubts about his birth in America and whether he is even a citizen. And these attacks are not just coming from the fringe. Now they come from Lou Dobbs on CNN and from members of the House of Representatives.

Again, hack away at the manâ€™s policies and even his character all you want. . .

The American political system was, as the saying goes, â€œdesigned by geniuses so it could be run by idiots.â€• But a cocktail of political and technological trends have converged in the last decade that are making it possible for the idiots of all political stripes to overwhelm and paralyze the genius of our system.

Those factors are: the wild excess of money in politics; the gerrymandering of political districts, making them permanently Republican or Democratic and erasing the political middle; a 24/7 cable news cycle that makes all politics a daily battle of tactics that overwhelm strategic thinking; and a blogosphere that at its best enriches our debates, adding new checks on the establishment, and at its worst coarsens our debates to a whole new level, giving a new power
to anonymous slanderers to send lies around the world. Finally, on top of it all, we now have a permanent presidential campaign that encourages all partisanship, all the time among our leading politicians. . .

We canâ€™t change this overnight, but what we can change, and must change, is people crossing the line between criticizing the president and tacitly encouraging the unthinkable and the unforgivable.

Posted by The Mad Giggler in Politics at 08:37

Tuesday, September 29. 2009

8

Just before darkness fell, another bird fluttered down onto the wagon. With practiced hands, Lena scooped the bird up. â€œYouâ€™re a tired one, arenâ€™t you? Poor thing.â€• She cooed at the bird softly, and called out to her father. â€œThereâ€™s another message.â€•
His hand emerged from the slit in the cover. He took the bird. â€œThank you.â€• His voice sounded tired. â€œLight the driving lamps, will you? We need to move quickly. Theyâ€™ll let everyone know weâ€™re here, but the speed will be worth it.â€• Reaching into a box beside the seat, she took out a clockwork fire starter and handed it to me, pointing silently at the lantern that hung beside me.
For several hours, we talked quietly, but eventually, the conversation lagged. I was nodding in my seat when the canvas rustled open and the Mask emerged, startling me so badly that I nearly fell off my seat.
He stretched, reaching upward until I could hear his back cracking. Sighing, he clambered over the back of the bench and sank down between us. Lena handed him the reins without a word. After a moment, he spoke. â€œThereâ€™s a master
mask waiting for us at the Ford of Sovea. Heâ€™s got supplies for me. Iâ€™ll take the horse to Kingsbury, and heâ€™ll drive with you to Belkeep. Once you get there, refill the bird cages and head to Torwell as quickly as you can. If all goes well, Iâ€™ll be waiting there for you.â€•
My head was in a whirl. Everything seemed so sudden. I knew that the birds somehow carried messages between the masks,
but I still didnâ€™t understand how. Lena said that the masks couldnâ€™t speak to each otherâ€™s minds, but that seemed
a lot more believable than the idea that birds carried enough information to tell the Mask everything that he seemed to know.
â€œWhat about Ian?â€• Lenaâ€™s words surprised me.
â€œTake him with you. Tell the redface whatâ€™s going on, and have him help you train Ian. By the time you get to Torwell, he might actually be useful.â€•
With that, the Mask turned and winked at me. I think his wink was supposed to reassure me, but in the dim light, one of his eyes just seemed to disappear behind his black mask, and the effect was more grotesque than comforting. Some unseen
landmark spurred him into action. â€œWeâ€™re almost there.â€• He handed me the reins, and once again disappeared into
the wagon, where we could hear him rummaging for supplies.

Posted by Johnny Elbows in The Apprentice Mask at 20:45

Monday, September 28. 2009

Podcast 36: We saw 4 lights!

After 16 weeks of awesome commentary, we finally called Jim and brought him into the podcast via telephone, and he responded with an outstanding guest performance. While we were worried about sound quality, everything sounds pretty
good. We also had Aaron join for the second week in a row. This podcast covers episodes 9-12 of Star
Trek: The Next Generation, Season 6.

Various topics discussed in this podcast include:
- Learning Machines
- Joey wears black stockings
- The change of command
- Just get it done!
- Listener Jim hates the new Star Trek movie
- Batman visited the Klingon homeworld
- Gross food from the Philippines
- How far can your will take you?
- Why are girls attracted to the bad boy?
- Are holodeck characters just a slave race?
- I Fight
Dragons
- JC Hutchins 7th Son
Novel

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Here are the ratings that we gave for each show:Quality of
Life: 43min 53sec
Peter: SciFi - 7 Television - 3
Joey: SciFi - 7 Television - 2
Aaron: SciFi - 7.5 Television - 3
Jim: SciFi - 4 Television - 4

Chain of
Command 1 & 2: 1hr 17min 43sec
Peter: SciFi - 4 Television - 5
Joey: SciFi - 7 Television - 5
Aaron: SciFi - 7 Television - 6
Jim: SciFi - 9 Television - 7

Ship in a
Bottle: 45min 11sec
Peter: SciFi - 7 Television - 4
Joey: SciFi - 8 Television - 3
Aaron: SciFi - 7 Television - 4
Jim: SciFi - 7 Television - 4

If you have something to say then we welcome your comments below, or feel free to email us at trekwest5@thehomestarmy.com, twitter us at hashtag TrekWest5, or leave us a voicemail at 801-788-4913.

Posted by Radar in Podcast at 04:00

Friday, September 25. 2009

Global Climate Change

Some of my facebook friends have been discussing the affects of legislation currently going before Congress, namely the
Waxman-Markey Act or cap-and-trade climate bill. Some of their arguments have seemed a little weird to me until I read this article by a
Nobel Prize winning economist in the New York Times Opinion section.

He starts his essay by playfully pointing out that the debate over health care reform has not exactly been an intellectual stunner and that we can expect more of the same from this piece of legislation.

I'll go ahead and quote heavily from the article, because I know some of you are link-challenged. If the New York Times comes knocking on my door for plagiarism or copyright infringment, I'll tell them it's your fault.

So the main argument against climate action probably wonâ€™t be the claim that global warming is a myth. It will, instead, be the argument that doing anything to limit global warming would destroy the economy. . .

First, the evidence suggests that weâ€™re wasting a lot of energy right now. That is, weâ€™re burning large amounts of
coal, oil and gas in ways that donâ€™t actually enhance our standard of living â€" a phenomenon known in the research literature as the â€œenergy-efficiency gap.â€• The existence of this gap suggests that policies promoting energy conservation could, up to a point, actually make consumers richer.

Second, the best available economic analyses suggest that even deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions would impose only
modest costs on the average family. Earlier this month, the Congressional Budget Office released an analysis of the effects of Waxman-Markey, concluding that in 2020 the bill would cost the average family only $160 a year, or 0.2 percent of income. Thatâ€™s roughly the cost of a postage stamp a day. . .

[L]ast week Glenn Beck â€" who seems to be challenging Rush Limbaugh for the role of de facto leader of the G.O.P. â€"
informed his audience of a â€œburiedâ€• Obama administration study showing that Waxman-Markey would actually cost the
average family $1,787 per year. Needless to say, no such study exists.

But we shouldnâ€™t be too hard on Mr. Beck. Similar â€" and similarly false â€" claims about the cost of Waxman-Markey
have been circulated by many supposed experts. . .

So hereâ€™s the bottom line: The claim that climate legislation will kill the economy deserves the same disdain as the claim that global warming is a hoax. The truth about the economics of climate change is that itâ€™s relatively easy being green.

So if you start seeing articles claiming that the cap and trade bill is going to destroy our economy, you now have a rebuttal by a world renowned economist. And you can always fall back on my favorite argument, which is that it will eventually cost more just to walk outside if we don't start doing more about pollution. The inversion+smog in Salt Lake is deadly and will only get worse unless we do something about it.

Posted by The Mad Giggler in Politics at 08:16

Thursday, September 24. 2009

7

We drove in silence for what seemed like hours. I kept waiting for her to say something, but she stared straight ahead, clucking at the oxen occasionally to keep them from straying after the lush grass that lined the road. Finally, my curiosity got the best of me. â€œWhatâ€™s he doing?â€•
â€œDo you know what a Mask is?â€•
â€œOf course.â€•
â€œSo?â€•
â€œThe Masks are Moraâ€™s servants. They are the keepers of secrets. They can speak to each otherâ€™s minds across the
Reia and the Weald, and they speak in a language that no one else can understand.â€•
She giggled. â€œThatâ€™s what they want you to think, anyway.â€•
I huffed. I didnâ€™t like having a girl laugh at me. â€œSo what do they do?â€•
â€œYouâ€™re mostly right. They are Moraâ€™s servants, at least most of them. Some of them serve silver drachms more
than they serve Mora. They are the keepers of secrets, and the oracles of Mora, but they canâ€™t actually speak to each
otherâ€™s minds. They have trained pigeons that carry their messages. One of their pigeons can fly from Aster to Norwood in three days. The messages that the birds carry are written in the language of the Masks. Iâ€™ve heard people
say that once upon a time, some Masks could speak the language, but that time is gone. Now, itâ€™s only a written language, and even that is hard to read.â€•
â€œOh.â€• I knew that she was trying to answer my question, but I still wasnâ€™t making the connection. â€œSo, whatâ€™s he doing?â€•
Her exasperated sigh told me that she thought the answer was obvious. â€œHeâ€™s reading, or trying to read. And heâ€™s
probably writing a response, too.â€•
Once the silence was broken, talking became easier. As Sal rowed the sun toward its resting place, she told me about the birds, how they were trained, and what I would have to do as the Maskâ€™s bird keeper.
â€œWhy doesnâ€™t he have you do it?â€•
She greeted my question with a long silence, and a wistful smile. â€œItâ€™s different in the city.â€• Gesturing toward the trees of the Weald, she continued. â€œOut here, and in the villages, men and women work together. Nobody gives me a
second glance, or even a second thought if Iâ€™m helping my father. In the cities, though, I canâ€™t be seen helping with things like this. It would be unseemly.â€•
â€œSo, what do you do in the city?â€• In my mind, a city was just a big village. I couldnâ€™t imagine a place where women werenâ€™t out helping the men with the crops or the herds.
â€œI sew, I read, I clean our house, and I prepare our meals.â€•
â€œWhat about your mother?â€•
â€œShe died a long time ago. I donâ€™t really remember her.â€•
â€œOh. Sorry.â€• Her smile in return was sad. I looked away, staring into the shadows.
In my mind, I relived the moment when Moraâ€™s thread had turned my life. The gleaming black mask glared at me again
over the wattled wall of the corral. Its deep voice shouted at the hapless boy scrabbling at his feet. â€œA trade,â€• it shouted, over and over again.
â€œWhat if Iâ€™m not good enough?â€• I whispered.
I didnâ€™t think my voice would even carry to where Lena was sitting, but it did. â€œYou will be,â€• she reassured me.

â€œMora will teach you.â€•
â€œCouldnâ€™t Mora teach him, too?â€•
Her face went hard. â€œHe wasnâ€™t Moraâ€™s.â€• She spat the words. â€œHe wasnâ€™t even sure whose he was. He was
born to Festian, but he liked Sal better.â€•
Again, I didnâ€™t know how to reply. I couldnâ€™t imagine someone trying to choose who his ara would be. Lena noticed
my dismay. I felt her touch the back of my hand. â€œYouâ€™ll get used to it. You just have to let people go their way,

and make sure that you donâ€™t lose yours.â€•

Posted by Johnny Elbows in The Apprentice Mask at 21:47

Red, Blue and Pigskin

There are tough weekends, and then there is last weekend. A weekend that saw Utah and BYU both lose on the same weekend
for the first time since September 8, 2007. 2 Full seasons ago. A weekend that opened up some questions.

Where was the defense from week one or did BYU beat Oklahoma only because Bronco Mendenhall is a better big game coach
than Bob Stoops? (Which is like being nominated for a Razzie, but not
winning.) And why is Bronco 1-4 in game 3's? How badly do the Utes need [a] Wynn? Where is the consistency both offensively and defensively? And most importantly now what?So who's loss was more damaging?
So which team suffered more due to their loss this weekend? Let's take a look shall we?
Utah lost their 16 game win streak, and their 9 game road win streak. Thanks to the loss the Utes are now unranked for the first time since week 2 last season. However lost in all the hoopla of those long streaks were the fact that Utah replaced both it's Offensive Coordinator, and it's Defensive Coordinator, as well as fielding a team led by a first year QB. Also featured RB Matt Asiata wasn't 100%.

Also Utah wasn't upset this past weekend. Oregon was the favorite. Utah was an underdog, going on the road to a Tough
Stadium. Played absolutely terrible. Was flagged for 10 penalties for 100 yards, and in the end, they still had a chance to win the game.

This combined with the fact that many expected Utah to lose 2-4 games this season, and that before the season began, Oregon was tabbed as the game where Utah lost.

Meanwhile, BYU was sporting an 18 game home win streak. Was still riding high off the upset over #3 Oklahoma in week 1,
and was the consensus favorite in their game. The current #3 team in the nation had already lost, meaning BYU was in prime position to possibly move into the top 5 with a win, setting up not only a BCS game this season but a possible shot at the National Championship game. BYU also had some well known pro BCS people starting to jump on their bandwagon
and talk about them in the National Championship spotlight.

Instead BYU was absolutely embarrassed by the Seminoles. It was so bad that you could even hear the Tomahawk Chop by
the Seminole fans in LaVell Edwards Stadium. Not only did BYU lose, but they lost in such a manner that many of the same questions from the 2008 Cougar team are still out there. Only now, the Offense is publicly pointing fingers in the media.

All this points to the BYU loss being much more damaging. Don't believe me? Just check out some of the headlines from
the sports sites on Saturday:

ESPN: "BYU Tanks"
FoxSports: "Overrated: FSU blows out BYU"
Yahoo: "BYU Goes Bust"

What did we learn?
So 3 weeks into the season, both teams are 2-1. What have we learned so far?
For Utah we learned that replacing your OC, DC, and QB will lead to early struggles. For BYU we learned that running quarterbacks, and teams that exploit their lack of speed will have a field day.

But we knew that before the season started. Honestly we don't really know much about either of these teams yet. But the most learning will come in the weeks ahead.

Is BYU mentally stronger than it was last year? Jacobsen, and Unga pointing fingers in the media is not a good sign of that, but we'll get to see how they handle losses this year, as now all eyes are on the matchup against TCU in a few

weeks.

For Utah, we're learning that of all the talk about rebuilding this season, many are forgetting that the real rebuilding is on the sidelines as many coaches changed duties this offseason. This is really apparent on the defensive line. One of Gary Andersen's great strengths was his ability to make situation in game adjustments, something that Kalani Satake just hasn't quite mastered yet.

For Utah, how good is Cain. He's been a mixed bag through the first three weeks of the season. Also how will the team adjust now that they've faced their first loss since 2007.

And for both teams, will the end of their streaks, and all the BCS talk, remove pressure from them, and let them ease into the rest of the season?

For any chance of success this season Utah MUST stick with Cain
Some are starting to wonder if Coach Whittingham should start adding True Freshman Jordan Wynn into the mix. This would
be a disastrous idea. We're already seeing what happens when a QB plays his first division 1 games. But at least Cain has the Junior College Experience. Jerking around the QB's would only lead to less continuity than is already there, and would only damage both player's confidence.

Cain was terrible for a good portion of the game. Including a streak of about 10 missed passes in a row. He's got a habit of overthrowing his WR's which usually indicates someone who is too amped up on his passes. But let's not lay all the blame on him. During that streak of missed passes his WR's weren't helping him out any. Jereme Brooks dropped 3
passes during that stretch, and crocodile-armed another. David Reed also dropped a couple in this stretch.

All that said, one of Cain's greatest assets though, is his ability to remain calm. Many times he saw pressure and scrambled around to keep his the play open while looking downfield.

Two drives exemplify some of the potential Cain has. At the end of the first half with 1:12 to go, Cain calmly drove his team downfield 56 yards in 8 plays to put his team with a chance to score a TD with :02 to go in the half. However the Utes were unable to convert, partly due to a high throw, and partly due to a bad play call.

Then in the 3rd quarter, when Oregon had just scored to put the Ducks up 28-10, and all hope seeming to be leaving the Utes, Cain took his team 71 yards in 10 plays. He capped the drive with one of those scramble around while looking downfield TD's to Jereme Brooke in the back of the end zone.

Cain is young, He's still learning. This was evident late in the game when twice the Utes had the ball with a chance to drive for the win or tie, and twice Cain threw an interception. One on a screen pass where Cain didn't see the defender, and finally on a pass that Cain just put too much air under and it floated on him. But this was his first big time game, in a big time stadium. Utah must stick with him. Go through the growing pains. They will be rewarded. Besides 2009 was always more about on field development than the overall record.

Besides, Cain did learn something from last week, and actually started pulling the ball out on the handoff option, which resulted in his TD.

I still don't miss Andy Ludwig, but the playcalling was terrible.
Part of the issue is that Cain is young and Utah isn't sure how much to give him. But a big portion is they are also severely handicapping their young QB. Firstly, stop the looking to the sideline for an audible thing. This is the worst fad to strike College Football since the BCS. It needs to stop.

Secondly, Utah abandoned the run too much. Early, when Asiata wasn't quite ready to take a hit the run wasn't working.

But later when Asiata was easily getting 4-5 yards a rush, the offense didn't stick with it. This constantly put the offense behind the sticks.

Thirdly, Cain is a mobile QB. Use it. Roll him out. Use the option. Shovel Pass. Make the defense guess. This was never more evident than on the 4th and goal at the end of the half. Rather than run the fade route against the defenses best defender, have Cain move around the pocket, stretch the defense, and pick his hole.

But even those issues are better than seeing Utah run a driver of, Reverse, Double Reverse, Fumble-rooskie, and Triple

Reverse.

Bad week for the MWC
Not only was it a bad week for local teams, but the MWC in general had a pretty dismal weekend. Excluding the Air Force
victory over New Mexico MWC Teams went 3-4. UNLV won a nail biter against Hawaii, TCU Killed FCS Texas State, and
Colorado State earned the MWC Best record at 3-0 going into their showdown with BYU this weekend. Losing were Utah,
BYU, SDSU to Idaho, and Wyoming being shut out by Colorado making the MWC 0-3 against BCS schools this week making the
MWC 3-6 for the season against the Big Six schools. Hopefully the MWC can get it turned around the upcoming week when
Utah tries to rebound at home against Louisville, and TCU returns to ACC country as the new flag bearer in the MWC for a
showdown against Clemson.

Why do we have the Mtn anyways?
So supposedly the Mtn tv channel is supposed to help showcase all of the Mountain West and not just Utah, BYU, and TCU.
As Those three teams have spent the majority of the first few weeks on ESPN affiliates or CBS College Sports, one would
figure that this would be a good chance to show games of the other MWC Teams. Especially since there were some interesting games, like Wyoming at Texas, SDSU at UCLA, CSU at Colorado, Air Force at Minnesota.

Instead what happened to be on the Mtn in the afternoon on Saturday the past few weeks? Games from 2007, Replays of
the Coaches press conferences, and Women's volleyball. Some of those games may not have the name power of Utah, BYU, or
TCU, but I'm sure some people would like to be able to watch the other 6 teams in the MWC on a Saturday afternoon.

And Finally
Both teams still have a chance at very successful seasons. Utah was never going to go back to the BCS this year. 2010
should be judged not just by wins on the field, but by growth on the field, and on the sidelines.

For BYU, though they didn't enter the season with the pressure of "The Quest" on them like last year, the win against OU
brought all that pressure and hype back to the team. Truthfully even in the win against OU there were many issues that sprung up. Now that the BCS National Championship is off the table, BYU still can correct their errors, and put in a good season.

It's just too bad that the Reward for a great, but not perfect, season for a MWC is the 5th best team from the Pac-10, meanwhile both OU, and FSU, and even Oregon, despite losing already, still have not only BCS dreams, but National Championship possibilities. Just goes to show the deck really is stacked against the non Big Six conferences.

Posted by Sideshow at 14:00

Wednesday, September 23. 2009

6

The big ger, a nearly-empty bird hutch, a bookcase full of ornately bound books, and the rugs and pallets that had been scattered about the ger all went into a large wagon with a brightly striped cover. There were carefully designed trunks and boxes for everything. â€œA place for everything, and everything in its place,â€• the Mask sang out, as we began packing.
His daughter, Lena, saw me running my fingers over the book bindings, and asked, â€œDo you read?â€•
â€œNo. Do you?â€•
â€œYes. My father taught me.â€•
â€œI donâ€™t think Iâ€™ve ever known anyone who could read. A lot of the people in my village could do figures, but thereâ€™s not much call for reading.â€•
â€œWould you like to learn how?â€•
â€œIâ€™m not sure. I donâ€™t know where Iâ€™m going from here. My village is gone. My brotherâ€™s dead. My parents
probably are, too. They were in the battle. I could probably get a farmer to take me on as a farm hand, but I donâ€™t have anyone to vouch for me as an apprentice . . .â€• My voice trailed off as I realized how precarious my situation was, and I felt myself tearing up, but Lena was kind enough not to notice when I sniffled and wiped my nose on my sleeve.
â€œDonâ€™t you remember? Youâ€™re supposed to learn to be my fatherâ€™s bird keeper.â€•
â€œI am?â€•
â€œYes, thatâ€™s why he traded for you.â€•
For a moment, I was thrilled, but then I remembered what had prompted him to trade for me. â€œWhat if I donâ€™t do a
good job?â€•
She looked like she was about to reply, but then I saw the Mask looking our way, and I cut her off. â€œWe better get to work. There will be time to talk on the road.â€•
We had just finished hitching the oxen to the wagon, and tying the riding pony to the ring on the back corner of the wagon when a fluttering pigeon landed on the seat. The Mask beckoned to it with a strange warbling call. It hopped over to him, and he turned to Lena. â€œGet us on the road while I find out what the king has to say. The Weald seems to
be deserted, so weâ€™ll be safe to drive all night. Have Ian spell you when you get tired. I have a feeling that weâ€™re going to want to get to Belkeep much faster than these oxen can take us.â€• With that, he disappeared into the
wagon, drawing the flaps of the cover tightly behind him.

Posted by Johnny Elbows in The Apprentice Mask at 20:25

Don't Fail Me Again

Darth Vader has a special message for you.This is a pretty cool idea. They have a soundboard with a bunch of Darth Vader quotes
and you can mix them together.

Posted by The Mad Giggler in Personal Entry at 08:59

Tuesday, September 22. 2009

A typical conversation

"Mom," says Preston, "When I grow up I want to be a smuster."
"A mister?"
"NO! A Smuster!"
I pause for a moment before saying solemnly, "I do not understand what you mean." This is the only response that will prompt the child to rephrase, rather than to just repeat what he’s said more slowly and loudly, as [...]

Posted by Daboo at 10:31

Monday, September 21. 2009

5

They let me out of my bed two days later. When I walked out of the ger, what I saw amazed me. The buzzing city of tents was gone. In its place, a crazy maze of mud and grass crisscrossed a large meadow. In the distance, the Dinaâ€™s
offering to Tor, a tower of bodies topped by a large banner bearing his symbol, marked the location of the battle. I gazed out at the emptiness, wondering.

â€œWho were the peasants?â€•

The Maskâ€™s question surprised me. I hadnâ€™t even realized that he was standing next to me. â€œI didnâ€™t know all
of them. Some of them were the people of my village.â€•

â€œThe call to arms was raised about an hour after you fainted. The Kingâ€™s Cavalry took the left flank. The Dina took
the right flank. Archers and infantry made up the center, with pike men at the front, archers just behind them, and heavy infantry in the back. The cavalry herded all of the peasants into a mass in the center, and pike men pushed them forward. Because of that, our archers were able to rain destruction down upon the Heffian front ranks while they were trying to defend themselves from the fear-crazed peasants. Those peasants won the battle for us, but I donâ€™t think a single one of them survived.â€•

â€œMost of them belonged to Mora. Doesnâ€™t the khasar fear her wrath?â€•

â€œI am the khasarâ€™s mask, Ian, not his mind or his soul. I donâ€™t know what he fears, but Iâ€™m not sure that he
even believes in Mora.â€•

My mouth must have looked unhinged when he said that. In my village, everyone belonged to Mora, except the smith, of
course, who belonged to Festion. I knew that there were people, like the Dina, who belonged to Tor, but I had never heard of anyone who didnâ€™t fear the gods. Everybody believed in Mora. Didnâ€™t they?

I felt the Maskâ€™s hand on my shoulder, steering me back toward the tent. He sighed. â€œDonâ€™t worry. Mora always
gets her due. We have to get on the road. Weâ€™re supposed to catch up to the khasar before the army reaches Belkeep.â€•

Posted by Johnny Elbows in The Apprentice Mask at 21:26

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Looks like we forgot to set the permissions correctly on our latest upload (podcast 35). But we have remedied the problem and you should now be able to download podcast 35. Sorry for the trouble.

Posted by Radar in Podcast at 10:52

Podcast 35: Poetry in Podcasting

Well technically we don't actually discuss the poetry in this podcast, but in a separate special release that will be posted later. But we did have quite a lot of fun Friday night. We had long time contributor Aaron come back and join us. While we wouldn't quite describe him as having an air of authenticity about a television podcast, he can be quite funny (either as joke teller or the butt of). And his ratings are different enough from Joey and I to provide some good comparison. Basically if you agree with Aaron, there is something wrong with you. We look forward to having
him come back on. This podcast covers episodes 5-8 of Star Trek: The Next Generation, Season 6.

Various topics discussed in this podcast include:
- Poetry
- Ode to

Spot
- Group Therapy
- Hot chick Olivia d'Abo
- Specialization vs. General Knowledge
- New food source: Soylent Puppy
- The most awkward Star Trek the Next Generation scene ever!
- Good techno-babble: The JOS
- Joey doesn't know how to play My Little Pony with his daughter
- I Fight

Dragons
- JC Hutchins 7th Son

Novel

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Here are the ratings that we gave for each show:Scisims: 43min 56sec
Peter: SciFi - 8 Television - 5
Joey: SciFi - 9 Television - 2
Aaron: SciFi - 6 Television - 4

True
Q: 34min 50sec
Peter: SciFi - 7 Television - 5
Joey: SciFi - 7 Television - 3
Aaron: SciFi - 3 Television - 2

Rascals: 33min 56sec
Peter: SciFi - 4 Television - 3
Joey: SciFi - 6 Television - 4
Aaron: SciFi - 8 Television - 5

Fistful of
Data's: 23min 20sec
Peter: SciFi - 2 Television - 2
Joey: SciFi - 4 Television - 3
Aaron: SciFi - 4 Television - 2.5

If you have something to say then we welcome your comments below, or feel free to email us at trekwest5@thehomestarmy.com, twitter us at hashtag TrekWest5, or leave us a voicemail at 801-788-4913.

Posted by Radar in Podcast at 04:00

Sunday, September 20. 2009

4

Dim light filtered through the wall of the ger. My eyes felt sticky and heavy. In the distance, I could hear the roar of charging men, the clash of weapons, and call of the clarion. I stirred, and tried to get up, but a hand pressed me back down. I slept once again.

A man in a golden mask with birds at his feet stood talking to a boy, my brother. I wanted to run to him, to tell him that I thought he was dead, killed by the Dina, but somehow, my feet wouldnâ€™t move. I couldnâ€™t hear what they were
saying, but occasionally, they glanced my way. Finally, the boy reached up and took the mask off the manâ€™s face. He
played with it for a moment, holding it up to his own face, and then dropped it on the ground. It shattered, scattering pieces of gilt plaster across the stone floor, and startling the birds into flight.

He turned, looking at me with his funny half-smile. I wanted to talk to him, to apologize, to tell him that I didnâ€™t know, to say that I wouldnâ€™t ever throw rocks again, but when I spoke, I couldnâ€™t hear myself, and he made no sign
that he could hear me either. He just smiled at me, and glanced up at the man who stood beside him. Following his gaze, I looked at the manâ€™s face for the first time. I stepped back in horror, and found myself falling.

And woke. I sat up, panting, drenched in sweat. The tent was dark except for the dim light of a candle in the next room. I started when a cool hand touched my head. A soft, feminine voice called out, â€œHeâ€™s awake, and his fever
seems to have broken.â€•

A shadow crossed the candlelight, and a big man entered my room. He spoke softly. â€œThank you, Lena. See if you can
do something for the kingâ€™s birds. I have a message, but I have no bird. Mora, curse that boy.â€•

A girl slipped from the room, and the man took her place on the chair beside my pallet. â€œWell, boy?â€•

â€œMy nameâ€™s Ian,â€• I replied.

â€œSo, Ian, you killed your brother.â€•

â€œNo!â€• A pause. â€œWell, yes.â€•

â€œHow did you kill him?â€•

â€œThe Dina came through our village. They chased him down and killed him.â€•

â€œIs that the whole story?â€•

â€œYes.â€•

â€œSo, how did you kill him?â€•

Then the story, along with my tears, came out. I told him about my rock, the clang of the shield, the chase, and the sight of my brother spitted on the cavalierâ€™s lance. He listened in silence. When I was finished, he sat without speaking for several minutes.

â€œWhose are you?â€• His question surprised me.

I answered automatically. â€œI am Moraâ€™s.â€•

â€œThen Mora will guide your brother home. Do you know who I am?â€•

â€œNo.â€•

â€œI am the khasarâ€™s mask.â€•

Posted by Johnny Elbows in The Apprentice Mask at 10:40

Saturday, September 19. 2009

3

Sighing, I picked my way through the crowd to where I could collapse against the fence of our corral. I was filthy, covered in mud and the detritus of walking behind horses for more than a hundred miles, but somehow, that didnâ€™t matter. According to the old man, I was going to be herded like a human shield in front of an army, but I didnâ€™t care. I was so hungry that my stomach was eating itself, but that made no difference to me. Sleep. I just needed sleep. Sinking into the mud at the edge of the corral, I slept.

Something crashed into the fence just behind me. Startled, I jumped to my feet. I craned my neck to see over the wattle wall of the corral, and found myself staring into the hooded eyes of a black fullface mask.

He bellowed, startling me further, but his rage was not directed at me. A boy, two or three years older than I, was wrestling with a large basket. In his haste, he dropped it again, and the masked man shouted, â€œStop! That is enough.
Just stop! Get out of here!â€• The boy turned to leave, but the masked man grabbed him by the arm and said, his eyes fixed on me, â€œNo, wait. I have a better idea.â€•

He marched over to the gate of our corral, stopping in front of the guard who stood there. Presenting the boy, he spoke. â€œA trade. This boy for that one.â€• He pointed across the paddock to where I stood, petrified.

â€œBut sir . . . â€•

â€œI know.â€•

The guard inclined his head. â€œYes sir.â€•

He turned and yelled to me. â€œYou, boy, come here.â€•

I found myself walking toward him, scared and unsure. Was I jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire? The gate opened just wide enough for me to squeeze through, and I stood there, dazed by what had just happened.

The man in the mask grabbed me by the hair and wrenched my face upwards. Turning my head, he examined me, then spoke to
the guard without looking at him. â€œThis will do.â€•

I think that he was going to march me off to carry the basket, but at that point, my strength gave out. My vision seemed to blur, then it narrowed and went black. I collapsed in a heap at his feet.

Posted by Johnny Elbows in The Apprentice Mask at 08:16

Friday, September 18. 2009

No Explanation Needed

Posted by The Mad Giggler in Personal Entry at 08:06

Thursday, September 17. 2009

I Seriously Like Free Books

Even PIECES of free books excite me. So I was pleased to recently discover that you can read the opening chapters of Robert J. Sawyer's "Wake" for free on his site.

Along that same path, Mr. Sawyer's fun-to-read crime/sf story "Flashforward" is coming to television this fall as a show on ABC.

Posted by Ancient of Days at 12:33

Wednesday, September 16. 2009

2

If I hadnâ€™t been so tired, I would have gawked like a fish at the sight of the armies massed at the front. Iâ€™d never seen so many people in my life. Some loafed around outside their tents, cooking over small fires, telling stories, oiling armor, and sharpening swords. Others rushed around on seemingly urgent errands. Tension hung like smoke over the camp, visible even in the most relaxed soldiers.

The Dina paraded through the camp, banners held high, dragging us behind them. Just outside a large ger, a peacock of a
man dressed in blue velvet stared haughtily at the Dina as they approached. Contempt dripped from his voice when he spoke. â€œWhere have you been? The khasar was expecting you three days ago.â€•

The commander rumbled his reply. â€œI will speak with his majesty alone. I do not treat with flunkies.â€•

The little man set his jaw and disappeared into the tent, scowling. When he emerged several minutes later, he swept the door open, and bowed. If a bow can be sarcastic, his was. â€œHis majesty will see you now, Dinar.â€•

The commander swept by him without even deigning to glance at him. He straightened, scowling, and then, pointing to us,
with as much disgust as he could muster, said, â€œwhat are these?â€•

One of the Dina answered him with one word. â€œGum.â€•

Gesturing with a jeweled staff, the chamberlain grinned, â€œtake them over there.â€•

Once again, they dragged us through the camp, finally driving us into a large corral where several hundred other prisoners squatted miserably around a sullen fire. When they opened the gate, a prisoner yelled at our captors, but he ducked behind his neighbor when the soldier raised his sword.

When they had gone, I turned to an old man hunched nearby. â€œWhat are they going to do with us?â€•

He looked at me with listless eyes. â€œTheyâ€™re going to herd us. Drive us in front of them. Use us as shields when
they attack.â€•

â€œWhy?â€•

He looked at me incredulously and shook his head, shuffling away from me as quickly as the press of the crowd would allow.

Posted by Johnny Elbows in The Apprentice Mask at 23:09

Red, Blue, And Pigskin

Week 2 has come, and week 2 has gone. Though it didn't have the excitement of week 1, and not the cache of the games
coming up in week 3, football is football. This weekend sees both local teams going up against BCS teams in matchups that aren't as impressive as they were three weeks ago. But we'll get to more on that later. For now here are some thoughts for the current season.The wonderful TV contract strikes again.
The tv contract is now into it's third year, and once again it is preventing local fansfrom seeing one of their teams in an important game. Thanks to the dispute between Direct TV and Comcast in regards to fees for Direct TV to air Versus Channel, the Florida State/BYU game will not be available to local fans who have Direct TV. Now sure you could blame Direct TV and/or Comcast, but the truth of the matter is, had the MWC not agreed to their current contract with CSTV, and instead re-upped with ESPN, this game would have been on an ESPN affiliate.

More importantly this is yet another opportunity, for Writers, Poll Voters, and future recruits around the country to

not see a MWC team in an important game.

BYU killed a terrible Tulane team, and Utah escaped a scare from San Jose State.
The team that impressed though was TCU who looked scary against what might turn out to be a bad Virginia team. TCU held
Viriginia to only 7 first downs in the game, and was up 30-0 before they substituted some of their second strings, and allowed Virginia to score on a couple long passes. Showing that their defense is ready to pick up where it left off last year, TCU racked up 8 sacks and allowed only 57 yards rushing in the game.

What was once a weekend of big games, has turned into a couple of lose-lose games for BYU and Utah.
Before the season started both Florida State and Oregon were ranked opponents looking to make a splash in their respective conferences. This weekend looked like a chance for the MWC and moreso Utah and BYU to once again show the
nation it's for real.

Now, not so much. Florida State lost an opening week shootout with Miami of Florida on Monday Night in week 1 where the
nation got to see their defense exposed, and got to watch their legendary coach make some major blunders as the team lost. But hey that was an ACC Conference game against what may turn out to be a quality opponent. But then the Seminoles followed that up by trailing FCS Jacksonville St. for the first 59 minutes of the game and needing 2 TD's in the final minute to win. Fortunately for Cougar fans the Seminoles aren't nearly as bad of an opponent as the Ducks.

The Ducks were beat up by Boise State in the first week of the season. Then they were embroiled in the scandal of their RB LeGarrette Blount sucker punching a Boise State players, punching his own players, trying to go after fans, and having to be escorted off the field by Security.

In week 2 the Ducks held on to beat a mediocre Purdue team when Purdue missed a two point attempt late in the game. But
for a true extent of how bad the ducks are check out their rankings.

Total Offense: 96
Passing Offense: 97
Rushing Offense: 79
Total Defense: 90
Passing Defense: 75
Rushing Defense: 89

Also this was a team whose defense averaged being on the field for 35 minutes per game last year.

Both of these games have become less about making a statement, to not having a statement made against Utah or BYU.

Putting on the Offensive Coordinator Cap.
Despite not being able to finish drives, Utah moved the ball really well against San Jose State. But I would make two major changes if I were their offensive coordinator.

Firstly, I would make sure that QB Terrance Cain, realizes that the handoff option they do is an option play. Many times during both the first two weeks if Cain would have just pulled the ball back out and ran it himself, the outside edge was wide open. The defensive ends have figured out that he's not going to keep the ball, and instead are just keying on the running back. The handoff option is only successful if the QB is actually a threat to keep it. Cain needs to realize that if he keeps it once in a while he will probably get a huge gain, and more importantly he'll help open more holes for his running back since the Defensive End won't just be able to key on the running back.

Next I'd work on goal line offense. While the Asiata formation is an effective weapon, it shouldn't be the only weapon. The problem with the Asiata formation is that there is a delay before Asiata runs at the line. He takes the snap, fakes the handoff to the WR, than runs forward to the line. It may only be a delay of a second or so, but that gives the defensive line time to fill gaps. Once in a while the Utes should just stay in their base formation and run Asiata straight up the gut, with no delay.

Also I think the play call to have Asiata pass to Cain was a great call. The play would have worked as Cain was wide open, and Asiata just missed the pass. The only issue with the play is that it should have been a 3rd down play, and

not a 4th down play.

I miss King Louie
Watching Ben Vroman miss 3 field goal attempts, made me miss King Louie. It also brought back memories of some of the
many bad field goal kickers in Utah history (The Keneshiro Doink anyone?). Now Freshman Joe Phillips will be taking over field goal duties, and will make his start at Autzen Stadium in Eugene which is a loud stadium. Hopefully the Utes can get their kicking situation figured out soon, before it costs them a game or two.

Posted by Sideshow at 13:06

Tuesday, September 15. 2009

1

Since I know how much Pete loves stories that don't get finished, I decided to post the beginning of a new story. If you hate stories that don't get finished, you probably shouldn't read any further, because I will not guarantee that this will be finished.

A flutter of wings, a flurry of feathers, and the bird was gone. The mists of early morning still clung to the sides of the hills, despite the sunâ€™s efforts to burn them away. On the beach, I could hear the children calling to each other as they searched for sand dollars and ran from the crashing breakers. I turned from the balcony into the shadows of my kitchen and began preparing my breakfast. First, an egg, hard boiled and leftover from last nightâ€™s dinner. A chunk of garlicky bread, some cheese cured with sea salt, and a bit of smoked fish would do. Eating would occupy the time until my master woke.

I sank down onto the cushion beside the table. Picking absently at my food, I stared through the doorway into the daylight, wondering at the surprising twists of Moraâ€™s loom.

The Dina probably would have passed through our village without incident. Those warriors on their giant horses were on
their way to the front; peasants meant nothing to them or their war. They barely noticed that we even existed. I didnâ€™t mean to draw their attention. I wasnâ€™t attacking them, protesting their presence, or even insulting them. I was just throwing rocks. In those days, I threw rocks at everythingâ€“my brother, our neighborsâ€™ dogs, even the cows
that wandered the overgrown streets of our village. When my rock clanged off the heavy shield that one of the warriors carried strapped to his back, though, everything changed. We went from mere insects to dangerous enemies, and the Dina
arenâ€™t known for their mercy.

They rounded us up at the point of lances. Anyone who tried to run was quickly spitted. Those who didnâ€™t run soon wished that they had. Our village soon disappeared behind us as we plodded along behind their horses, our hands tied, our heads bowed. When I dared to look back, the only sign of our homes was the black cloud of smoke on the horizon. I
knew that somewhere in those burning buildings, my brotherâ€™s spirit was cursing me for throwing rocks, and I shivered
in spite of the heat of the afternoon sun.

At nightfall, they gave Mikel a javelin, and told him, â€œhunt, or be hunted. Your people will eat if you catch anything. If you donâ€™t, they wonâ€™t eat. If you try to run, we will follow you, and will leave nothing for the earth or the sky to claim.â€• It wasnâ€™t much, but that night Mikel was able to kill something, so we ate. Most nights, we werenâ€™t so lucky. We tried to satisfy our hunger by grabbing at the berry brambles at the side of the road, but the Dina never slackened their pace, so we were never able to eat our fill. Fortunately for us, it only took six days to reach the front.

Posted by Johnny Elbows in The Apprentice Mask at 21:30

Recommendation Fail

I clicked on the "Recommendations" section of Amazon today on a whim. As I was going through the list of fantasy books,
video game accessories, and alternative music albums, I noticed something a little out of place. Curious to know why it had made the list, I clicked the "Why was this recommended for me?" link. To my surprise, this was the result.

Posted by The Mad Giggler in Ooops at 10:36

Sister Missionary

This is the beginning of a new series on Winged Wolves. I’ll be posting letters (and pictures if I get any) of my sister while she’s serving her mission. She was originally supposed to just speak English in the Mormon Battalion
Visitor’s Center, but since the start of her service, she’s been tracting [...]

Posted by Daboo at 09:31

Monday, September 14. 2009

D&D Session 3 (It Rhymes)

Will Master Whisper find his mother's killer? Will Silver the Enchantress recover her memories? Will Bronwynn wreak the vengeance she so desperately seeks? Will Undetermined meet his Unforgettable soul mate? Or will our heroes just kill a lot of baddies? Tune in to EPISODE THREE and
find out!

Posted by The Mad Giggler in D&D at 14:11

Podcast 34: The Sweet Spot of Podcasting

I was so pumped for this Sunday to get here because of the return of the NFL. And due to that, it took Joey and I a while to edit the podcast. So there is a good chance we might have even missed a couple of things. But at least it was also a good start to our latest season of podcasting about Star Trek The Next Generation. My Friend Jon Madsen was able to
join us for the last TNG/Original Series crossover episode. This time it was about Captain Montgomery Scott: Scotty. Beam us up to that great warp core in the sky James Doohan, we miss you. This podcast covers episodes 1-4 of Star Trek: The Next Generation, Season 6.

Various topics discussed in this podcast include:
I Fight
Dragons
JC Hutchins 7th Son
Novel
Tesla
Would you tell people the aliens have come?
weird Classified ads
Mark Twain was a pervert
Pete needs a relaxation technique
New theme park idea: Transporterland
Coolest tech ever: Dyson Sphere
The plight of the aged
Zero-G orgies for the elderly

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Here are the ratings that we gave for each show:Time's Arrow
part 2: 59min 46sec
Peter: SciFi - 7 Television - 4
Joey: SciFi - 7 Television - 3
Jon: SciFi - 4 Television - 4

Realm of
Fear: 35min 06sec
Peter: SciFi - 8 Television - 3
Joey: SciFi - 6 Television - 5
Jon: SciFi - 3 Television - 4

Man of the
People: 41min 07sec
Peter: SciFi - 4 Television - 3
Joey: SciFi - 3 Television - 4
Jon: SciFi - 2 Television - 4

Relics: 1hr 3min 00sec
Peter: SciFi - 7 Television - 5
Joey: SciFi - 8 Television - 3
Jon: SciFi - 5.5 Television - 6

If you have something to say then we welcome your comments below, or feel free to email us at trekwest5@thehomestarmy.com, twitter us at hashtag TrekWest5, or leave us a voicemail at 801-788-4913.

Posted by Radar in Podcast at 05:00

Thursday, September 10. 2009

Red, Blue, and Pigskin

Wow, college football returned, and it returned in a big way for local teams and the MWC Conference. The cougars did what no one thought they could do, as the MWC showed they just might be for real.Big Big Big win for the Cougars, but it doesn't really mean anything yet.
BYU's 14-13 upset win over #3 ranked Oklahoma is a huge win. To start the season beating such a highly regarded foe puts BYU in the driver's seat for not just a BCS bowl game, but even possibly a chance at the National Championship game. But before all you Cougar fans start talking about the greatness of this win, and it being the biggest win in MWC history, remember there are still 11 weeks to go.

If Oklahoma ends up being just mediocre, or if the Cougars stumble along the way, this game will be looked at as just another game. Also it's important to remember that pollsters put more weight on end of season events than they do beginning of season events.

Both local teams won, and looked good, but there are issues lingering.
Utah finished off Utah State 35-17, and Junior College transfer Terrance Cain looked good in his debut going 20 of 30 for just under 300 yards and 2 TD's with only one interception which wasn't his fault. However The Utes playbook was very scaled down and they will need to open it up later in the season to be successful.

Defensively the Utes gave up some yardage early, but as the game went on the Defense locked down, and with Koa Misi
returning this week they should be okay.

For the Cougars there is no taking away from the big victory against Oklahoma. But there were still some very familiar issues that Cougar fans might not want to blow off. First that Offensive Line did allow pressure and wasn't able to open up many holes in the run game. Granted the Cougars were without Harvey Unga, but there was still a bit of pressure
coming at Hall. And Hall reverted to some of his tendencies of making bad decisions when faced with that pressure including 2 interceptions (half of the Cougars 4 turnovers). All that said though, Hall came through biggest when it mattered on the final drive of the game.

The one thing that might be worrisome is that final drive was all Dennis Pitta. Who knows if it's because BYU found a schematic advantage, or if '08 Collie offense is turning into '09 Pitta offense.

The pressure is squarely on the MWC after week one.
BYU's big victory over Oklahoma, combined with Colorado State beating Colorado, has put the pressure on the MWC to keep
the ball running. If the MWC can continue to show up out of conference opponents, especially opponents from BCS conferences, it will continue to expose the fraud that is the BCS. However, if the teams start to stumble it won't mean anything at the end of the year.

Moreso the pressure is on BYU, Utah, and TCU as the front runners of the conference, as most don't expect much from the
bottom half. But it is exactly that reason that makes the Colorado State victory so important. Everyone knows that our top 3 can hang with any other team, but when the rest of our conference starts pulling the upset, it helps prove why the MWC is as good, if not better than the Big East, and ACC. Heck an argument against the Big Ten can even be made.

If BYU, Utah, and TCU can make it through out of conference opponents undefeated it would mean MWC would have 2 victories against the Big 12, 1 over the Pac-10, 1 over the Big East, and 3 over the ACC. Plus whatever else the rest of the conference can help out with.

Posted by Sideshow at 21:04

Lines Have Been Drawn

Ancient of Days:
you should post this on thehomestarmy:

The Mad Giggler:
I like this new line drawn between us. I feel like I'm in one of those classic novels where the protaganist went to school and was close friends with the person who became his archnemesis.

The Mad Giggler vs. Ancient of Days
Star Wars vs. Star Trek
Lines have been drawn. Blood will be shed.
STAY TUNED!

Posted by The Mad Giggler in Personal Entry at 11:05

Monday, September 7. 2009

Podcast 33: High Five

Well we bring to a close the best season of TNG so far. It is going to be pretty difficult to beat this one. We gush on and on about the episode The Inner Light, but over all this was a fun podcast for Joey and I to record. We also started a new tradition for the beginning of the podcast: high five. Let's see how long it sticks around for. Due to our secret location we had no guests. This podcast covers episodes 25-26 of Star
Trek: The Next Generation, Season 5.

Various topics discussed in this podcast include:
I Fight
Dragons
JC Hutchins 7th Son
Novel
What helps you think?
Should you announce impending doom
New vocabulary word: Voorwerp
Is Research & Development really gone?
What is reality?
Do you believe in fate?
The first rule of time travel: Blend in
Peter shames Joey on the subject of tipping

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Here are the ratings that we gave for each show as well as Season 5 lists/recaps:The Inner
Light: 1hr 11min 50sec
Peter: SciFi - 10 Television - 10
Joey: SciFi - 10 Television - 10

Time's Arrow
part 1: 48min 37sec
Peter: SciFi - 9 Television - 3
Joey: SciFi - 9 Television - 6

Season 5 wrap
up: 33min 20sec

Season 5 recaps and lists
Favorite Extra/Bit Part
Peter: Spock from the episode Unification
Joey: Captain Dathon from the episode Darmock

Most Hated Character
Peter: Ensign Ro from the episode Ensign Ro
Joey: Etana Jol from the episode The Game

Hot Chick
Peter: Ensign Leffler (as played by Ashley Judd) from the episode The Game
Joey: Kamala (as played by Famke
Janssen) from the episode First Contact

Favorite Villain
Peter: The Romulans

Joey: Jev the Mind-rapist

Favorite New Concept
Joey: The "soliton wave" propulsion system (from the episode New Ground)
Peter: Passing on an entire lifetime in 20 min (from the episode The Inner Light - much faster than any TW5 podcast)

Top 5 Hated Episodes
PeterThe GameEnsign RoCost of LivingPower PlayViolations
Joey
The First DutyThe GamePower PlayConundrumCost of Living

Top 5 Favorite Episodes
Peter:
DarmockThe Inner LightUnificationTime's ArrowCause & Effect
Joey:
DarmockThe Inner LightEthicsTime's ArrowHero Worship

Favorite Overall Moment
Peter: The Inner Light: Jean Luc Picard (Kamin) at the end of the episode realizing that this is not his real life.

Joey: Darmock: Captain Picard breaking through the language barrier

If you have something to say then we welcome your comments below, or feel free to email us at trekwest5@thehomestarmy.com, twitter us at hashtag TrekWest5, or leave us a voicemail at 801-788-4913.

Posted by Radar in Podcast at 04:00

Thursday, September 3. 2009

Red, Blue, And Pigskin

Finally, finally, finally. Our long national nightmare is coming to an end. Tonight football begins, and counts for real, and next weekend the pros kickoff as well. So in preparation for tonight's game, and this weekends games here are
4 downs of information about the Utes, Cougs and the MWC in general.First Down: MWC Commissioner Craig Thompson is a plague on this conference.
The MWC has grown immensely in the 11 years since it's creation, and while Thompson may have been commissioner the
entire time during this growth, it happened in spite of, not because of him. Sure Thompson was around and helped facilitate TCU joining the conference, but even a blind squirrel finds a nut once in a while.

Shortly after creating the conference Thompson helped agree to make the Liberty Bowl the destination for our Conference
champ. While the C-USA Champion that we faced in the bowl was a decent opponent for the conference at the time, the
fact that the Bowl was in Memphis made it very difficult for anyone to travel there.

After the '04 season when the contract with the Liberty Bowl was up, Thompson wisely negotiated to move our #1 team from
the Liberty Bowl to the Las Vegas Bowl. The bowl is a better destination. One problem though. While the #5 team from the Pac-10 was okay for our #2 or #3 team, it is a lousy opponent for our conference champion.

That statement is even more true in '09 after Thompson renewed the bowl and the opponent through 2013.

But the biggest mistake for Thompson, is and will be the TV Contract. 3 years after it's inception a good number of MWC
Fans who own Dish Network, still can't watch their teams. And now thanks to contractual issues between Versus, and Direct TV, subscribers to Direct TV are unable to watch Versus which was a secondary network to show games. It's hard
to move the conference forward, and show the nation how good the teams are, when nobody can see them play.

In fact Thompson has been so bad, that I am calling a penalty on this down. Unsportsmanlike Commissioning. Replay the
down.

First Down: It's not likely, but Cougar coach Bronco Mendenhall's job could be on the line in '09.
There may not be the quest for perfection in '08, but last year's collapse has put pressure on Mendenhall and the Cougars. It doesn't help that their rivals, the Utes went to another BCS bowl, while the Cougars still haven't been to one. Now BYU opens the season on the big stage against a big time opponent. If the Cougars get absolutely killed by Oklahoma, it could undo the good will from the Sugar Bowl dismantling of Alabama by the Utes (Even if Oklahoma is a much
better team than that Alabama team was.).

If an OU destruction is followed up by a 4-5 loss season, which is a possibility, filled with many of the same lack of in game adjustments, and other issues that plagued the '08 season, and if the Utes were to avoid the expected downslide
in '09, and have another stellar 11-12 win season (less likely), the Cougar faithful may just get fed up with Mendenhall's easy going attitude.

Second Down: Whittingham has earned the benefit of the doubt in '09, bt not necessarily a free
pass.
The Utes performance in '09, and more importantly Whittingham's growth as a coach, has earned him a lot of good will. The lowered expectations that also come with QB Brian Johnson's graduation, and the realization that either Junior College Transfer Terrence Cain, or True Freshman Jordan Wynn are likely to be slow out of the gate, have helped to take

some pressure off of Coach Whit in 2009. That doesn't mean though the Ute fans are willing to live through what happened after the last time the Utes made a BCS Bowl. This season is going to be judged not as much on wins, as on the
field growth, but fans still want consistency, and not a return to the up and down of McBride, or Whit's first 3.5 seasons as Ron McBride 2.0

Third Down: I hate the BCS for making me have to root for BYU against Oklahoma.
The BCS has many flaws. Most of which will probably be exposed once again this season. But one of it's biggest flaws, is that it has removed some of the enjoyment that comes from watching the Cougars falter. An embarrasing showing by the
Cougars against the Sooners, won't be just a loss for them, but it will be a loss to the conference. So all Utes fans, and all MWC Fans in general need to root for the Cougars against not only the Sooners but all non conference opponents
this season. Same goes for Cougar fans rooting for the Utes.

I know that this scenario is not great for BYU Fans as well, as one big BYU Fan recently told me "I hate having to have Ute fans root for the Cougars too."

Fourth Down: It may take 2 quarters to get going, but Utes will start off with a win tonight.
It's a good thing the Utes are starting out with the aggies. First of which is Gary Andersen is going to turn that team around and by mid season they'll be massively improved.

But for the Utes, playing the Aggies has many good benefits. First the Aggies are a sub-par team, which will give the Utes a larger room for error than most games. Secondly with Anderson being very familiar with the Utes players, coaches, schemes, and whatever else you can think of, it gives the game more of a twist than it normally have, which will give the young quarterbacks a chance to learn from pressure they normally wouldn't get in this game. Finally, Andersen is likely to throw everything at the Utes including the kitchen sink. The Utes have already had to make their Quarterbacks prepare against 7-8 defenses, which is more than the typical 4-5 defenses a team prepares for in a normal game. All of this will increase the trial by fire of the Utes unknown QB situation.

And because of the unknown QB situation don't be surprised if it takes most, if not all of the first half, before the Utes look like a decent football team, and not a group of Keystone Kops. At least on the offense. The defense will still be solid, and they, along with the help of the best RB in the conference, Matt Asiata, will key the Utes to victory.

Posted by Sideshow at 07:43

Wednesday, September 2. 2009

PMP my "tric"

Well it's clear now what you all can get me for Christmas. I have always wanted an MP3 player. I guess technically I already have 3 of them, but strapping my desktop computer on to my back and jogging in place in my apartment just isn't
practical. Frankly neither is this. But I want it sooooo bad.

Seriously though, a PMP designed to look like a Star
Trek The Next Generation Tricorder is just absolutely ridiculous. I can't imagine that the screen would be large enough for me to want to watch any movie or tv show. And at a price tag of a little over $360, it's way too expensive for something that only holds 12 hours of music. But why do I want it so bad?

Posted by Radar in Oddities at 09:55