

Thursday, July 29. 2010

Watch This Space

The question nobody has been wondering is: why hasn't the new guy been posting? Well, I've been quite busy. But, next week, my children and wife are leaving for a few days, and I shall be finally posting my thoughts regarding the end of Lost. At least I've had time to think about it. I shall be posting twice, in fact, once about the narrative of Lost and whether or not it proved to be satisfying, and a second post will be about Lost and faith.

Posted by The Fox in Oddities at 13:29

Awesomely Awkward

Some of you may have seen this site before, but I recently came across it and thought you would enjoy it: Awkward Family Photos. Don't worry it is SFW. Make sure to read the captions with each photo as it adds a little something special.

Here are just a few offerings that cracked me up:

Bearing Fruit
On The Road Again
Deeply Denim
Punks in Space
Elbow Room
Old Smokey

And my personal favorite:

Roadside Assistance

Posted by Radar in Oddities at 09:29

Monday, July 26. 2010

Podcast 73: Jared's bug bear*

We suckered another person to listen to us! Welcome in to the podcast Listener Jaybird (or whatever name you decide you want). Thanks to he and Listener Jim for some great insight on racial profiling. We also discussed episodes 9-12 of The West Wing, Season 4.

*"Often, especially when learning some large new system, programmers get stuck on something that looks like a bug and ask someone for help. Halfway through explaining their problem they realize where they had gone wrong. Never mind, never mind, it's not a bug, I'm an idiot. At a company I used to work for we had a stuffed bear called the bugbear. Before you could bug anyone else about your bug, you had explain it to the bugbear. Just thinking to yourself doesn't always work; there is something about vocalizing your mini-mental crisis to another being that engages the brain." -- <http://carlos.bueno.org/>

Various topics discussed in this podcast include:

- Â Â Â Â Weird Fortune Cookie fortune: Ambition is a poor excuse for not having enough sense to be lazy
- Â Â Â Â New listener Jay and his Podcast: Geek Squared Podcast
- Â Â Â Â More discussion on Racial Profiling
- Â Â Â Â Online Book Website: Daily Lit
- Â Â Â Â Joey's Culture Corner: Flatland by Edwin Abbott
- Â Â Â Â Principles of an American Life: The 23rd Amendment
- Â Â Â Â Peter is Jared's bug bear
- Â Â Â Â Joey and Peter do not have a Star Trek fetish
- Â Â Â Â Music and Memory
- Â Â Â Â Josh Woodward's track Morning Blue

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Here are the ratings that we gave for each show:Swiss Diplomacy: 48min 52sec

Peter: Television - 6

Joey: Television - 6

Arctic Radar: 31min 01sec

Peter: Television - 6

Joey: Television - 8

Holy Night: 31min 46sec

Peter: Television - 8

Joey: Television - 8

Guns Not Butter: 20min 24sec

Peter: Television - 7

Joey: Television - 7

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

Monday, July 19. 2010

Podcast 72: We're calling you out Orrin Hatch

We hereby lay down an open invitation/challenge to Senator Orrin Hatch to come on this podcast. If he is a real man then he'll show up. My Friend Jon Madsen dropped by long enough to call him a tyrant. Bold words. But we are very glad that Jon could stop by. We also discussed episodes 5-8 of The West Wing, Season 4.

Various topics discussed in this podcast include:

- Â Â Â Â My Friend Jon Madsen comes by to chat
- Â Â Â Â Joey's Culture Corner: Conspiracy of Fools by Kurt Eichenwald
- Â Â Â Â Principles of an American Life: The 22nd Amendment
- Â Â Â Â Podcast series test: The Simpson's
- Â Â Â Â Joey is too good to move his own stuff
- Â Â Â Â Is racial profiling ok to use?
- Â Â Â Â Shaky cameras are dumb
- Â Â Â Â How do you make big decisions?
- Â Â Â Â Electronic voting machines can be hacked!
- Â Â Â Â Music by Shayna Zaid

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Here are the ratings that we gave for each show: Debate Camp: 1hr 04min 36sec

Peter: Television - 7

Joey: Television - 6

Game On: 36min 32sec

Peter: Television - 7

Joey: Television - 8

Election Night: 19min 53sec

Peter: Television - 7

Joey: Television - 7

Process Stories: 12min 32sec

Peter: Television - 6

Joey: Television - 7

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 10:00

Monday, July 12. 2010

Podcast 71: Subsidized by the Government

Welcome back from our Independence Day holiday! It turns out that we can get government funding for this little podcast of ours. So many thanks to all of you tax payers out there subsidizing our work. Well... actually there is no funding for us, but it's nice to dream once and a while. We did however discuss episodes 1-4 of The West Wing, Season 4.

Various topics discussed in this podcast include:

- Â Â Â Â Joey's Culture Corner: The Stars Like Dust by Issac Asimov
- Â Â Â Â Jules Verne gives birth to Science Fiction
- Â Â Â Â Principles of an American Life: The 21st Amendment
- Â Â Â Â Are farm subsidies good?
- Â Â Â Â Being the smartest kid in the class
- Â Â Â Â Justice served in secret
- Â Â Â Â Needle Exchange
- Â Â Â Â 3rd Party Candidates
- Â Â Â Â I Fight Dragons

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Here are the ratings that we gave for each show:20 Hours in America: 1hr 03min 06sec

Peter: Television - 7

Joey: Television - 8

College Kids: 32min 45sec

Peter: Television - 6

Joey: Television - 7

Red Mass: 27min 53sec

Peter: Television - 6

Joey: 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 04:00

Thursday, July 8, 2010

Considering recent events

All of us who write on this blog are familiar with the Harry Potter series. While not all love it, I do want to briefly paraphrase something from it. Dumbledore said at one time that aid will always be given to Hogwarts when it is most needed or called for (or something along those lines). I would like to reiterate to all of you that I, like Dumbledore, will always give whatever aid I can to those of my friends who need it. All you have to do is ask.

Posted by Radar in Personal Entry at 07:32

Wednesday, July 7, 2010

Cloning and Mormonism

I just read *The New York Regional Mormon Singles Halloween Dance: A Memoir* and it is hilarious and a little sad. I was really worried it would bash Mormons too much but it was too honest for that. No hate here, no prejudice, just honest reality. I liked it a lot. As someone who has actually thought about my faith and grappled with its major questions and problems, but have still chosen to be Mormon, I can really relate to her. But at one point of the book a guy the author dated asks her about cloning. It really throws her and she doesn't have a good answer, except that it's not possible to clone a real thinking person. I can see why she thought this but she is wrong. I wrote a response to her: what I would like to tell her in person. It is below the fold. What I'd like to say to Elna Baker. First off, cloning doesn't go against any of your Mormon religious principles. In Genesis it says that God created the world, but the Hebrew word is actually better translated as "organized" the world. Thus God took matter that already existed and sculpted it together into the world as it is. God is not a magician - He did not say "Abracadabra" and POOF! the world appeared. He is a scientist. He is a genius. He organized the world and everything in it using scientific principles. As we delve deeper into physics, astronomy, biology, and other sciences, we merely discover what He always knew. The human body is merely an extension of this. The name of our first father, Adam, literally means "earth." Out of the same components that God used to make the world, He organized our bodies. And when we die, we will "return to dust" -- our bodies will break down into those components once again.

We have, in the pursuit of science, discovered how an egg and sperm interact to begin building a new body. We have developed this knowledge to the point where we can "clone," or faithfully reproduce an organism. Basically, we are learning how to organize a body with available materials. As in all things, we are children groping after the perfect knowledge of our Father, and as time goes by we collectively learn more and more as generations pass. However, this does not mean that we are anywhere near God's level of knowledge and genius. We are like a toddler with a plastic hammer, emulating a parent who can with his own hands build a mansion. This is both naive and wonderful of us, and an indictment of our vast and fabulous eternal potential. Does it make us able to author life? No.

Cloning already exists. Any set of identical twins are genetically the same, just as a clone is genetically identical to its "parent." We have learned, in our childish (but wonderfully inspired) endeavors, to reproduce an organism near-perfectly. However, we can not, and never will, grant the breath of life to that organism. We can build the body out of clay, but we can not usher souls into it. This is a divine power which is too powerful to be given into the hands of inexperienced and naive children. Only God can breathe life into clay. With a set of identical twins, they may look alike, but each body contains a very different soul. Ask any parent who has raised a child--that child's personality and spirit came pre-formed. A preschooler will naturally be shy or gregarious, studious or active, and nothing that the parent tries will change this. I recognize in my four-year old son many traits that I possess myself, and yet he is undoubtedly his own, separate, and firmly formed person. He was born that way. The spirit that God ushered into that little skinny, blonde body is completely unique.

If cloning does progress to humankind, and if a fully formed human is cloned, it doesn't break any rules of religion. We are merely fumbling around with God's building blocks. We create the body out of clay. Will God fill it with a soul? I don't know. I can tell you this: if He does not, that body will not live and breathe and walk around and talk. If He does, then one of God's spirit children has been assigned to that body, just as we all are assigned to a body, and it will live and breathe and laugh and love just like the rest of us. There is nothing we can do to influence this process. If God chooses to put a soul into a cloned body, He will have a great reason to do so. Just because the creation of that body was influenced by His clumsy children doesn't mean that it's not a suitable vessel for one of His precious children.

Cloning may seem like a scary concept, but in truth it is just one of the ways that humans, working together, have tried to elevate our state closer to that of God. Whether or not those who desire to clone a human reach their ultimate goal, God is completely in charge of what follows.

Posted by Daboo in Personal Entry at 13:40

On a Less Rainbow Filled Note

Dig out that World of Warcraft fan fiction guys:

Blizzard Entertainment is proud to present the 2010 Blizzard Global Writing Contest! Once again you're called to action,

to use your wits and strength, to compete for the ultimate prize.

Your weapons? They seem to be but a musty tome and quill*, but know that their power is far stronger than the armies of the Scourge, far craftier than the zerg Swarm, and far mightier than the Burning Hells. Ready your tools, scribe, and prepare for combat with the inky beast called fiction!

Whether you're an accomplished writer or you simply fancy writing as a hobby, we encourage one and all to submit their creative works to our judges of official Blizzard writers and masters of lore. Their eyeballs are glistening and ready, their ocular fortitude intensified by the 2009 Blizzard Global Writing Contest.

Yes, last year's contest was a marathon for the retina. After poring over story and ballad, adventure and romance, the judges ascended from their drool-covered keyboards to proclaim that they had succeeded in their charge: the 2009 winners had been chosen. News delivered, they then heroically passed out.

Do you dare test our judges' optic mettle, laying your ideas and dreams beneath their unblinking gaze? If so, submit a 2,500- to 7,500-word short story written in English and set in the Warcraft, StarCraft, or Diablo universe by August 23, 2010, and earn your chance to visit the Blizzard headquarters and meet the writers and staff behind the lore of Blizzard's games and books.

See below for details about prizes and frequently-asked questions. You can also check out the official rules for more information.

(*Please see the FAQ regarding the submission of musty tomes.)

Award Categories

Grand Prize: The grand prize winner will receive a trip to Blizzard's headquarters in southern California, where you'll meet and eat with the Blizzard writing staff. You'll also receive your choice of a Diablo III "OVERTHROWN" barbarian diorama or a Frostmourne sword.

Runners-up: Seven runners-up will each receive a prize package of the Diablo Archive, the Warcraft Archive, the StarCraft Archive, and the Warcraft: War of the Ancients Archive, all signed by Chris Metzen, the cover artists, and Blizzard's writing staff.

FAQ

Posted by The Mad Giggler in Stories at 08:44

It's a Double Rainbow

For those of you who may have missed this, I present: Crazy Double Rainbow Guy

Posted by The Mad Giggler in Oddities at 08:18