

Another Pointless Reboot

Well... with our free Cinemax preview for as long as it lasts, I have been able to DVR a few movies I have been interested in seeing. I always liked the original *A-Team* tv series but somehow missed the big screen adaptation so that is one movie on my list.

Another is the reboot of the 1984 classic *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. I am soooooo glad that I did not shell out the money to see this senseless remake in the theaters. I thought it would be good for a tv screening, if that. I admit that these movies are about the furthest thing from high art as one can get but I for one expect to go in and be a little entertained and (Heaven forbid) scared. Except for a few bits, this was an almost exact copy of the original. Several of the few killings made me believe that I was watching the original.

The names of the characters (save for our heroine... "Nancy") were changed from the old movie.

I did not like the new Freddy, at all. He sounded quite reminiscent of Christian Bale's Batman growling. The finger-knives did not screech giving the nails across the blackboard effect. Instead, they produced sparks as they glided over the steel pipes of the boiler room. I also did not like the addition of Mr. Krugger's complete backstory. It painted him to be nothing more than a pedophile who was hunted down by a group of "justice seeking" parents and incinerated. OK... so he was in the old movie as well but to actually see it played out? Not sure of the intent of the backstory but it did nothing to endear itself.

All in all, this masterpiece only almost PUT me to sleep without any fear of the boogymen slicing me to bits. Should have stuck with *The A-Team*.

Trips to Florida and vehicle problems

I just returned from a wonderful visit to Florida. I enjoyed my time with my family, and got to meet the newest member of said family. Even though I've only been gone a few days, I miss them all.

I would like to know why I always seem to have problems with my truck on the way home. It seems like every time I've travelled that road something bad happens to my truck. Stones hitting the windshield, battery going bad, problems with the driver's side window and finally some engine problems. This coincidence just about doubles the cost of each trip.

This trip it was a problem with acceleration. I had hoped that it was only bad gasoline, but that was not the cause. Final cost on this has yet to be realized, since they still have my truck in the shop. It seems like I'm waiting for parts again.

I guess I really shouldn't complain too much. That truck and I have been through a lot together. After almost 7 years and 196000 miles, I still like that truck. As far as vehicles go, it has been one of my better investments. I should be able to get at least another 50,000 or so on it. I sure hope so.

Anyway, back to the thoughts on my trip. I was able to spend some time with my family both in Florida and in South Carolina. I am fortunate that my sister lives halfway between Florida and Ohio. This gives me an opportunity to visit my big sister a little more often than I usually would. Family is very important to me and any time I can spend with sisters, children and grandchildren is a big plus in my book.

In General...

Here we are in the middle of August already, how did that happen? I know how July flew by for me since most of it was spent traveling, but where the heck has the beginning of August gone?

I am 30 weeks + a few days pregnant. I talked to the doctor yesterday and am most likely going to have the baby at 39 weeks (planned cesarean), so there is not too much time left of this pregnancy – for that, I am mostly glad! I cannot wait to meet little Luke! Plus I'm sick of the soreness, the nausea, the moodiness, and all that good stuff. I just hope that I turn back into a normal person again because right now it seems like an impossibility. I can't remember my life before I was pregnant – did I really have enough energy to function every day? Sure don't now, but most days, I can fake it but that is exhausting in itself.

I wrote a few posts ago about making important decisions and about doors of opportunity opening for us. For certain things, we are still praying, being patient, and waiting to see what God's plan is for us right now. In the meantime, we did reach one decision about a lifestyle change for our family, and we are very excited to get started. Close family already knows what this is about, but do I want to reveal it to others for the first time in a blog? I'm not sure... But either way, we are very excited about it, and it's been a lot of fun already to begin this journey. Just another thing to look forward to this fall!

Tonight is the last night of our Wednesday night Bible study, and it's been great to make new friends and to get to know these families. I am looking forward to having 3 (THREE!!)

free Wednesday nights for our family once the class is over and before youth group starts again. And how is this for irony? I wrote the preceding paragraphs, saved it as a draft, then did lunch with the kids before coming back to it. During lunch, I checked the mail and I found postcards notifying us of youth group leader training meetings on TWO of my THREE free Wednesdays. Sigh. I need to be happy with that one free evening, but my human nature disappoints me because I almost had 3 free Wednesdays instead of one... oh well, such is life. Wednesday nights are fun anyway; I just wish I had more energy to enjoy them.

My Monday morning Bible study is drawing to a close also – that one I will really miss. I've become close with the other ladies in my class, and it's been so great to get to know them and learn about the similarities and the differences in our lives and journeys in our relationships with Christ. I will even miss the 5 hours a week of homework – it was SO incredibly valuable and eye-opening for me to spend this time with God's word. If I weren't taking on so much this fall, I would definitely sign up for another one. Maybe in the spring or next summer...

Seen some movies lately, as usual – I think it's probably mine and Hubby's favorite thing to do together, snuggle and watch movies after long days of work and tending the kids. I had heard that the new Planet of the Apes movie was supposed to be good, so we saw that, but I was disappointed. It was okay, but I was hoping for less ape, more planet – meaning, the movie ended just as the apes were about to take over. I would have liked to see their rise to power as they actually take over the planet. Maybe that's going to be saved for the next movie? The movie was entertaining, but there was a little too much animal cruelty and not enough payoff – seeing the apes take over the planet – for having to watch all that animal cruelty. Of course the creatures were CGI so you know none of them were hurt during filming and it was just a movie, but

that doesn't mean in my spare time I want to sit and watch that and think about what goes on in animal testing labs.

We haven't visited the Redbox in a while, mostly because we had seen many of the movies they had (we watch a lot of movies!). But Hubby ventured out last night and picked out Cedar Rapids, a fun (a bit more vulgar than I usually like, but interesting just the same) movie about insurance salesmen starring Ed Helms (Andy Bernard from The Office; he's also in the Hangover movies). It was a different kind of movie, and we both enjoyed it.

That's about it for now... I just had the opportunity to sit and blog for awhile – I MADE the opportunity, actually – because I just HAD to today. I've had this awful headache that's been lodged behind my left eye for a few days now, and running around chasing kids again was just too much for today. And I do need to sit more. For someone in my condition, I really think I should be resting more, but the nature of the busyness in our household makes it an impossibility. I'm finding it quite a challenge to take good care of myself, finding time to eat right to take care of my anemia and gestational diabetes and all that stuff. It's just too hard to put myself first when I have 4 little ones to take care of and Hubby has his own full plate with work as well. I hate to complain about physical stuff, but I really need to feel better soon.

Take A Sad Song And Make It Better

I was very honored to join with the church choir this morning

as we said farewell to one of our own. Mark lost his long battle with the nasty "c" word this past week. I first learned of his condition almost half a year ago when I began my own recuperation. Mark's 59 years (while only a blink of an eye) were lived with love, hard work, and a lot of fun.

Until being struck by the illness, he and Barb faithfully climbed the steps to join us on the Sunday mornings we sang at services. He also was an avid classic car enthusiast and the procession outside church this morning was a testament to that (I will not display my ignorance and even attempt to name the makes and models). He was also a passionate music fan. In years past, Mark and a select group of gentlemen made up Stevie and the Studebakers (a 50's-60s doo-wop group). Not entirely sure what became of the group (and their barbershop equivalent, The Edgertones) but they were great fun to watch.

I was still young in their heyday.

Father Art... in the short time he has presided over our masses, he has really endeared himself to the congregation. His message today was full of meaning and a bit of laughter as they have been for the last month or two. He went to a corner and pulled out his 1951 "Something-or-other" saxophone and mashed together three classic 60s tunes ("Blue Moon," "Mbube," and "Hey Jude"), the first two of which had been performed by the Studebakers. The Beatles hit was Mark and Barb's "song." Although Mark and Father Art only knew each other a short time, they are both the same age and were born in the same era. Never pretending to know him anymore than he did, Father described a man who really took "sad songs and made them better." Later, the sax joined the organ and choir for "How Great Thou Art."

The choir sang songs hand picked by Barb (and Mark I am sure) including "Oh, Holy Night." You may ask why in the middle of August one would choose to have a Christmas carol sang at a funeral. I have been honored to have attended two in which the untraditional seemed traditional. Another tribute to

Mark's legacy was the number of choir members who sang this morning. Usually, we have no more than ten. We had double that and more today, even some from a neighboring parish.

Another good guy to join the heavenly chorus. May we all strive to make our own sad songs better.

Have to Watch Out for the Old Ones

Never a dull moment at a small four-aisle grocery! Receiving prank phone calls, nasty notes from the boss telling you that you do nothing, and co-workers who (after 6 months on the job) still do not know what to do. I thought I would help these two along by leaving polite notes reminding them of what needs to be done while they are working. For the most part, they helped and kept those who needed a little nudge busy. That is until last night when I worked a whopping 4 hours and had a list of duties that I would normally need a full day to accomplish plus the addendum that the helpful notes I had been leaving "Will stop!" So much for being helpful.

Today, no note... the boss left before I arrived at noon leaving one person in the store (at noon?!). I was able to get sooooo much more done than any of her laundry lists demand me to do.

How long have I worked in retail?! My leg is feeling SOOO much better... maybe not 100%, but I "See the light at the end of the tunnel!" Of course, the last hour arrived leaving me there all alone because the other person leaves an hour before closing(never understood this). Of course, the last hour is one of the busiest but somehow, I did get the coolers straightened and everything ready to lock up.

And now... to the title of my post. Around 8:15 a female who is getting on in years, came into the store and purchased a good quantity of groceries. I offered to help her out; however (like so many), she pushed the cart outside. A short time later, after I realized she was not bringing the cart back, I went outside and noticed a surprise. Inside the cart, I discovered a squarish green bottle and my jaw dropped as I read the *Jagermeister* label. No wonder she wanted to push the cart out herself (not that I'm 100% sure that it was hers). And noooooo... it was not mine. Warfarin and alcohol do not mix. I showed a customer who I know well the bottle and we had a good laugh. I took the bottle and left a note on the desk. This might backfire as I may get yet another note about leaving notes.

A Smurfin' Good Time

I was so pleasantly surprised by how much my family liked the new Smurf movie that I was inspired to write a short review. Going in, I thought I would hate the movie because it didn't look funny. And I was a fan of the Smurfs as a kid, so not only did the movie look stupid, but I couldn't figure out why it took place in our realm rather than the Smurf's realm – wouldn't fans of the little blue mystical creatures, kids, and everyone else want to see Smurf village on the big screen?

Don't worry, we get to see Smurf village, and it's pretty cool. Especially the scene where Gargamel breaks in!! Ok, so I guess that's kind of a spoiler, sorry about that... but this is a kid's movie we're talking about. And kid's movie it is – my kids all really liked it (ages 11, 7, 4 and 3). The Smurfs have screen time for pretty much 100% of the movie, and there aren't any boring scenes with a lot of dialogue – these tend

to lose the attention of kids. There are some Smurfy jokes – in this case I’m using “Smurfy” to describe inside jokes written for fans of the Smurfs from decades ago. Much like the Brady Bunch movies are actually enjoyable parodies of the hit tv show and poke fun at it, The Smurfs movie has gags about such shout-outs to the 80s cartoon as their names reflecting their personalities (a hilarious joke in the movie that I’m still chuckling about), cracks about how Smurfette always wears the same dress (although more than one joke about this was overdoing it and took the humor away), and multiple references to creator Peyo.



(the Smurfs as I knew and loved them)

From the previews, I thought Gargamel was going to be a bumbling bafoon, one of these over-the-top characters who might be ruined by the actor portraying him as he flailed around aimlessly in a ridiculous looking costume. But Gargamel as a live person in today’s New York City was actually quite entertaining and even hilarious at times (If you grew up watching the Smurf cartoon like I did, watch for the way Hank Azaria runs as he portrays Gargamel – he imitates the cartoon character so well that it made me laugh out loud!). I especially liked the inclusion of the little details from the cartoon – like seeing the Smurf cages that Gargamel always had lying in wait for when he finally caught the little guys. There was backstory explained; everyone knows by now that Smurfette was actually created by Gargamel

as Smurf bait, right? The story line was cheesy but not unbearable even while it made several futile attempts at teaching positive life lessons to kids in the audience. I could have done without the Katy Perry song reference (is “I Kissed a Girl” really a song for kids? I’ve never heard the song and don’t want to know), and Katy Perry as Smurfette’s voice didn’t really give any personality to the character anyhow – she was just a girl Smurf and nothing like her character in the cartoon. Clumsy Smurf on the other hand, was a perfect 3d replica of his cartoon counterpart – both in voice and graphics. I did stop watching the Smurfs sometime after the Smurf cousins (Smurflings) came in, so I have no idea where Gutsy Smurf came from (seems to be a brave Scottish Smurf complete with red sideburns and a kilt?). I would have liked to see my personal favorite Smurf, Jokey, get more screen time in the movie. On that subject, I don’t understand why the group of 6 Smurfs with the most screen time (the ones who get to go to NY) did not include such series regulars as Jokey, Greedy, Handy, Vanity or Hefty. Actually, I didn’t see those Smurfs at all, but then again, we arrived late to the movie so maybe I missed their appearances. The production staff also did an excellent job of utilizing aspects of modern technology to make funny jokes involving the Smurfs. Case in point: see the wikipedia reference.



(My favorite Smurf, Jokey)

Overall, Smurfs was an entertaining film for the entire family – and there was a huge gap between my low expectations and my high level of enjoyment of this cute movie! A must-see for anyone who has kids to take to a movie – bonus if you are a Smurf fan!

One more note – here is a list of characters I would like to

see in the sequel:

Hogatha, Johan and Peewit, Clockwork Smurf, and Baby Smurf.
But please, NO SMURFLINGS!!

And oh yeah... I did a search on my own blog to see if I had written about the I'm a Pink Toothbrush song from the Smurf's 1979 album. Turns out, I did include it in a [blog post that I had written in March 2010](#), and my kids (and me still!) are big fans of this adorable tune. It was really fun to read about my speculations on the Smurf movie in this blog post given the limited info I had that time on this "in production" project! (if you read it, you should know that Quentin Tarentino was originally cast as Brainy Smurf, but both actor and studio are quiet on why the pairing did not work out...) So apparently I HAD heard of Gutsy Smurf – and wrote about it in my own blog a year and a half ago!



(modern Smurfs from the 2011 movie)