Created in the cloud with Saaspose.Words. http://saaspose.com

# If I Didn't Know Any Better...

I’d think these are the same person:

The Cowardly Lion, fictional movie character, 1939

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/11/cowardly-lion.jpg)Â Â

Drew Peterson, suspected wife murderer, 2008

Â Â Â Â  [](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/11/drew-peterson.jpg)

I got an email a few months ago comparing a bunch of people’sÂ facesÂ to other pictures.Â  It was funny to see the resemblance between people you wouldn’t have otherwise thought about – like the two pictured above.

For those of you who don’t know, Drew Peterson is a former police officerÂ who lives in the suburbs of Chicago.Â  He is somewhat of a celebrity these days because his young 4th wife Stacy went missing over a year ago.Â  During the search for her, his 3rd wife’s body was exhumed and another autopsy was performed.Â Â Following this autopsy, they changedÂ the 3rd wife’sÂ cause of death from accidental drowning to homicide.Â  This and other aspects of this case always point to Drew being responsible for some sort of foul play on Stacy.Â  The man is very smug, and some of the things he’s said to the media are shockingly rude and callous toward Stacy.Â  He is an infamous jerk, and I think he actually likes the public and media attention.Â  I’ve take an interest in the case because I’m originally from the area where they lived, and during the national coverage of this case, I follow along, knowing the towns and areas they’re talking about.Â  Drew was on the Dr. Phil show the other day, and he was smug as ever…Â  He is in court currently on a weapons charge, and I got the idea to compare his picture to the cowardly lion when someone posted a comment on the story on dailyherald.com – good observation!Â  If I can dig out that original email comparing the pictures, I should post it on my blog and add these two to the email!

### Comments

# Changeling

Wow.Â  What a great film…Â  and I don’t think I’ve been able to say that since I saw The Orphanage months ago.Â  We ventured over to the Toledo suburbs yesterday for date night to see [Changeling](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0824747/) at the nice theater since we still had a free pass leftover from a movie where they had technical issues.Â  It was a long drive (saw 3 overturned semisÂ in the ditches ofÂ the Ohio turnpike just in the almost 40 miles we use it, what’s up with that?Â  Has it really been that windy the past few days?), but well worth the long drive since our local theaters didn’t have anything good playing.Â  There’s also great food in the Toledo area, and we went out to dinner at Ruby Tuesday’s…Â  that is good food for us – you should try moving to Bufu; it really makes you appreciate places like Ruby Tuesday’s, Olive Garden, etc. in a whole new light when you don’t get to have them very often.Â  We wanted to try a place that has Mediterranean foodÂ which was recommended by justj, a fellow tangents.org blogger, but we figured we’d wait until a time when he could join us.

Changeling is a “period thriller”; the period being 1928-1935.Â  The movie is based on the true story of Christine Collins, a single working momÂ whose 9-year-old son goes missing.Â  What followsÂ is the tale of one woman’s plight as she seeks justice in an unjust world where women don’t even really have aÂ voice.Â  I’m going to have to stop giving the plot synopsis there, however, because it was so great for me to watch the film only knowing about it what I’ve shared with you – I recommend you don’t research the story until afterÂ you see the movie.Â  I didn’t know the course the events would take, even though it’s really easy to find out since it’s based on a true story – it probably stays closer to the actual events than do most movies based upon true stories.Â  After you watch the movie, you can look up the real story and see how close they were, and if you’re like me, you’ll wonder why they changed and left out the things they did in the movie.

The acting is great, the cinematography isÂ breathtaking, and the direction ([Clint Eastwood](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000142/))Â is incredible.Â  The movieÂ really gives you a vision of what everyday life might have been like in 1928.Â  [Angelina Jolie](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001401/) is a really good actress – I can’t stand all of theÂ publicity stunts she pulls overÂ in her personal life, but as an actress, she’s proven herself with this film alone.Â  [Amy Ryan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0752407/) (you might recognize her as Holly from The Office – need her back in the Office though!) is also amazing in this movie, and I’ll say the same for [John Malkovich](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000518/) and [Jeffrey Donovan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0232998/), who played the villian you loved to hate.Â  The movie is lengthy at 2 hours and 20 minutes, but the time flies by as the plot unravels.Â  I was never bored, never lost, and thoroughly entertained the entire time.Â  Changeling has a story to tell, and its story is riveting, as is the movie.Â  I highly recommend this movie!!!

### Comments

**Morat’s Blog » Telephone Operators On Skates?**[...] taylhis has already given an excellent synop, I will mention the pains taken in the creating of late [...]  
**jamiahsh**It looks good, I was going to say... isn't that Eastwood's new directing flick. Sorry, but I don't think Holly is coming back to the office anytime soon :(

# Call Of Cthulu

In the past few months, I’ve had the opportunity to get involved in a role playing game – sort of like Dungeons and Dragons, I’m told.Â  This one was called “Call of Cthulu”, and we played it on two separate Saturdays for about 5 hours each.Â  We began by choosing a character, and then we used the dice to determine many different details of our characters; like their income, height, strength, looks, smarts, etc.Â  Along the journey, we made decisions about where to go and who to speak to – that sort of thing.Â  Sometimes the roll of the dice would help make decisions, and sometimes we were left to our own judgement.Â  Overall, it was a really fun experience, although not a hobby I could pick up right now because it’s not something you can do while kids are around.Â  I’m lucky I found the time to put the hours into this game that I did.Â  But it was fun, and the guy who ran it wrote up the entire thing novel-style.Â  So here it is, from the website:  
<http://www.yogsothoth.com/modules.phpname=Journal&file=search&bywhat=aid&exact=1&forwhat=Max_Writer>  
If you go to the site, the journal entries concerning our game are called “The Haunter in the Hills”, and there are 4 parts total.Â  Here is the journal in its entirety:

Â

The Haunter in the Hills 1  
by: Max\_Writer  
Posted on: 10-08-2008 @ 04:44 pm  
Â

A quick note needs to be added before this journal entry.

The Haunter in the Hills (my title) appeared in the appendix of the 3rd Edition Call of Câ€™thulhu boxed set as a scenario vignette for a beginning scenario for a campaign. In preparing to run a group of people who had never before played Call of Câ€™thulhu, I stumbled across it and was intrigued by it. Unfortunately, though the introduction was very solid, there were no details past the sheriffâ€™s fate. I thought this a great way to get characters together, so I took it upon myself to get a scenario together.

Moretown and Dr. Haylett are both real, as is the article by the Honorable D. P. THOMPSON of Montpelier. The Mad River Valley exists and the roads that the investigators are on are also real and, I assume, were there in 1925.

This is my first scenario for Call of Câ€™thulhu (up to now, Iâ€™ve used published scenarios) and I hope you enjoy the story that came from it. This is merely part one as the investigators have not yet solved it. Iâ€™m hoping to run again in a month or so for this group.

Enjoy …  
Monday, October 6, 2008

(After playing the original Call of Câ€™thulhu scenario â€œHaunter in the Hillsâ€ from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday with Kim, Chris, Lisa, Crystal, and John).

In September of 1925, an unsettling event occurred which would forever change the lives of five people. This is their story.

It was a cool Autumn Saturday on that fateful September 19, 1925. A tour bus wound along a narrow hillside road in Vermont. Though the fall foliage was beautiful, the cast of the day had dulled and the once jovial passengers were silent.

They were all from Boston though none of them knew each other.

Professor Katie Brooks was a tall, slim middle-aged woman, and, if not exactly attractive, was not unattractive either. She had shoulder-length hair that was a respectable, if not a striking, brown. She wore glasses and a gray menâ€™s hat and a tan wool sweater. She wore trousers as well and carried a good-sized purse. She was a Professor of Science at Radcliffe.

Charles Puccano was skinny and of average height. He had dark hair and eyes and wore a nice suit though his shoes were old and well-used. He wore a baseball cap and appeared to be in his 20s. Though he was not handsome, his hair was perfectly cut and he read a newspaper. He was glad to be taking a day off from his barbershop. A brand new Kodak camera sat on the seat next to him. Heâ€™d purchased it especially for the trip.

Grace Oâ€™Conner was very tall and slim as well. She had frizzy red hair and lots of freckles. She wore a dress with a floral pattern and nothing about her said she worked at the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston.

Claire McAdams was a tall, curvy woman. She had blonde hair and blue eyes and though she was not particularly pretty, she carried herself with a grace that bespoke the stage. The talent agent was wearing a pink dress suit and appeared to be very young.

Finally, Jason Carthage was a short slim man in a fine suit and a bowler. He was also blonde and had green eyes that looked over the other passengers. He carried a fine walking stick and wore a dark suit. He was also middle-aged.

The tour bus was primitively arranged. There were narrow seats for about 20 passengers arranged on each side of the central isle. The windows had velvet curtains, a little touch of luxury drawn back by straps to let in the daylight. All of the passenger wore coats as the bus wasnâ€™t heated and all of them had long been aware that there was no luxury in the suspension of the bus. Every rut was like a land mine and some of them had headaches.

The day trip up to Montpelier, Vermont, included a nightâ€™s stay at a local hotel and that evening and Sunday morning to tour the city and look at the changing leaves of Vermont. Charles Puccano had saved up all year for the trip, his barbershop not having done great business in 1925.

The driver, old Hiram Sikes, was the one source of comfort in the pioneering ritual of educational travel. Sikesâ€™ quick wit and thorough knowledge of the country had made the bumps and sways of the pitiful roads into something at least memorable if not comfortable. Everyone was looking forward to getting to Montpelier but everyone was glad they made the trip with Hiram.

In a town called Northfield Falls, they came to a detour sign. Hiram said that because of the detour, the trip would be a a half hour or so longer. He turned the bus down the detour, a narrow road that ran between the Vermont hills.

As the afternoon darkened and got more chilly, Hiram turned more and more to jokes about his arthritis.

Ten minutes later, in a saddle between two hills, the bus stopped without warning or symptom. Advising the tourists that they may as well get out and stretch their legs, Hiram pulled out a leather-wrapped package from beneath his seat and left the bus.

Puccano followed him and saw that the package was actually a tool kit filled with automotive tools. Hiram laid it out on the fender and opened the hood. He got to work on the engine while Puccano watched for a few moments before he went back to his seat on the bus and opened up his newspaper again.

Oâ€™Conner got off the bus and lit a cigarette, looking at the surrounding wooded mountains. Claire McAdams joined her and chatted with her, then went back onto the bus herself.

To the north was a beautiful prospect of fall trees and a little town a few miles away. To the south was an unusual grove of flaming red birches.

Carthage left the bus with his binoculars and headed up one of the nearby hills. He found a clear spot and looked at the nearby town. It appeared to be a very small village with little more than a single road running through it. He could see a narrow river running behind the village.

Professor Brooks left the bus with her own camera and headed towards the flaming red birches. She had never seen their like before. She knew that the color wouldnâ€™t show up on film but still thought it might be worth a picture.

She was several hundred yards from the others when she entered the birches and looked around, amazed at the color of the leaves. She finally looked down and saw the thing on the ground ahead.

It was at least as large as a man, possibly larger, and squirmed on the ground though it appeared to have large wings of some kind of membrane pulled tight between protuberances of thin bone. The pink, blasphemous thing seemed to be composed of pyramided, fleshing rings and was covered with antenna or projectiles of some kind where the head should be. It didnâ€™t have an kind of discernible face but did have many sets of paired appendages.

Professor Brooks gasped and turned and ran away as fast as she could.

\* \* \*

The others were still just loitering around or on the bus when the tall woman dressed as a man came running back like something terrible was chasing her. She called out for them to leave, to get out of there. Puccano left the bus as she ran up.

â€œSettle down!â€ Puccano told the woman. â€œTell us what you saw.â€

Professor Brooks was out of breath and muttering, barely coherent.

â€œIt was this … it was this … it was this …â€ she gibbered.

Carthage, down the road, was walking back, having heard the commotion. Sikes had stopped his work on the engine of the bus.

â€œLots of feet,â€ Brooks said. â€œAnd a face with … no face. Itâ€™s big. Itâ€™s big.â€

â€œDid you ever think of going into acting?â€ McAdams asked, peeking out of one of the open windows on the bus.

Puccano gave her a look.

â€œItâ€™s big!â€ Brooks said again.

â€œWhere was it?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œI donâ€™t know,â€ Brooks said. â€œItâ€™s big. Itâ€™s big.â€

As Carthage approached, the others looked at each other.

â€œWas it a tree?â€ McAdams quipped from the window.

Brooks just glared at her.

â€œNo, it wasnâ€™t a tree!â€ she yelled. â€œA tree doesnâ€™t have this big pink thing on it and no face! It was unnatural.â€

â€œRight,â€ McAdams said doubtfully.

â€œGo look!â€ Brooks shouted at her.

â€œNo wonder I couldnâ€™t find anythingâ€”â€ Hiram said. He stopped speaking suddenly and then looked at his passengers.

â€œIâ€™ll go look,â€ Puccano said.

â€œWhoa, whoa whoa,â€ Hiram said. â€œLook, Iâ€™m going to have to ask all you folks to get back on the bus.â€

â€œFine by me!â€ Brooks said, heading onto the vehicle.

â€œThereâ€™s a thing out there!â€ Puccano said.

â€œI know, I just need you stay on the bus,â€ Hiram said. â€œIâ€™m going to need to investigate. All you people are my responsibility and I need you to get back on the bus.â€

â€œI want to go with you!â€ Puccano said.

Hiram was gathering up his tools. He rolled up the tool kit and closed the hood of the bus.

â€œI canâ€™t take you sir,â€ Hiram said. â€œIâ€™ve … everyone hereâ€™s my responsibility and thatâ€™s my fault. Iâ€™m asking you just please, please get back on the bus.â€

â€œIâ€™d like to go with you,â€ Puccano said.

â€œI understand that sir butâ€”â€ Hiram said.

Carthage was climbing back on the bus as well.

â€œIf you can just wait here, I wonâ€™t be long,â€ Hiram said. â€œI promise.â€

â€œHurry,â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œIâ€™m giving you two minutes and them Iâ€™m coming,â€ Puccano said.

â€œJust please stay on the bus,â€ Hiram said, herding them all back onto the bus.

He put the tools back on his seat. He reached under the seat and took something out, tucking it into his shirt. Only a few of them noticed that it was a revolver.

Carthage saw it.

â€œDo you need some help sir?â€ he asked.

He turned the handle on his cane and lifted it to reveal a sword blade within.

â€œUh … thank you sir,â€ Hiram said. â€œBut please just stay on the bus.â€

As they got back on the bus, they all noticed that Professor Brooks seemed very anxious and kept looking around with wild eyes.

â€œWas it some kind of animal?â€ McAdams asked the nervous woman.

â€œWas it chasing you?â€ Puccano asked her. â€œWas it coming after you?â€

â€œI donâ€™t know,â€ she replied. â€œIt was squirming on the ground and it was unlike anything Iâ€™ve ever seen in my life.â€

â€œHow big was it?â€ Carthage asked.

â€œBig,â€ Professor Brooks replied.

Puccano had gone down onto the running board of the bus and was looking out the open door towards the woods where Sikes had disappeared. The shadows continued to lengthen in the gloomy afternoon.

â€œIt was big,â€ Professor Brooks said again.

â€œAnd pink,â€ McAdams said with a frown.

â€œPink,â€ Brooks nodded. She stared blankly at the woman a moment. â€œI donâ€™t like pink either but it was pink.â€

â€œI like pink,â€ McAdams said, gesturing at her pink dress.

Professor Brooks ignored the comment and looked out of the window.

â€œWhere is the driver?â€ she said. â€œCan we go?â€

She kept glancing nervously back at the grove of flaming red birch trees. She continually asked if they could go and where the bus driver was.

Jason Carthage got out of the bus, taking the crank with him, and tried to get the engine started. It wouldnâ€™t turn over.

â€œWeâ€™ll give him some time,â€ he said to the others when he got back on the bus.

He drew out his binoculars and looked towards the unusual-looking grove of flaming red birches.

Birches turn yellow in the fall, donâ€™t they? he thought.

Puccano looked at the woods where Sikes had disappeared and then at his watch.

â€œItâ€™s been two minutes,â€ he said. â€œIâ€™m going to go look for him.â€

He drew out a .38 revolver from his jacket pocket and showed it to the others.

â€œWell, he took a gun with him too,â€ McAdams said.

â€œHe did?â€ Puccano asked.

He hadnâ€™t seen that.

â€œYeah,â€ McAdams replied.

Carthage nodded.

â€œHeâ€™s probably fine,â€ McAdams said. â€œI havenâ€™t heard any gunshots.â€

â€œWell, Iâ€™ll back him up,â€ Puccano said.

â€œWhat if shoots you?â€ McAdams asked.

The man just frowned at her.

â€œYou donâ€™t want to go down there,â€ Professor Brooks said to Puccano.

â€œHow big is this thing?â€ Puccano asked her.

â€œBig!â€

â€œBigger than a person?â€

â€œBigger than me, yes!â€

â€œHow fast was it moving?â€

â€œI donâ€™t know.â€

â€œWas it moving?â€

â€œIt was moving across the … it wasâ€”â€

â€œHow many feet would you say it had?â€

â€œLots.â€

â€œHundreds?â€

â€œLots. I donâ€™t know, I didnâ€™t really take the time to count them all, okay? It was lots.â€

â€œPink?â€

â€œPink. Pink. Do you see him yet? Can we go? Letâ€™s just go.â€

Puccano stepped off the bus.

â€œNo no!â€ Professor Brooks said. â€œI meant all of us.â€

Puccano disappeared into the forest where heâ€™d seen Sikes go. Carthage got off the bus with the hand crank and tried to crank the engine again without luck.

\* \* \*

Puccano saw no sign of the older man and after looking for a short time, he returned to the bus. He couldnâ€™t shake the feeling that something was watching him. He found the other man who had been a passenger on the bus outside when he returned.

â€œMr. … uh …â€ Carthage said.

â€œPuccano,â€ Puccano said. â€œCharles Puccano.â€

â€œCharles, Iâ€™m Jason Carthage,â€ Cartage said, shaking his hand. â€œI tried to start the bus and it wouldnâ€™t turn over.â€

Puccano asked what Carthage did for a living and learned he was a museum curator with the Boston Museum of Art. He told Puccano that as they got back on the bus. The woman whoâ€™d seen the thing turned to him as he said it.

â€œKatie Brooks,â€ she said, holding out a hand. â€œScience Department at Radcliffe.â€

Puccano introduced himself to her as well, telling her to call him Charlie.

â€œClaire McAdams!â€ Claire said. â€œHi.â€

â€œMy name is Grace,â€ Grace said. â€œGrace Oâ€™Conner.â€

Carthage told them there was a town a couple of miles down the road he thought. Brooks was all for going there. Puccano asked if they should take a look at the engine. He grabbed the leather bound tools off the seat and headed out to look examine it with Carthage. They could find nothing wrong with it.

When he and Carthage came back into the bus, they discussed leaving the vehicle and heading for the small town Carthage had seen in the distance. Professor Brooks seemed very nervous about leaving the bus.

â€œAre you leaving the bus too?â€ she asked Carthage.

â€œI donâ€™t know yet,â€ the man replied, thinking.

He noted that whatever happened, they should probably all stay together.

â€œKatie,â€ Puccano said. â€œIs it Katie?â€

â€œYes,â€ Professor Brooks replied.

â€œI say we get out of the bus,â€ Puccano went on. â€œWe stick together. I have a revolver.â€ He turned to Carthage. â€œYou have a sword. Do we have any other weapons?â€

â€œWhat about the driver?â€ Professor Brooks said quietly.

The others looked at each other.

â€œWe canâ€™t leave him down here,â€ Brooks said.

â€œHe left us here,â€ McAdams said.

They talked about it for a few minutes and decided to leave a note. Oâ€™Conner said sheâ€™d write it and Puccano told Brooks there was nothing they could do there. Carthage pointed out there was no food on the bus or rest rooms.

â€œHow far away is that town?â€ Puccano said. â€œTwo miles away?â€

â€œAs the crow flies,â€ Carthage pointed out. â€œIt could be farther. I donâ€™t know how these mountain roads go.â€

As Oâ€™Conner was finishing the note and they were preparing to leave the bus, they suddenly saw Hiram up the road, just standing in the middle of the road and looking down at the bus. Puccano went down to the running board.

â€œHiram!â€ he called.

The old man waved at them.

â€œAre you okay?â€ Puccano yelled.

â€œStart the bus and follow me!â€ the man yelled back.

His voice sounded strange, almost like his teeth were chattering.

â€œWe canâ€™t get it started!â€ Puccano yelled back.

Hiram just waved for them to head that way.

â€œWell, thatâ€™s kind of strange,â€ McAdams said.

Carthage picked up the crank and went out in front of the bus. He cranked it and the engine roared to life. Hiram headed further up the road where it curved to the right and was quickly lost to sight.

â€œJason, you know how to drive?â€ Puccano said.

Carthage had boarded the bus and looked over the various levers and pedals.

â€œWhy donâ€™t you drive us?â€ Puccano said.

The man shrugged his shoulders and put the bus into gear. He started to drive them down the road and as they went around the curve, they all saw the old man sprawled in the road in front of the bus. Carthage brought the bus to a stop.

â€œJason, you want to come with me?â€ Puccano said, opening the bus door.

â€œUh … we just saw him … thereâ€”â€ Carthage said.

â€œHeâ€™s lying in the road,â€ Puccano said.

He climbed off the bus as Carthage engaged the parking brake and took the bus out of gear.

â€œWe just saw him,â€ Carthage said, going after Puccano. â€œThis is strange.â€

Oâ€™Conner also got off the bus, telling Carthage she had some first aid skills.

Puccano rolled the old man over and Oâ€™Conner checked for a pulse at his wrist and his throat.

Sikes was dead.

â€œYe gods,â€ Carthage said.

Puccano searched the man for the revolver the others had said theyâ€™d seen him take with him. He didnâ€™t appear to be armed.

McAdams stuck her head out of the bus door.

â€œWhatâ€™s going on?â€ she called.

â€œHeâ€™s dead!â€ Carthage called back.

â€œWhy donâ€™t you ladies come out here!â€ Puccano called.

â€œNo!â€ Carthage called. â€œStay on the bus!â€

Puccano gave him a look as the woman pulled her head back into the window. Carthage and Puccano more closely examined the body and found that it was unusually cold and stiff.

â€œIt feels like heâ€™s been dead for a while,â€ Puccano said.

McAdams called to them to come back to the bus.

â€œMaybe we could go to that little town and get some help,â€ she said from the window.

There was some discussion of leaving the body. The women didnâ€™t want to put the body on the bus but the men thought they should bring it with them. In the end, Puccano and Carthage carried Sikesâ€™ body back to the bus and put it in the back. They found a blanket to put over it.

Carthage put the bus in gear and headed down the road. They came to another detour sign and he followed it back to the main road. It was less than a half our later when they spotted another automobile coming from the other direction. The Model T appeared to be a police vehicle and Carthage pulled the bus off the side of the road and then leapt out and waved the police officer down.

The auto pulled over and they could see that the side was marked â€œWashington County Sheriffâ€™s Office.â€ The man who got out was solidly build and wore a brown uniform and a star. He was armed with a revolver on his hip.

â€œWeâ€™ve been looking for you folks,â€ he said. â€œNoticed you were late. Whereâ€™s Hiram?â€

â€œHeâ€™s … I think dead,â€ Carthage told the sheriff.

They showed the man Hiramâ€™s dead body and he examined it. When he asked what happened, Carthage tried to explain.

â€œShe saw something,â€ he said, pointing to Professor Brooks. â€œHiram went out to investigate. He said to start the bus and waved us ahead. We pulled around the curve. He was there in the middle of the road.â€

â€œFelt like heâ€™d been dead for hours,â€ Puccano put in.

â€œWhat was he investigating?â€ the sheriff asked.

â€œWhatever she said she saw,â€ Carthage said.

Professor Brooks was somewhat hesitant to explain but told him sheâ€™d seen a big pink â€œthingâ€ moving around a copse of big, red birch trees. The sheriff seemed to take her claims very seriously.

â€œSo, she sees this thing,â€ Puccano said. â€œHiram goes to investigate.â€

â€œHe takes a gun with him,â€ McAdams put in.

â€œWe try to start the bus, it wonâ€™t start,â€ Puccano went on. â€œHe calls us over, says â€˜Start the bus.â€™ It starts up, we go over to him, heâ€™s dead. Feels like heâ€™s been dead for hours.â€

The sheriff scratched his head. Then he told them he needed them to stay on the bus. He found out who was driving and asked Carthage to follow him back to Montpelier. He got off the bus, turned his automobile around, then led them back to Montpelier, leading them to what appeared to be a jail.

The sheriff asked them to wait on the bus as he had to make a telephone call. He left but within a half hour, a Cadillac pulled up and a man in a fine black suit carrying a medical bag arrived at the sheriffâ€™s office. He and the sheriff examined the body. The two men looked at each other and talked quietly.

Only Puccano wasnâ€™t listening to them. He had moved to the front of the bus and was certain that they were all going to get blamed for Sikesâ€™ death. The others heard the two men conferring. The sheriff told the other man that it had to be handled like the rest. The other man nodded and wrote â€œheart attackâ€ on the death certificate.

When the coroner left, Sheriff Becket asked them to stay on the bus.

â€œIf you folks will just wait here on the bus, weâ€™re going to get you home safe, all right?â€ he said.

â€œAre we going to get a whole new bus?â€ McAdams asked.

â€œYes maâ€™am,â€ he replied.

He asked them to wait on the bus and heâ€™d be back in just a half hour.

â€œWe were on the bus for two and a half hours!â€ Puccano said.

The sheriff looked them over.

â€œLook,â€ he said. â€œThis is for your own good.â€

He advised them not to come back to Montpelier and told them they would be refunded their money for the trip.

â€œYeah, but I bought a new camera for this, are you going to refund me for that?â€ Puccano asked.

The man looked at him.

â€œSure,â€ he said. â€œIâ€™m trying to do something to help youâ€”â€

â€œI donâ€™t see how your helping us,â€ Puccano said. â€œYouâ€™re not telling us whatâ€™s going on or what kind of danger weâ€™re in.â€

â€œThe less time youâ€™re know, the less danger youâ€™re in,â€ Sheriff Becket said.

â€œDanger from what?â€ Puccano blurted out.

â€œWhat kind of danger?â€ McAdams also asked.

The sheriff looked at them again.

â€œIâ€™ll be right back,â€ he said. â€œYou folks please stay on the bus.â€

â€œNo no no!â€ Professor Brooks said.

Sheriff Becket left the bus.

Within the hour, there was another bus and bus driver, a young man. They were taken onto the new bus and each of them was refunded the cost of the trip, money that had been wired for hotel reservations in Montpelier, and Puccano was refunded the $5 he had paid for his cheap Kodak camera.

They were driven back to Boston that afternoon.

\* \* \*

The next week was a strange one for all of them.

Claire McAdams was fired from her job as a talent agent. She had always gotten along with her boss in Boston but on Tuesday, he fired her without explanation. He seemed nervous that day when he told her to clear out her desk and not return to work.

She spent the rest of the week looking for another job.

On Wednesday morning, Charles Puccano found that his barbershop had been broken into and ransacked. Things had been moved around and the few addresses and files he had were disturbed. He found a back window broken and was somewhat miffed as he paid a local mobster to keep just this sort of thing from happening. He also knew the few members of street gangs in the area and got along well enough with all of them. Plus he serviced several policemen and they were often in the shop.

He didnâ€™t find anything missing.

Professor Katie Brooks returned home from teaching on Wednesday and found her home had been broken into that day. There was nothing missing but someone had been through her address book.

All that week, Jason Carthage had thought heâ€™d seen shadowy figures near his own house. He called the police on several occasions but in each case, they found nothing, not even footprints in the grass where he was sure someone had been standing before heâ€™d made the phone call that night. He was also seeing figures in the shadows at the museum, but when he went to talk to them, they couldnâ€™t be found.

It was all rather unnerving.

Perhaps Grace Oâ€™Conner had the worse of it. She found that the animals were sometimes shying away from her at the oddest times. It was often when she worked after dark and the wolves behaved the strangest. They would flee to the small doghouses in the wide cages where they were kept when she approached and refuse to come out. She had always had a good, almost friendly relationship with the wolves, who had always seemed to trust her before that.

All five of them received telephone calls that week from Sheriff Carl Becket. He convinced them all to meet at Professor Brooksâ€™ home on Saturday evening.  
\* \* \*

On Saturday, Sept. 26, 1925, the five of them met with Sheriff Becket at Katie Brooksâ€™ house. Professor Brooks lived in a large home with a detached automobile garage behind and and to the side of it. The others arrived on foot, most of them having taken a bus to the residential neighborhood. Sheriff Becket arrived in a taxicab after they had all met. He arrived well after dinnertime and they all went into the sitting room towards the front of the house.

The man warned them that because of what theyâ€™d seen, their lives might have been in danger. He stated emphatically that they must band together for self-protection and that he was willing to try to help them, but that his own family was held hostage to powers greater than anyone in the room could imagine.

â€œThere are unknown forces at work here,â€ he said. â€œIntelligences not of this world.â€

He made sure they all had each othersâ€™ addresses and telephone numbers and mentioned briefly that the Old Adams Place outside of Moretown might hold something of value to them.

â€œTake care, however,â€ he told them.

The phone rang and Professor Brooks looked at the clock on the wall. It was after 9 p.m. and she wondered who would call at that hour.

She picked up the phone. The connection was not very good and the voice on the other end of the line buzzed terribly.

â€œSheriff Becket please,â€ the voice said.

â€œWho may I say is calling,â€ Professor Brooks asked nervously.

There was a moment of silence before the voice answered.

â€œMr. Smith,â€ it simple said.

She turned towards the rest where Becket was just telling them that Hiram Sikesâ€™ death should be avenged.

â€œThe telephone is for you,â€ she said to the sheriff. â€œHe says his name is Mr. Smith.â€

Sheriff Becket went white.

â€œThank you,â€ he said, carefully taking the telephone receiver from her.

He listened for a few seconds before he hung up the telephone.

â€œIâ€™ve got to go,â€ he said. â€œIâ€™ll get in touch with you as soon as I can.â€

â€œWho was that?â€ McAdams quickly asked. â€œOn the telephone?â€

He just stared at her.

â€œIâ€™ve got to go,â€ he simply said.

â€œWait!â€ Puccano said.

â€œHow did he know you were here?â€ McAdams asked.

â€œWhat do you mean band together?â€ Puccano asked. â€œWhatâ€™s that mean?â€

Sheriff Becket pulled on his coat.

â€œYouâ€™ve got to find a way to protect yourselves,â€ he said. â€œI just …â€

He looked out the window again.

â€œWhatâ€™s out there?â€ Puccano asked.

Sheriff Becket opened the door.

â€œGood luck,â€ he said. â€œIâ€™ll contact you as soon as I can.â€

He closed the door behind him.

They all looked at each other and Professor Brooks was the first to speak, offering them the use of her house if they were going to â€œband together.â€ McBride said she would stay as sheâ€™d lost her job and didnâ€™t have anywhere to go anyway. Brooks said she didnâ€™t want to be there alone and everyone was welcome to stay.

â€œI have plenty of room,â€ she said.

â€œI want to know what the heckâ€™s going on here,â€ Puccano said.

McAdams went to the window and peered out into the dark night. She saw only the street light across the street. Otherwise there was no one out there she could see nothing unusual about the street.

Puccano was still unsure of what Becket meant and Oâ€™Conner noted that if they all stayed together, it felt like they were a bigger target.

â€œA target for what!?!â€ Puccano said.

He was getting frustrated.

Carthage asked Professor Brooks if she had any shotguns in the house.

â€œIâ€™m getting scared,â€ he confessed.

She said she didnâ€™t.

â€œIâ€™m packing,â€ Puccano admitted, patting the pocket of his jacket.

McBride said she didnâ€™t see anything outside. None of them had driven as none of them owned automobiles. Carthage went to the front window and peered out into the gloom. He didnâ€™t see anything either.

â€œI donâ€™t know why, but his visit made me nervous,â€ Carthage said. â€œThat could just be me.â€

â€œI want to know how his friend knew he was here and how he got this telephone number,â€ McAdams said.

They began to discuss what had happened to them in the week before.

Jason Carthage mentioned that he had seen shadows around his house. Men seemed to be skulking around the place. He told them of calling the police on several occasions but the officers had found nothing. Not even footprints.

â€œSomeone broke into my barbershop,â€ Puccano admitted. â€œThey didnâ€™t steal anything.â€

â€œSo, how do you know they broke in?â€ Oâ€™Conner asked.

â€œBecause my stuff was all ransacked,â€ Puccano said. â€œThe window was broken.â€

â€œSomeone got into my house too,â€ Professor Brooks said. â€œThey went through my address books.â€

They discussed what they should do and Puccano noted that he knew several Boston police officers. He suggested contacting them and seeing if they knew anything about the Washington County Sheriff. He figured he would wait until the next morning.

Professor Brooks showed them all a small liquor cabinet with various bottles of illegal alcohol.

â€œThis is really not protocol right now,â€ she said. â€œI donâ€™t know about you but Iâ€™m going to have a drink. Would anyone care to join me?â€

â€œYeah,â€ McAdams said.

â€œAll right, Iâ€™ll stay,â€ Carthage suddenly said, picking up a bottle of gin.

She made drinks for everyone and they talked over their cocktails.

\* \* \*

Professor Brooks was the first one up the next morning. She started the coffee and then got the Boston Globe from her front porch. She sat down in the breakfast nook to read the paper and almost dropped it when she stumbled across a small article buried on the back page.

It read:  
Vermont Sheriff dies on train

MONTPELIER, VERMONT – A sheriff from Vermont died on the night train bound for Montpelier Saturday night.

Sheriff Carl Becket was found dead in his seat by the conductor on arrival in Montpelier.

Cause of death was a heart attack.  
She just stared at the newspaper article as the others got up. Then she finally got herself a cup of coffee before sitting back down in the nook. The others were making themselves at home and getting their own breakfast when she broke the news to them.

â€œSheriff Becket is … uh … is dead,â€ Professor Brooks said to them.

â€œWhat?â€ Puccano said.

â€œItâ€™s … itâ€™s right here,â€ she said, holding out the newspaper. â€œHe died on the train on the way back to Vermont.â€

â€œLet me see that!â€ Puccano said, taking the paper.

â€œWhat did they say was the cause?â€ McAdams asked.

â€œIt said heart attack,â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œHeart attack,â€ Carthage said.

â€œIsnâ€™t that what they said the bus driver died of?â€ McAdams asked.

â€œYeah,â€ Professor Brooks replied.

â€œâ€˜Cause of death was a heart attack,â€™â€ Puccano read.

â€œSomethingâ€™s not right,â€ Professor Brooks said.

Carthage pulled out the little address book he always carried with him and looked through it for anyone he might know in the Vermont or new Hampshire area. Puccano used the telephone to call one of his police friends. He had no luck finding out anything about Washington County Sheriff Carl Becket. By the time he was off the phone, Carthage had searched through his address book but found no contacts in Vermont or New Hampshire. Claire McAdams went to the liquor cabinet and poured herself a stiff drink.

â€œThis early in the morning?â€ Mr. Carthage said to her.

â€œYeah,â€ was her only reply before she took a long swig.

Puccano looked again at the news story but there was no byline. It was just a short blurb buried inside the paper. Brooks realized she wouldnâ€™t even have noticed it or paid it any mind if she hadnâ€™t known Becket. They talked about telephoning the newspaper but realized there would probably not be anyone there on Sunday morning. Puccano asked Professor Brooks if she had an automobile.

â€œYeah, I do,â€ she replied.

â€œI say we head for Vermont,â€ he replied.

Her eyes went wide. She wasnâ€™t sure if she wanted to take her Cadillac to Vermont or if she even wanted to go herself. They all discussed it and finally agreed that they should find out what was going on, at least for their own safety.

They all headed for their respective homes to pack their bags for a trip back to Vermont. It was roughly an hour later before they returned to Professor Brooksâ€™ home. When Grace Oâ€™Conner got back, she had a large rifle bag over her shoulder.

â€œWhat is that?â€ Puccano asked her.

â€œElephant gun,â€ she said with a smile, opening the bag and showing them a very large double-barreled rifle. â€œIn case any of the elephants go mad.â€

Puccano asked Professor Brooks how big the thing she had seen had been and she wasnâ€™t sure.

â€œWas it bigger than an elephant?â€ he asked.

â€œNo,â€ she replied.

â€œThen weâ€™re in business,â€ he said.

He noted that he had a .38 revolver and Professor Brooks confessed she had a .45 automatic handgun. The professor got an atlas off the shelf and found that it had a decent map of the state of Vermont within. She tucked it into her purse and told the others she had it with her.

They loaded up her Cadillac.

â€œIt was Haroldâ€™s car,â€ she said as she put it into gear and pulled out of the garage.

\* \* \*

They drove to western Massachusetts and then Vermont. It was about a three hour drive up the road that led through Northfield to Montpelier. They passed the spot where the detour sign had been before, in Northfield Falls, and saw that the sign was gone.

â€œIsnâ€™t this where the detour sign was?â€ Professor Brooks asked they drove by.

â€œIt was,â€ Puccano said. â€œOf course, so was Hiram.â€

Less than a mile up the road, they passed over a bridge with new asphalt on it. It was less than a half hour before they entered the city of Montpelier, capitol of Vermont. It took them a little while to find the Sheriffâ€™s Office. They headed in to ask about the Sheriffâ€™s death and talked to a deputy on duty who was wearing a black armband. Puccano explained to him some of what happened to them the weekend before.

â€œHe told us we should turn around, head home, put us on the bus back home,â€ Puccano went on. â€œNow my barbershop gets broken into, heâ€™s seeing shadows, her house was broken into, the zoo animals were acting funnyâ€”â€

â€œAre you folks from around here?â€ the deputy asked.

â€œNo, weâ€™re from Boston,â€ Puccano said.

The man gave them a look.

â€œOkay,â€ he finally said.

â€œSo Carl Becket comes to her house and says â€˜You all are in danger,â€™â€ Puccano went on. â€œGets a call from a Mr. Smith, and heâ€™s gone. Mr. Smith.â€

â€œMr. Smith, yes, thatâ€™s what the man said,â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œHe heard it was Mr. Smith, turned white as a ghost,â€ Puccano went on. â€œAnd now heâ€™s dead.â€

â€œYes sir, I know heâ€™s dead,â€ the deputy said. â€œI donâ€™t know why you think thereâ€™s a connection between some breaking and enterings in Boston and Montpelier, Vermont, butâ€”â€

â€œWell, Iâ€™ll tell you why,â€ Puccano said. â€œWe all came down here for vacation, go back, suddenly all this stuff happens, and your man, Mr. Becket, comes over and he tells us weâ€™re all in great danger. We kind of connected the dots.â€

â€œI donâ€™t know anything about that sir,â€ the deputy said.

â€œWhatâ€™s with the black armbands?â€ Puccano suddenly said.

â€œIn memory of the sheriff,â€ the deputy said. â€œHe died last night on the train.â€

â€œWhatâ€™d he die of?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œI think it said heart attack in the newspaper,â€ the deputy said.

â€œWas anyone sitting next to him when he died?â€ Oâ€™Conner asked.

â€œI donâ€™t know maâ€™am,â€ the deputy said. â€œHe was on the night train, coming back up here from the south.â€

Puccano sighed.

â€œYou have a lot of people die of heart attacks?â€ he asked.

â€œOur share I suppose,â€ the deputy said.

He said he didnâ€™t know where the sheriff went the day before and Professor Brooks told him heâ€™d been down in Boston. She noted that heâ€™d called all of them on Friday to meet in Boston on Saturday. She said they had gathered at her house and the sheriff had told them to band together because they were in danger.

â€œAnd that there were … how did he put that?â€ she said. â€œThere were thingsâ€”â€

â€œOtherworldly things that we should be worried about,â€ Puccano finished.

The deputy looked at them like they were quite mad.

McAdams asked if the deputy knew where his family lived but he wouldnâ€™t give the address or phone number. He told them they were welcome at the funeral but he wouldnâ€™t give that information.

â€œYouâ€™re right officer,â€ Carthage said. â€œYouâ€™re right.â€

When McAdams asked where the funeral was, the deputy showed her the obituary page of the Montpelier Argus and the listing there. It told when the funeral was the next day and where. Puccano asked about strange happenings in the area but the deputy said he didnâ€™t know of any.

â€œSounds like you know plenty for everybody,â€ the deputy said to him.

Professor Brooks asked what time the sheriff had died and the man said he only knew what had been in the paper.

Carthage thanked the officer and ushered the others quickly out. They got back to Professor Brooksâ€™ Cadillac and talked about finding out where Becket lived. Carthage wasnâ€™t sure his family would be the ones to talk to but wanted to talk to the coroner instead. He suggested that man knew what was going one. They realized that none of them had gotten the coronerâ€™s name the week before.

â€œWhy do you say he knows what was going on?â€ McAdams asked.

â€œWe have to find him because those were the only two people we know here that knew something was going on,â€ Carthage repeated.

Puccano suggested Carthage to back in to find out the name of the coroner.

â€œBecket said his family was in danger too,â€ McAdams said.

â€œThatâ€™s another reason I donâ€™t want to include his family on this,â€ Carthage said.

Professor Brooks wanted to investigate the newspaper office. She wanted to know where and when Becket had died. Puccano said he thought it curious that Deputy Oâ€™Connelly had not said how Becket had died but had noted that the newspaper said it was a heart attack. Professor Brooks wanted to know how the Boston Globe had gotten the information so quickly.

They found a telephone booth and McAdams called the operator and got Sheriff Becketâ€™s address and phone number. They drove by the house and saw black hangings on the front door as well as a few automobiles out front. They didnâ€™t stop but drove down the street and parked there to discuss what they should do next.

Professor Brooks got out the atlas and someone remembered Sheriff Becket mentioning the Old Adams Place near Moretown. She found that town on the map of Vermont in the atlas and though it didnâ€™t show a road connect it to anything, they guessed that the road to Moretown was west of Montpelier.

They headed out of town on the main road to the west and found a side road that looked promising. It was another wide road that led them to Moretown.

\* \* \*

Moretown lay on the edge of what the signposts called the Mad River. It was a small town that was strung along the main road and seemed to consist of little more than a main street. The river ran west of the town, following the highway.

They drove through the town and saw that it consisted of lumber mill and related buildings to the south, two churches, a small cemetery, a small building that appeared to be a library, a small general store marked Ward Lumber Company General Store, an old tin shop, an old blacksmith shop, a small home with a sign out front that read â€œDr. James Haylett, M.D.â€, a horse barn, a hotel called the Central House, a second general store named Wilcox General Store, numerous homes and houses, a grandstand, and a couple of one-room schoolhouses.

Professor Brooks turned the automobile around after they passed through Moretown and they discussed what to do as they entered the town again. They stopped at the Central House and decided to ask about the Old Adams Place there and maybe get rooms.

The hotel proprietor was a rotund man who seemed extremely friendly. He was a sweaty man with a smell to him and often blotted his high forehead with a handkerchief. When they arrived, he seemed anxious to rent them rooms.

â€œWhat brings you folks to this area?â€ he asked amicably.

â€œJust sightseeing,â€ Professor Brooks replied. â€œDriving around and looking around.â€

â€œVery nice, very nice,â€ the man replied.

â€œI have a question about the area,â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œOkay, any way I can help a customer,â€ he said with a smile.

â€œHave you ever heard of the Old Adamsâ€™ Place,â€ Professor Brooks said.

The man looked at her.

â€œYeah,â€ he said carefully.

â€œCould you point us in that direction?â€ she asked.

â€œWhy … uh … why do you want to go to the Old Adamsâ€™ Place?â€ he asked.

She noted it had been brought to their attention a few days before and sounded like an interesting place to visit on their weekend holiday.

â€œWell … uh … you know Dr. Adams is kind of strange,â€ he said. â€œHeâ€™s not from around here originally and kind of went off two or three years ago.â€

â€œWhat do you mean?â€ she asked.

â€œYou know, he attacked somebody in Montpelier,â€ the man said. â€œThatâ€™s what I heard.â€

â€œDoes he still live there now?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œFar as I know,â€ the man replied. â€œWe donâ€™t see him around town. Heâ€™s kind of a recluse.â€

â€œHm,â€ Brooks said.

â€œHis house is up on Old Moretown Road,â€ the man said.

â€œOld Moretown Road?â€ Professor Brooks said.

The man described how to get to the road, noting that it angled off to the right if one headed north on Main Street. He said that it went all the way down to Northfield Falls.

â€œBut youâ€™re not going to be able to find rooms there,â€ he concluded. â€œNow, weâ€™ve got rooms here.â€

â€œWell, I …â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œWeâ€™ve even got telephone,â€ the man, blotting his forehead again. â€œGot long distance and everything.â€

â€œDo you?â€ Professor Brooks said, surprised.

â€œYes maâ€™am,â€ the man replied with a grin. â€œLong distance calls cost 20 cents though.â€

â€œThat sounds good.â€

â€œSo, how many rooms do you need?â€

Carthage coughed loudly.

â€œWeâ€™ll make our drive and be sure to get a room from you when we get back,â€ he quickly said.

â€œBe sure you do,â€ the man said.

Professor Brooks asked about any special spots of interests in the town and the man said the entire was very quaint. He mentioned Moretown Memorial Library and Ward Lumber Mill as both being in the town. They learned that rooms were $1 a night and the man told them that each floor had its own bathroom.

â€œWhen you say Mr. Adams went crazy, was there something that caused that?â€ McAdams asked.

â€œI donâ€™t know maâ€™am,â€ the man said. â€œHe moved to the areaâ€”â€

â€œYou said he attacked some people?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œHe attacked somebody in Montpelier,â€ the man replied. â€œThatâ€™s what I heard. Maybe I heard wrong, but thatâ€™s what I heard.â€

â€œThis was years ago?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œA few years ago,â€ the man replied. â€œCouple of years ago? Made the papers.â€

â€œInteresting local color,â€ Carthage mused.

They talked briefly and decided to get rooms for the evening. Carthage, Oâ€™Conner, and Brooks realized they would have to make telephone calls if they were not going to be back to Boston for work by the next day. They ended up getting three rooms: one for McBride and Oâ€™Conner, one for Brooks, and one for Carthage and Puccano. The man had them all sign the guest register. Then he handed over keys.

Professor Brooks asked the manâ€™s name and he told them he was Andrew Sawyer, the proprietor of the Central House.

They found that the rooms were simple, each with two single beds, a radiator, and dresser. There were hooks on the walls for hanging clothing. They used the telephone to call their employers to let them know they would not be at work on Monday or Tuesday. Professor Brooks also arranged for one of her graduate students to teach her classes. Oâ€™Conner was a bit unnerved that the zoo seemed happy she was going to be away but with the way the animals had been acting lately, she could understand that if not appreciate it.

â€œThe animals have calmed down a lot since you werenâ€™t here,â€ she was told.

They drove out of town down Moretown Mountain Road after that. It was plainly marked and they soon recognized the road they had driven down the weekend before. After they reached the spot where the bus had broken down and even after they passed the red-leafed birch copse, Mr. Carthage spotted a rusty, unused mailbox on the side of the road with the name â€œAdamsâ€ on it. He pointed it out to the rest but theyâ€™d already passed the dirt road beside the mailbox. Professor Brooks turned the Cadillac around and took them back.

The dirt road from Moretown Mountain Road led them a few hundred yards to the foot of a mountain to the north. The cleared area in front and to the side of the house included a large house and what appeared to be an old and abandoned carriage house. The dirt road continued around the side of the main house and disappeared from sight.

The house itself faced to the south and had peeling paint and loose shutters. Some of the shingles had apparently fallen to the ground below. It looked a little worse for wear and though numerous chimneys jutted from the structure, only the one on the east side of the house had smoke coming from it. A porch stood on one side of the house. Telephone and electrical lines followed the drive up to the impressive-looking house that had a large tower jutting from the gabled roof.

To the west of the house was what appears to be a large kennel and dog run though that building looked like it was in little better shape than the house itself. There was no signs of any dogs.

Puccano and Carthage got out of the automobile and walked up to the house. Puccano knocked on the door. After he knocked a second time, the front door was finally wrenched open by an ugly individual whose nose looked like it had been broken numerous times. One of his eyes was off center and seemed to look over Puccanoâ€™s left shoulder. His black hair was greasy and he needed a shave. His clothes were disheveled.

â€œHi!â€ Puccano said. â€œAre you Doc Adams?â€

â€œNo,â€ the man said.

â€œDo you know where we can find him?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œUncleâ€™s napping,â€ the man said. â€œHis health is not good. Who are you?â€

â€œWell, my nameâ€™s Charles and this is Jason,â€ Puccano said. â€œWeâ€™re here trying to figure out some things. Why donâ€™t you wake him up and let us talk to him?â€

Jason put his fingers to the bridge of his nose and shook his head.

â€œHeâ€™s napping,â€ the man slowly repeated.

â€œExcuse me,â€ Carthage said.

He explained they were there because of the death of the Montpelier sheriff and the man looked confused.

â€œOkay,â€ the man said.

â€œHe came to visit us and told us about this place,â€ Carthage said.

â€œUh-huh,â€ the man said. â€œWhatâ€™d he tell ya?â€

â€œNot a heck of a lot,â€ Carthage admitted. â€œThe name.â€

â€œUh-huh,â€ the man said.

McAdams was trying to listen from the automobile but it didnâ€™t sound like the two men were making much progress. She got out and walked up to the front porch.

â€œHi! Who are you?â€ she asked the greasy man.

The man glared at her.

â€œWho are you?â€ he muttered.

â€œIâ€™m a … I used to be a talent agent,â€ she said with a smile. â€œIâ€™m Claire. Claire McAdams. Similar last names.â€

He just looked at her.

Puccano noted that strange things had been happening and people had died. He said that at the hotel, they said Mr. Adams had lost his marbles recently. The man wasnâ€™t eager for them to see Doctor Adams but agreed that if they came back the following night at 6 p.m., he might have time for them. They left the porch and returned to the automobile.

They told Professor Brooks and Oâ€™Conner, who had never gotten out of the Cadillac, what had happened. McAdams suggested they head back into town to talk to locals. Puccano suggested lunch and Brooks wanted to find a place that might serve flapjacks.

They drove back to Moretown.

As it was Sunday, there were no stores open. However, they talked to Andrew Sawyer at the hotel and he was willing to fix them a meal in his small cafe. They sat down and ordered lunch and he cooked it up. He had a pretty young girl named Amy as a waitress and she took their orders. When they asked her about the Old Adamsâ€™ Place, she said she didnâ€™t know too much but remembered that Dr. Adams had moved to the area when she was very little.

A dark-haired man who needed a shave came into the small dining hall and sat down at a table. He wore jeans and a flannel shirt. Amy took his order and he leered at the girl.

The five Bostonians discussed what to do next. They were upset about what had happened to them.

â€œIt also made the sheriff upset,â€ Carthage said. â€œHe and the bus driver are now both dead.â€

â€œDid you see that man who just walked in?â€ Claire asked Professor Brooks. â€œWhy donâ€™t you go talk to him?â€

â€œAll right,â€ Professor Brooks said hesitantly.

â€œMaybe he knows the Adams,â€ Claire went on.

â€œI donâ€™t know if the Adams know anything,â€ Carthage said.

Professor Brooks wondered if the man who had just come in would be in a hotel if he were from Moretown and Claire suggested he might just be there eating as it was Sunday and the rest of the town was closed. Professor Brooks told the woman to go talk to him herself. Then she asked Amy for maple syrup and dug into the pancakes she had ordered.

â€œI donâ€™t know what you think Jason, but that waitress is a doll,â€ Puccano said, nudging the other man in the ribs.

â€œA little young,â€ Carthage replied, rolling his eyes.

They had a pleasant lunch.

â€œI donâ€™t know about the rest of you, but I could use a little something stronger than water,â€ Claire said.

â€œI wouldnâ€™t mention that too loudly around here,â€ Carthage said.

â€œWhy donâ€™t you ask the gentleman sitting at that table?â€ Puccano said, gesturing towards the other man in the place. â€œHe might have something for you.â€

Claire glared at him.

â€œYouâ€™re a funny guy,â€ she said. She raised her voice a little. â€œFunny guy over here.â€

She stood up and walked over to the man. A jacket was over the back of his chair and he appeared to be eating a club sandwich.

â€œHe there!â€ Claire said to him.

He grunted at her.

â€œYou from around here?â€ she asked.

â€œYeah,â€ he replied.

â€œYou work at the lumber yard?â€ she asked.

â€œSometimes.â€

She noticed there was a $5 bill on the table and she saw that all he had was the sandwich, some potato chips, and a soda. It seemed a lot of money for just lunch.

â€œWeâ€™re just here in town,â€ Claire said. â€œWeâ€™re just traveling through. Does anything go on around here? Anything to do? Any sights to see?â€

â€œSights?â€ he asked. â€œNot really. Why are you here?â€

â€œWeâ€™re just here to see the Adams,â€ she said. â€œDoc Adams. Do you know him?â€

He took a large bite of the sandwich and then chewed it with his mouth open.

â€œNot personally,â€ he said. â€œWhy you seeinâ€™ him for? Iâ€™ve heard of him.â€

â€œWell, weâ€™ve just heard of him too,â€ Claire said.

A half-chewed crumb of bread fell out of his mouth.

â€œRight,â€ she said slowly. â€œOkay, so, do you know anything about him? Weâ€™ve never met him before.â€

â€œHe went crazy, didnâ€™t he?â€ the man muttered.

â€œWell, thatâ€™s what we hear but we donâ€™t know much about that,â€ Claire said.

â€œThatâ€™s what I heard,â€ the man said.

He looked her in the eye.

â€œYou folks should be careful,â€ he said. â€œYou know, strangers get lost up here all the time.â€

â€œAll the time,â€ she said. â€œWhatâ€™s that supposed to mean?â€

He shrugged.

â€œSometimes people just get lost,â€ he said.

â€œOkay, right,â€ she said. â€œThanks a lot. Iâ€™m just going to go back … to my table. Okay, thanks.â€

She walked back to the table.

â€œWhatâ€™d he say?â€ Puccano asked her as she sat down.

She related that he said strangers sometimes get lost up there.

â€œWhat does that mean?â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œI donâ€™t know,â€ Claire said.

â€œGo ask him,â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œThanks Erik,â€ the waitress said as she took the $5 bill from the table. She didnâ€™t sound happy. Puccano guessed the man was a local.

Carthage stood up and went over to the manâ€™s table.

â€œExcuse me sir,â€ he said. â€œShe was telling us that you said people get lost around here. Do you happen to know of a good guide?â€

The man just stared at him.

â€œWouldnâ€™t want to get lost,â€ Carthage went on.

â€œI wouldnâ€™t go off into the mountains,â€ the man said. â€œIâ€™d stay to the roads.â€

â€œStay on the roads,â€ Carthage replied. â€œOkay.â€

â€œWhat kind of sandwich you eating?â€ Puccano called to him.

â€œI donâ€™t know,â€ the man replied.

â€œLooks good,â€ Puccano said.

Carthage just shook his head.

â€œThank you sir,â€ he said to the man.

â€œSome kind of meat sandwich?â€ Puccano called.

â€œThey say itâ€™s a club,â€ the man muttered. â€œI think thereâ€™s turkey in it.â€

â€œDid you notice that he gave her $5 for that sandwich?â€ Puccano said quietly to the others as Carthage joined them again.

Claire noted that he had said he worked at the lumberyard and Professor Brooks wondered if he owned the lumberyard. That still didnâ€™t answer Puccanoâ€™s question of why he paid so much for such a small meal. Claire suggested that the man might like the waitress.

The man finished his sandwich and left.

When their waitress, Amy, came by to see if they wanted anything else, Professor Brooks asked about the man.

â€œThatâ€™s Erik Bartlett,â€ the girl said. â€œHeâ€™s a pig. You see him eating?â€

â€œI noticed,â€ Claire said.

â€œHe comes in here and gives me all this money and asks me out,â€ Amy went on. â€œIâ€™m only 15!â€

Puccano mentally marked the girl off the list of women he might ask out.

â€œWhere does he get his money?â€ Professor Brooks asked.

â€œI donâ€™t know,â€ Amy said. â€œHe never seems to do any work in town but he always has money heâ€™s throwing around.â€

â€œHe doesnâ€™t work?â€ Claire asked.

â€œI donâ€™t think so,â€ Amy replied. â€œHeâ€™s always hanging out at the general store.â€

â€œHe said he worked at the lumber yard,â€ Claire said.

â€œWhere does he live?â€ Professor Brooks asked the girl but she didnâ€™t know nor did she care. She guessed he lived in a boarding house in the area somewhere.

â€œI think Iâ€™m going to go for a walk,â€ Professor Brooks said, leaving the room.

â€œGreat,â€ Carthage said. â€œI guess Iâ€™m picking up the bill for lunch.â€

Claire was thinking about how rude the man had been.

â€œHe said stay away from the mountains,â€ she said.

\* \* \*

Professor Brooks followed Bartlett down the street. He soon turned between two houses and when she followed him, she almost passed him leaning up against one of the buildings. He had a .45 revolver in one hand and was spinning it on one finger and occasionally pointing it at her.

He asked her what she was doing and when she told him she was just taking a walk, he suggested she do it elsewhere. She agreed and left, going back to the hotel.

\* \* \*

It took some time for them to get out of Professor Brooks that she had followed Erik Bartlett and he threatened her with a revolver. She was vague about his threatening her but noted that the revolver had been pointed in her general direction.

She looked towards the lobby of the hotel to make sure that Bartlett wasnâ€™t coming back.

â€œWere you always this paranoid?â€ Claire asked her.

â€œNo no no,â€ Professor Brooks said. â€œIâ€™m okay.â€

She called to Mr. Sawyer but he was already gone. She asked Amy if there were locks on the hotel room doors. The girl said she thought there were and that seemed to relieve Professor Brooks. She told the rest she was going to go take a nap.

After she left, Puccano remarked that every time she went out on her own, she would come back with some terrifyingly crazy story. He said he wanted to find out the location of the county coronerâ€™s office.

\* \* \*

Puccano used the telephone and learned from the operator that there was no listing for the county coroner but suggested he call the sheriffâ€™s office. She also told him she assumed the county coroner was one of the local doctors. He learned there was a hospital in Montpelier and got the address for that.

\* \* \*

Carthage took a walk to the Ward General Store across the street and learned that though they were open, they were not selling anything on Sunday. The boy working there pointed out the post office boxes off to one side and told him that they were open though the store was not. He said he could sell things to him if it was an emergency.

Carthage looked around the general store and saw it carried mostly produce and such as well as a few rifles and shotguns.

When he returned to the hotel, he found Puccano and McAdams had been looking for him. They rounded up Oâ€™Conner and said they wanted to have a look at the strange birch copse near Moretown Mountain Road. The two were all for just borrowing Professor Brooksâ€™ Cadillac but Carthage thought they should tell the woman.

They found her room and knocked. It took some coaxing to get her to open the door and when they told her they wanted to borrow her automobile to go for a ride, she said she would drive them.

They headed out of town on Moretown Mountain Road and had not reached the Adamsâ€™ place yet when Puccano suddenly told Professor Brooks to stop. She braked and when the car came to a halt, McAdams got out.

â€œWhat are you doing!?!â€ Professor Brooks asked.

She had seen the copse of red birch trees and was not happy to be back in the area.

â€œWe want to look around here,â€ Puccano told her. â€œComing?â€

â€œNo!â€ Professor Brooks said like he was crazy. â€œYouâ€™ve got five minutes.â€

â€œOkey dokey,â€ Claire said.

Carthage went with them and they wandered around in the copse of strange-looking trees but found nothing, not even tracks. They returned to the automobile and Claire said something about rock climbing. They eventually pulled the car off the road near where a mountain loomed to the south and all of them got out.

They headed into the woods. It was around 2 p.m.

For the next three hours, they wandered in the woods, always looking for high ground. The shadows were lengthening before they got back to the automobile. They had seen nothing strange but had observed the mountain to the north and saw a great boulder on the side of it that didnâ€™t look quite right. They also spotted the tower of the Adamsâ€™ place jutting from the tree line from the hill they were on.

They returned to Moretown and cleaned themselves up before having dinner at the cafe in the hotel again.

Brooks and Oâ€™Conner heard the church bells and so decided to go to one of the two churches in town. They headed out with Carthage not far behind them. He was of the same mind.

\* \* \*

One of the churches proved to be St. Patrick Catholic Church and Brooks and Oâ€™Conner went in for the Sunday evening mass. The priest was a young, good-looking man in his mid-20s and they talked to him afterwards and learned he was from the area and had been the priest at the church for a couple of years.

They asked him about the Old Adamsâ€™ Place and he told them that Dr. Adams stopped coming to town while he was at seminary some three years before.

â€œNobody is even sure if heâ€™s still alive up there,â€ Father Thomas told them. â€œSome say that something happened to the man in Montpelier.â€

That was all he knew.

\* \* \*

It was a cold but sunny day on Monday, Sept. 28, 1925. The five met for breakfast in the cafe and discussed where they should go next to try to solve the mystery of the deaths and the thing Professor Brooks had seen in the birch copse.

They talked about going to the library, either in Moretown or Montpelier, going to the hospital to try to find the coroner, and going to the funeral that afternoon at 3 p.m.

Carthage walked down the street to examine the Moretown Memorial Library and found a card on the door with its hours. It would be open from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. that day. When he told the others, they decided to try the library in Montpelier.

Professor Brooks drove them back to Montpelier and it only took them a little while to find the library. They spread out in the place though Claire McAdams went to talk to one of the librarians.

Claire found the man quite helpful and asked about anything unusual that might have happened in the area. The librarian said there was an article from 1830 of a strange event. He found it for her and she read it:  
The following account of a most extraordinary thunder-storm was written by the late Hon. D. P. THOMPSON, of Montpelier:

The most remarkable instance of a sudden and great fall of water, which was ever known in this region, occurred about thirty years ago, round the sources of Jonesâ€™s brook, a small mill stream that rises in Moretown Mountains and empties into Winooski river three miles below Montpelier. The mountains round the source of this stream rise to the height of about 2,000 feet, with unusual abruptness, and, at the same time, so curve around as to leave the intermediate space in the form of a deep half basin, down the precipitous sides of which a sudden shower descends almost as rapidly as water rushing down the steepest roof of a house, and, collecting, at the bottom, pours in a raging river down the valley to the outlet of the stream. It was over this mountain-rimmed basin that burst the extraordinary thunder-storm which I have undertaken to describe, and which passed among the inhabitants under the mame of the bursting of a cloud.

The inhabitants of the basin, when the storm burst upon them so suddenly and unexpectedly, were struck with astonishment and alarm at the unwonted quantity of water that descended upon them, from the seemingly flooded heavens. A settler who lived nearest the foot of the mountain described the rain as â€˜coming down in bucketsful I was in a field a short distance from my house when it struck, and was so astonished at first I knew not what to do. But the rain, if it could be called rain, coming thicker and faster, I ran with all my might for the house, but was almost drowned before I got there, and then it was only to find the water gushing into the house on all sides till it was nearly knee deep on the floor.â€™ And so with all the inhabitants of the basin. No place afforded them any protection; rivers were within all their houses, and rivers, rising into seas, were all around them without; and they looked on with mute consternation at that tremendous outpouring of the clouds. But they were the first to be relieved. The rain, after a brief duration of less than half an hour, ceased as suddenly as it came, and the inhabitants ran out of their drenched houses just in time to behold the numerous uniting streams, that had come pouring down the encircling mountain, gathering into a mighty river that swept away shanties, fences, old trees, logs, lumber, and everything in its path, and bearing them in wild confusion on its surface, went foaming, trembling, and roaring like a cataract, with amazing force, down the valley towards the outlet three or four miles below.

But the principal scene arising from the destructive and fatal progress occurred at the saw-mill of Oren CLARK, and situated about a mile from the mouth of the stream. Mr. CLARK and his hired man were at work in a field near the mill, and being warned by the appearance of the clouds that a flood would soon be down upon them, ran to the mill to make some necessary protection for its safety. While thus engaged, they were aroused by a deafening roar, that burst suddenly upon their ears from the stream but a short distance above the mill; when looking up they beheld, to their astonishment and alarm, a wild, tumultuous sea of commingling flood-wood and turbid waters, with a wall-like front, ten feet high, tumbling and rolling down upon them with furious uproar, and with the speed of the wind. They attempted to secure a retreat over the log-way which extended from the mill to the high ground five or six rods distant. Over this they made their way with all possible speed. But such was the velocity of the on rushing torrent, that they had not proceeded half way before the mill came down, with a crash, behind them, the log-way was swept from beneath their feet, and they were struggling for their lives in a flood a dozen feet deep, foaming, boiling, and so filled with trees, timber, and all sorts of ruins, that it did not seem possible for a human being to be borne along in the frightfully whirling mass and live a single minute.

Mr. CLARK said, â€˜I saw EASTMAN once more when I rose to the surface after the first plunge. He was struggling desperately to get his head above the flood-wood. But I saw him no more. The next moment a raft of logs swept over me, and I was whirled onward, sometimes with my head above and sometimes below the water, until I neared the wooded bank down and on the opposite side of the stream, when I came within reach of a small tree which I grasped, which about as soon came up by the roots, and I was again plunged into the flood. I struggled on and soon was so fortunate as to grasp another sapling, and drew myself ashore, and fell down half dead from bruises and half drowned.â€™

The remains of poor Eastman were found next day near the mouth of the stream.  
She took notes to share with the others later.

\* \* \*

Jason Carthage looked up the more recent newspaper archive for any information on deaths in the last month or so. Unfortunately, he didnâ€™t find any kind of unusual numbers of deaths from any one cause. Even heart attack.

\* \* \*

Professor Brooks, Mr. Puccano, and Ms. Oâ€™Conner all looked through old copies of the Montpelier Argus for anything out of the ordinary. Professor Brooks found a story and shared it with the others. It was from the Montpelier Argus dated Thursday, Sept. 7, 1922.

It read:  
Nervous breakdown causes historian to attack second man  
Second man disappears from site of the attack  
Doctor Adams claims â€˜thingsâ€™ after him

A local landowner and one-time Doctor of History had a nervous breakdown in downtown Montpelier Tuesday afternoon.

Dr. Richard Adams of Moretown was arrested for assault after attacking a man on Main Street. Dr. Adams was reported to have had an altercation with the man both of them talking with raised voices, before he grabbed the man by the collar and threw him to the sidewalk. The man yelled for help, claiming that Dr. Adams was trying to murder him.

Several passers-by came to the manâ€™s rescue, subduing Dr. Adams until police could arrive. Dr. Adams proved to be armed with a revolver though he was not able to make use of it.

The man Doctor Adams attacked slipped away in the confusion.

Police questioned Dr. Adams Tuesday night but could learn nothing that made sense to them. According to one policeman who wished to remain anonymous, Dr. Adams ranted about things from the hills that chased him and tried to tear at him. Adams claimed that he had been under siege at his home near Moretown and only recently escaped to Montpelier. He further claimed that the man he had attacked had been in league with the things.

Dr. Adamsâ€™ Fort Model T was found parked on Main Street and impounded by police.

Dr. Adamsâ€™ nephew took custody of the doctor from police this morning. He told this reporter that Dr. Adams had been under a great deal of strain lately and needed a good long rest. This publication wishes Dr. Adams well and hopes that he gets the rest he needs.

Dr. Adams is an 1879 graduate of the University of Vermont in Burlington. He taught history at that college as well as Norwich University in nearby Northfield, and McIntosh College in Dover, New Hampshire. He retired to the Moretown area in 1910.  
After he read it, Puccano tore it out of the newspaper, secreted it away in his jacket, and returned that paper to the rack.

\* \* \*

They all discussed what theyâ€™d learned in the automobile that afternoon. The 1922 newspaper article was the center of the conversation.

â€œThe second man, the one he assaulted, he claimed was in … cahoots would be a good word,â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œYeah,â€ Puccano said.

â€œWith these things that are in the hills,â€ she finished.

â€œAnd the second man happened to slip away,â€ Puccano said. â€œThey didnâ€™t catch him. They werenâ€™t able to interview him.â€

Puccano pulled out the article heâ€™d torn from the paper in the library.

â€œHere,â€ he said. â€œLook.â€

Carthage rolled his eyes at the theft and took the article, reading it.

Claire told them that she had found an article the librarian had given her about something strange that had occurred.

â€œIt was like a flood, like a thunderstorm,â€ she said. â€œBut it wasnâ€™t like any storm Iâ€™ve ever heard of. The water came down so fast that they said it was like a wall of water coming down. There was a man who owned a sawmill, Oren Clark, him and his hired man were outside when they saw the rain coming and they ran to get out but they didnâ€™t make it and everything was turned into a big river. And his hired man died because of it but he lived.

â€œThe article was written by a Hon D.P. Thompson. It only rained for about 30 minutes but they said the water was a dozen feet deep in that 30 minutes and then just stopped.â€

â€œWhere did this happen? Montpelier?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œIn Moretown,â€ she said.

She told them it had been dated 1830. Carthage noted that the man couldnâ€™t still be alive but she wondered if he had family still alive who would know of the incident.

\* \* \*

The funeral was at a local Methodist Church in Montpelier at 3 p.m. and they all attended it, following the procession to the cemetery for interment after. After the interment, some of the mourners left but others stayed and talked. Carthage spotted the old man heâ€™d seen in the church the night before. He also saw the coroner, whom heâ€™d learned was Dr. William Thompson. He approached Dr. Thompson and introduced himself.

â€œWe were on the bus last weekend,â€ Carthage reminded the man.

â€œOh … yes?â€ he said. He suddenly looked nervous.

â€œSometime when you have a chance, not today, because this is not a good timeâ€”â€ Carthage said.

â€œI probably wonâ€™t have a chance,â€ the man interrupted him quietly, looking around. â€œWhat are you doing here?â€

â€œThe sheriff came to visit us the night he died,â€ Carthage said.

The man looked scared.

â€œI canâ€™t talk to you,â€ he said. â€œLook for Dr. Haylett. He lives in Moretown. Talk to him.â€

He turned abruptly and walked away.

Carthage remembered the sign on the house in Moretown that listed it as Dr. Haylettâ€™s office. He quickly told the rest what heâ€™d learned. Puccano asked him if he recognized any of the other mourners and Carthage pointed out the older gentlemen who was leaving the cemetery even as they talked of it.

â€œHe said talk to Dr. Haylett in Moretown,â€ Carthage said.

â€œThe coroner?â€ Puccano asked.

Carthage nodded.

â€œHe seemed scared,â€ he said.

Carthage made sure they stayed at the cemetery a respectable time before they left, taking Professor Brooksâ€™ Cadillac back to Moretown. On the drive there, they talked about whether or not they had time to look in the Moretown Memorial Library before their appointment with Dr. Adams. Mr. Carthage noted that they could keep the appointment with Adams and he could go look in the library.

â€œSo you donâ€™t want to meet with Adams then?â€ Oâ€™Conner asked him.

Carthage looked at the woman.

â€œNot now,â€ he said. â€œIâ€™m more interested in the doctor in Moretown and the library.â€

Everyone but Carthage was interested in going to see Dr. Adams but then Professor Brooks changed her mind and decided to go with Mr. Carthage to see Dr. Haylett, if the doctor was in.

It was about 5 p.m. when they got back to Moretown. Puccano, Oâ€™Conner, and McAdams went to the hotel for some dinner. Before they left the other two, they asked Professor Brooks if they could borrow her car to go to the Old Adamsâ€™ Place that evening.

\* \* \*

Carthage and Professor Brooks walked down the street to the Dr. Haylettâ€™s house and office. There were no hours listed on the door but they guessed he was an on-demand doctor. Carthage knocked and after a few moments, there was an answer. The door was opened by an elderly gentleman and they could smell cooked food coming from within.

Dr. Haylett was probably in his 80s but looked fairly healthy. His white hair was thick for the most part and he had probably once been tall. Carthage recognized him as the same man who had been at the cemetery and the church. He looked them over.

â€œCan I help you two?â€ he asked.

â€œDr. Haylett?â€ Carthage said.

â€œYes?â€ the man replied.

â€œMy name is Jason Carthage,â€ he said. â€œLast weekend, we had a trip scheduled to see the fall colors in Vermont. We come from Boston. Something strange happened on the road here and our bus driver died mysteriously.â€

â€œHiram Sikes?â€ the doctor asked.

â€œThatâ€™s the man,â€ Carthage said as Professor Brooks nodded.

â€œWhy donâ€™t you folks come in here,â€ Dr. Haylett said.

He let them into the small office and examination room, looking up and down the street and then closing and locking the door behind them. He hobbled over to a chair and sat down.

â€œGo on,â€ he said.

Carthage explained how the sheriff had come down to warn them and then died on the way back, his death listed as the same cause as Sikes had been: heart attack.

â€œStrange things have been happening to us,â€ Mr. Carthage went on. â€œIâ€™ve been seeing shadows when thereâ€™s nothing there.â€

â€œI saw a thing in the woods,â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œOthers saw other things or had things happen to them,â€ Carthage said.

â€œHmm,â€ Dr. Haylett said. â€œIâ€™ll tell you folks, there are some things up here that arenâ€™t natural.â€

â€œThatâ€™s what the sheriff was telling us,â€ Carthage said.

â€œIf theyâ€™ve latched onto you, then you are in a great deal of danger,â€ Dr. Haylett said.

Professor Brooks sighed nervously.

â€œThatâ€™s what we were afraid of,â€ Carthage said.

â€œWeâ€™ve been hearing that a lot lately,â€ Professor Brooks said. â€œAnything we can do to …â€

â€œUnlatch them?â€ Carthage said.

The doctor thought about it.

â€œI donâ€™t know,â€ he said. â€œI donâ€™t know about that. Thereâ€™s a book at the Memorial Library down the street called Legends of New England. You tell Lester Howes that I advised you to take a look at that. Otherwise, he wonâ€™t let you borrow it.â€

â€œAll right,â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œYou take a look through that and … you come back here and talk to me,â€ Dr. Haylett said. â€œDonâ€™t let anyone see you come here though. All right?â€

â€œOkay,â€ Professor Brooks said.

Dr. Haylett stood up and went to the window, peeking out. Then he led them to the back door and let them out that way. As they left the building, they heard the locks clicking behind them.

They went to the Moretown Memorial Library which was in what appeared to be a large house of the Greek-revival period. It had a porch, sidelights, and curved lintels over the windows. A tall, thin man within was stamping books but no one else was in the library. Lying on the desk nearby were three different newspapers: the Montpelier Argus, the Barre Daily Times, and the Northfield News and Transcript.

â€œExcuse me but are you Lester … Howes?â€ Professor Brooks said.

â€œYes maâ€™am,â€ the man replied in a soft voice.

She told him Dr. Haylett had told them to see Legends of New England.

â€œDr. Haylett?â€ Howes said.

â€œYes,â€ Professor Brooks replied.

â€œAll right then,â€ Howes said. â€œI guess thereâ€™s no harm then. Not if Dr. Haylett sent you.â€

He went back to a small office and got a book that he handed over to her. She and Mr. Carthage found a table they could read at and began skimming the book.

Legends of New England was written by Eli Davenport and was dated 1839. They spent the next hour skimming it and found that it collected many of the legends and folklore of the Indian tribes in New England. A strange, ancient city of white man, long since destroyed, was described; the place seemed to lie somewhere in the wilds of northern Massachusetts. Of particular interest was a series of recurring tales about mysterious spirits from the constellation of the Great Bear who lived under the hills of Vermont and Maine, whose presence on earth pre-dated that of humanity.

As they finished skimming the dreadful book, they heard a car start up and head out of town. They guessed it was Professor Brooksâ€™ Cadillac heading to the Old Adamsâ€™ Place.

\*\*\*  
Monday, November 17, 2008

(After playing the original Call of Câ€™thulhu scenario â€œHaunter in the Hillsâ€ from noon to 6 p.m. Saturday with John, Kim, Chris, Lisa, and Shelley.)

Jason Carthage and Dr. Katie Brooks, still at Moretown Memorial Library, decided to read the book theyâ€™d found in more detail and what they found was very disturbing.

Legends of New England by Eli Davenport was a strange book and the legends it related were written almost as if they were all facts.

The book was a discourse on material orally obtained prior to 1839 amongst the oldest people in Vermont. Part of it hinted at a hidden race of monstrous beings which lurked somewhere among the remoter hills – in the deep woods of the highest peaks, and the dark valleys where streams trickled from unknown sources. The beings were seldom glimpsed, but evidences of their presence were reported by those who had ventured farther than usual up the slopes of certain mountains or into certain deep, steep-sided gorges that even the wolves shunned.

There were queer footprints or claw-prints in the mud of brook-margins and barren patches, and curious circles of stones, with the grass around them worn away, which did not seem to have been placed or entirely shaped by Nature. There were, too, certain caves of problematical depth in the sides of the hills; with mouths closed by boulders in a manner scarcely accidental, and with more than an average quota of the queer prints leading both toward and away from them – if indeed the direction of these prints could be justly estimated. And worst of all, there were the things which adventurous people had seen very rarely in the twilight of the remotest valleys and the dense perpendicular woods above the limits of normal hill-climbing.

It would have been less uncomfortable if the stray accounts of these things had not agreed so well. As it was, nearly all the rumors had several points in common, averring that the creatures were a sort of huge, light-red crab with many pairs of legs and with two great bat-like wings in the middle of the back. They sometimes walked on all their legs, and sometimes on the hindmost pair only, using the others to convey large objects of indeterminate nature. It was written that on one occasion they were spied in considerable numbers, a detachment of them wading along a shallow woodland watercourse three abreast in evidently disciplined formation. Once a specimen was seen flying – launching itself from the top of a bald, lonely hill at night and vanishing in the sky after its great flapping wings had been silhouetted an instant against the full moon.

The things seemed content, on the whole, to let mankind alone; though they were at times held responsible for the disappearance of venturesome individuals – especially persons who built houses too close to certain valleys or too high up on certain mountains. Many localities came to be known as inadvisable to settle in, the feeling persisting long after the cause was forgotten. People would look up at some of the neighboring mountain-precipices with a shudder, even when not recalling how many settlers had been lost, and how many farmhouses burnt to ashes, on the lower slopes of those grim, green sentinels.

But while according to the earliest legends the creatures would appear to have harmed only those trespassing on their privacy, there were later accounts of their curiosity respecting men, and of their attempts to establish secret outposts in the human world. There were tales of the queer claw-prints seen around farmhouse windows in the morning, and of occasional disappearances in regions outside the obviously haunted areas. Tales, besides, of buzzing voices in imitation of human speech which made surprising offers to lone travelers on roads and cart-paths in the deep woods, and of children frightened out of their wits by things seen or heard where the primal forest pressed close upon their door-yards. In the final layer of legends – the layer just preceding the decline of superstition and the abandonment of close contact with the dreaded places – there were shocked references to hermits and remote farmers who at some period of life appeared to have undergone a repellent mental change, and who were shunned and whispered about as mortals who had sold themselves to the strange beings. In one of the northeastern counties it seemed to be a fashion about 1800 to accuse eccentric and unpopular recluses of being allies or representatives of the abhorred things.

As to what the things were – explanations naturally varied. The common name applied to them was â€œthose ones,â€ or â€œthe old ones,â€ though other terms had a local and transient use. Perhaps the bulk of the Puritan settlers set them down bluntly as familiars of the devil, and made them a basis of awed theological speculation. Those with Celtic legendry in their heritage – mainly the Scotch-Irish element of New Hampshire, and their kindred who had settled in Vermont on Governor Wentworth’s colonial grants – linked them vaguely with the malign fairies and â€œlittle peopleâ€ of the bogs and raths, and protected themselves with scraps of incantation handed down through many generations. But the Indians had the most fantastic theories of all. While different tribal legends varied, there was a marked consensus of belief in certain vital particulars; it being unanimously agreed that the creatures were not native to the earth.

The Pennacook myths, which were the most consistent and picturesque, taught that the Winged Ones came from the Great Bear in the sky, and had mines in the hills whence they took a kind of stone they could not get on any other world. They did not live here, said the myths, but merely maintained outposts and flew back with vast cargoes of stone to their own stars in the north. They harmed only those Earth-people who got too near them or spied upon them. Animals shunned them through instinctive hatred, not because of being hunted. They could not eat the things and animals of earth, but brought their own food from the stars. It was bad to get near them, and sometimes young hunters who went into their hills never came back. It was not good, either, to listen to what they whispered at night in the forest with voices like a bee’s that tried to be like the voices of men. They knew the speech of all kinds of men – Pennacooks, Hurons, men of the Five Nations – but did not seem to have or need any speech of their own. They talked with their heads, which changed color in different ways to mean different things.

That was all that the book said of the things.

Dr. Brooks was unnerved by what she read. The description had been far to close to what she had seen for her comfort. She hoped the others were all right.

\* \* \*

Charles Puccano was driving Dr. Brooksâ€™ Cadillac. Claire McAdams sat in the back while Grace Oâ€™Conner rode in the passenger seat in the front. They were some ways down the Old Moretown Road when they spotted a figure on the side of the track. The woman was very tall and solid with a backpack on her back. She held out her thumb and Puccano pulled over and slowed the automobile.

â€œWould you like a ride?â€ he asked.

â€œSure,â€ she said.

â€œWeâ€™re going to a house up the road but can give you a lift at least that far,â€ he said.

The woman had short, dark hair and was well over six feet tall. She wore menâ€™s trousers and appeared to be very muscular. She climbed into the back seat with Claire and gave the woman a nod. Then she looked down and noticed that there was a long, leather gun case on the floor in the back.

They all introduced themselves and learned the womanâ€™s name was Dorothy Morgan.

â€œWeâ€™re going to the Adams place,â€ Puccano said as he put the automobile back into gear. â€œEver hear of it?â€

Ms. Morgan told them that she had indeed heard of the Adams place. She said she had heard Dr. Adams was very ill and couldnâ€™t stand the sunlight. She also related that she was from St. Louis, Missouri, and was in the area visiting her sister, who was having a baby.

Puccano pulled into the driveway by the decrepit mailbox and up the long, dirt road that led to the clearing in the woods where the house stood. It looked even worse at night. The old, apparently abandoned carriage house off to one side was dark and looked down on the clearing with empty windows. The loose shutters on the main house banged in the rising wind and dark spots on the roof where shingles had fallen off almost looked like great holes. No light shined from anywhere in the house and as they exited the auto, Claire lit a cigarette.

â€œIâ€™ll stay with the car,â€ she said.

Puccano questioned her about that but she told him she just felt nervous about the place and thought someone should stay with Katieâ€™s automobile. Puccano shrugged his shoulders and asked Ms. Morgan if sheâ€™d like to come with himself and Ms. Oâ€˜Conner. The woman just nodded and they went to the front door and knocked.

The door was opened by a handsome man in a fine suit who thanked them for coming in a cultured Bostonian accent. He introduced himself as Mr. John Noyes and told them he was Dr. Adamsâ€™ solicitor. He told them Dr. Adams was quite ill as he waved them into the house.

It was very dark in the house and they found themselves in a foyer. Mr. Noyes led them into a high-ceilinged inner foyer lit only by a single lamp with a dark shade. An archway to the left led into a darkened room and steps crept up into the darkness above. Another archway leading towards the front of the house was dark as well.

It seemed to be even darker towards the back of the house.

â€œDr. Adamsâ€™ illness has given him a great sensitivity to light,â€ Mr. Noyes said as he led them slowly towards the back of the house. â€œItâ€™s further caused his asthma to become quite pronounced. He cannot speak above a whisper. He recently had a very debilitating fever, leaving him very, very weak. His feet and ankles are swollen – donâ€™t mention that – they had to be bandaged. Heâ€™s in fairly bad shape but willing to talk to you.â€

By then they had reached two more archways. To the left was what appeared to be a darkened kitchen while to the right was a dim room lit only by the fire in a fireplace and a very dim, covered lamp on a desk. The large room appeared to be a greatroom that had been converted into a large library. Bookshelves filled with books lined the walls on either side and a large desk stood on the far side of the room. A great bay window, the curtains pulled shut across it, was behind the desk while a few chairs sat in front of the desk.

Puccano noticed that on top of the bookshelves to the right were several shiny silver cylinders. They were unlike anything heâ€™d ever seen before and shiny even in the terribly dim light.

Noyes ushered them into the dim room and a half-imagined rhythm or vibration seemed to be in the air. A strange smell like sour milk was also evident in the room. Even though it was a large room, they all felt somewhat claustrophobic.

Sitting in a high-backed, heavily cushioned chair behind the desk was Dr. Adams. He had thick, bushy gray hair, a thick beard and mustache, and he wore glasses that barely seemed to fit his face. He had a mole under his right eye and his face was that of a sick man with a strained, rigid, immobile expression and an unwinking glass stare. He wore a thick bathrobe and his hands lay immobile on the arms of his chair.

As they approached the desk with Mr. Noyes, Dr. Adam stirred.

â€œThank you for coming,â€ he whispered. â€œI apologize for my condition. Iâ€™ve been in ill health since a breakdown in Montpelier some years ago. Thank you for coming and visiting me. What is it I can help you with?â€

â€œThank you for agreeing to meet with us Dr. Adams,â€ Puccano said as he sat down. â€œIâ€™m Charles Puccano.â€

â€œIâ€™m Grace Oâ€™Conner,â€ Grace said.

â€œDorothy Morgan,â€ Dorothy said.

â€œItâ€™s nice to meet you,â€ Dr. Adams whispered.

â€œItâ€™s nice to meet you,â€ Puccano said.

He then explained that some strange things had happened to them since they took a bus trip into Montpelier. He noted that everyone else connected with the situation had died, including the bus driver on that first trip.

â€œFrom things weâ€™ve heard, weâ€™re led to believe that you might know something about whatâ€™s going on,â€ Puccano finished.

â€œYouâ€™ll have to tell me more,â€ Dr. Adams whispered.

They were all seated by that point and could see that his face was obviously partially paralyzed. His lips barely moved when he spoke.

Puccano and Oâ€™Conner related the story of their bus trip to Montpelier and how the bus had broken down on the road they had taken. They told him of their driver dying in a most mysterious manner and how they had met with the sheriff. Ms. Morgan just listened to the whole thing.

â€œDr. Katie Brooks claimed to have seen something out there,â€ Puccano went on. â€œShe couldnâ€™t really describe it very well, a monster or creature.â€

Noyes quietly left the room.

â€œWhen we went to the Sheriffâ€™s office, they sent us home,â€ Puccano said. He related how their normal lives had then been disrupted, that his own shop had been broken into. Oâ€™Conner told him that the animals at the zoo where she worked had started to act strangely when she was around them.

â€œSo a series of strange things have been happening,â€ Puccano said, telling Adams that they had decided to return to the area to investigate what might be causing it. He said that the sheriff of Washington County had come to Boston to talk to them and Oâ€™Conner noted that the evening he spoke to them, he had died on the train ride back to Vermont of an apparent heart attack.

â€œWhat was this creature that you saw?â€ Dr. Adams asked quietly.

â€œI didnâ€™t see it,â€ Oâ€™Conner said. â€œIt was our companion.â€

â€œWe didnâ€™t see it,â€ Puccano put it. â€œIt was a doctor and â€¦ we thought she was crazy.â€

â€œSheâ€™s a professor,â€ Oâ€™Conner said. â€œShe said it was pink and large and in the woods.â€

â€œShe didnâ€™t have much detail on it,â€ Puccano said.

â€œYes,â€ Dr. Adams whispered. â€œI believe you are mistaken about the thing that she saw. The Old Ones, as they are sometimes called, the Outer Beings mean mankind no harm, and they offer much to humanity. They do have enemies who might be trying to harm you, however. The secret cult of evil men linked with Hastur and the yellow sign are devoted to hunting down and destroying the outer ones on behalf of monstrous powers from other dimensions.â€

He seemed to take a breath.

â€œMy home is safe from anything that might threaten you,â€ he continued to whisper. â€œYou are welcome to stay here for as long as you wish to continue your investigations. If you find Mr. Noyes, he can get you some dinner and tea or coffee. I think that is all I can tell you at this point. It is all that I know.â€

â€œDoctor, can I ask you, I noticed some shiny cylinders up on the shelf there,â€ Puccano asked. â€œCan you tell me what those are?â€

â€œMerely an experiment,â€ Dr. Adams whispered. â€œIt has to do with preserving human life. It is too early in its conception for me to say any more. I continue to experiment when I feel well enough.â€

He hesitated again.

â€œThere is little more that I know save to say that the thing you saw was not responsible for what is happening to you,â€ he continued.

â€œDo you know what is responsible?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œI would guess it was members of the cult of Hastur,â€ Dr. Adams whispered. â€œI am not sure who might be among them in this area, but Sheriff Beckett himself might have been luring you into some kind of trap, though I donâ€™t, of course, know for sure.â€

â€œHow did you become ill doctor?â€ Puccano asked. â€œYou said you became ill shortly after your breakdown in Montpelier.â€

â€œIt was related to my mental condition, I believe,â€ Dr. Adams whispered. â€œAnd I think it was related to these evil men.â€

Silence filled the room and Puccano asked the women if they should get a bite to eat or go back to town and get Jason and Dr. Brooks. Ms. Morgan said she would love to have some food and Oâ€™Conner nodded.

â€œThank you for your time,â€ Puccano said.

â€œYouâ€™re welcome,â€ Dr. Adams whispered. â€œIf you will excuse me now, I will probably sleep here, as it is more easy for me than moving.â€

â€œOne more question before I go,â€ Puccano said. â€œDo you raise animals?â€

â€œI had dogs,â€ Dr. Adams whispered. â€œAt one time. Several years ago. But I have not kept dogs since.â€

â€œSince â€¦ you became ill?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œYes,â€ Dr. Adams whispered. â€œIf youâ€™ll now excuse me, Iâ€™m going to try to sleep now.â€

â€œThanks for your time,â€ Puccano said.

â€œThank you,â€ Dr. Adams whispered.

The three left the library and looked for Mr. Noyes. They walked towards the front of the house and found that another archway led to a parlor. As they looked into the room, Mr. Noyes came from the darkened kitchen. Puccano told him of Dr. Adamsâ€™ offer of dinner and tea and Noyes told him he had some food warming in the kitchen. He offered them tea or coffee and they all chose to have coffee. He asked them to wait in the parlor and then headed once more for the back of the house.

The parlor was dimly lit as well with only a single electric lamp burning on a small table. A couch and two stuffed chairs gave them ample room to sit as they conversed about what little they had learned. Within just a few minutes, Mr. Noyes returned with a tray laden with a large bowl of soup, several bowls and silverware, and a coffee pot and three coffee cups. There was also cream and sugar on the tray and after Noyes put it down on the small table in the center of the room, he excused himself, telling them he had to check on Dr. Adams.

Puccano poured each of them a cup of coffee.

â€œI found it interesting that he said the creature that the doctor saw was not evil,â€ he said.

â€œYeah,â€ Oâ€™Conner agreed. â€œThatâ€™s why I think Katie should talk to him. Did he say that we could stay here? Because I was planning on staying at the hotel.â€

â€œHe said we could stay here,â€ Puccano said, nodding.

He took a sip of his coffee and made a face. It had a strange, acrid taste and he didnâ€™t like it. Ms. Morgan had already ladled out three bowls of soup and he found that it tasted normal enough.

â€œNow Iâ€™m not so sure about staying here,â€ Oâ€™Conner said as she put her own coffee cup down. â€œIâ€™m a little concerned about this coffee.â€

Ms. Morgan had also noticed the strong taste in the coffee. They were all a bit put off by the fact that something seemed wrong with it.

Puccano wanted to go back to town to talk to Dr. Brooks and Jason Carthage. He noted that they had her automobile and they couldnâ€™t just leave them stranded in Moretown. He turned to Ms. Morgan.

â€œDo you have a time you needed to get out east?â€ Puccano said. â€œWhere are you headed?â€

â€œIâ€™m supposed to go see my sister in Vermont,â€ Ms. Morgan said. â€œSheâ€™s supposed to have a baby but â€¦ this is really interesting to me.â€

â€œDo you need to meet her tonight?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œWell, sheâ€™s unsure about when sheâ€™s going to have the baby, so Iâ€™ve got some time,â€ Morgan went on. â€œBut if I can get a free nightâ€™s stay, thatâ€™s what Iâ€™d like to do. I like that idea.â€

They talked about it a little longer and decided that they were going to take Dr. Adams up on the offer to spend the night but they figured they had to return to Moretown to get the others first. They told Mr. Noyes when he returned to get the dishes. When Puccano mentioned it, Mr. Noyes said that there were several bedrooms upstairs, including Dr. Adamsâ€™, where they could stay. Puccano went on to say that they wanted to return to town to pick up the others before returning to spend the night.

Mr. Noyes asked them to wait a few minutes while he checked to see if Dr. Adams was still awake. Puccano said they would wait in the parlor and it was about five minutes before the man returned. Noyes thanked them and noted that there was no telephone at the house but he would wait for their return and would turn down beds for them.

Puccano thanked the lawyer and the three left the house. They found Claire asleep in the back of the Cadillac. Puccano started up the car and drove back into town. The three arrived at the hotel and saw Dr. Brooks and Carthage about the enter the building.

Puccano pulled the Cadillac to a stop and Dr. Brooks and Mr. Carthage saw a tall, muscular woman with short brown hair in the back seat. The woman introduced herself as Dorothy Morgan as she unfolded herself from the back seat of the car. She looked like she was all muscle and Carthage smiled up at the woman as he shook her hand and introduced himself. The woman dwarfed both him and Puccano.

Puccano told them they had picked up Dorothy hitchhiking on Old Moretown Road near the Adams place so they picked her up and gave her a ride. Ms. Morgan told them sheâ€™d heard about the Adamsâ€™ place and that the old man who lived there was sickly and didnâ€™t go out often. She said sheâ€™d heard he was diseased.

â€œWe did meet with Mr. Adams,â€ Puccano said. â€œHeâ€™s a very, very ill man. The house was almost completely dark inside. He was-â€

â€œWas it Mr. Adams?â€ Carthage asked.

â€œHe was, he was â€¦ it appeared to be,â€ Puccano went on. â€œIt was very dark inside. Mr. Noyes, who is apparently is his assistant-â€

â€œCaretaker,â€ Oâ€™Conner put in.

â€œCaretaker, butler,â€ Puccano said.

â€œSolicitor,â€ Oâ€™Conner said.

â€œSolicitor he said,â€ Puccano went on, â€œwas very nice to us and led us to Mr. Adams who seemed to be almost bedridden. But he did mention he was doing some experiments preserving life. It was hard to see how he was doing that in his condition. He told us we could all stay at his place. He said weâ€™d be safe there. He mentioned that the â€¦ he talked a little bit about that creature that you saw. He said it was a good spirit, whatever that means, he said it was something friendly and I donâ€™t know if heâ€™s lost his mind, his age, but you seemed pretty convinced you saw something. So, he said that something you saw was good.â€

Carthage sighed.

â€œDoes it have a name or anything?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œHe said it was good,â€ Puccano said. â€œGood spirits â€¦ and that there was an evil cult of men who are-â€

â€œWho are responsible for what is happening to us,â€ Oâ€™Conner finished.

â€œYeah,â€ Puccano said. â€œAnd they work against these beings from another world or beings from another plane of existence and-â€

â€œFunny,â€ Carthage interrupted. â€œNot what I read.â€

â€œWhat did you read?â€ Puccano asked.

Dr. Brooks and Mr. Carthage just laughed nervously.

â€œWe came across something that was similar to what I saw in the woods,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œYou came across it?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œRead it in a book,â€ Dr. Brooks said. â€œThey described it as a crab-like thing.â€

â€œMultiple legs, light red crab-like thing with wings,â€ Carthage said.

â€œAnd itâ€™s head changes color and that means different things,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œWas that what you saw?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œPretty close to it,â€ Dr. Brooks replied. â€œThey referred to it as â€˜those onesâ€™ or the â€˜old ones.â€™â€  
â€œYes,â€ Carthage said.

â€œIt wasnâ€™t good,â€ Dr. Brooks said, noting that the things were reported to go after anyone that went near them or were spying on them. She told them that their food didnâ€™t come from Earth but from the stars. Carthage added that animals avoided them and Dr. Brooks said that children were afraid as the things would just glare at them.

â€œIt certainly sounds different from what we were told,â€ Puccano said.

Brooks and Carthage went on to tell them that the things were reported to have come to Earth to mine metal they couldnâ€™t get at their homes. They said it was something that wasnâ€™t found on any other world.

â€œWell, youâ€™re an educated woman, does this sound like anything youâ€™ve heard of before?â€ Puccano asked.

Dr. Brooks laughed again. It was not a nice sound.

Puccano asked about the book and they told him it was called Legends of New England. Dr. Brooks called the book interesting but Puccano noticed that she appeared to be terribly unnerved, almost as bad as sheâ€™d been the week before when sheâ€™d come back to the bus.

â€œDo you think what Adams described and what we read were the same thing?â€ she asked. â€œOr do you think they were different things or â€¦?â€

â€œIt sounds like he was talking about the same thing but to be frank, at the time he told us, I thought maybe he was a little crazy,â€ Puccano said. â€œBut it sounds like there might be something to this. You saw it, itâ€™s in the book, he mentioned it.â€

â€œHeâ€™s experimenting on extending life?â€ Carthage asked.

â€œThatâ€™s what he said,â€ Puccano said. â€œHe had these cylinders on a shelf in the library. Iâ€™d never seen anything like them before. I asked him about it and he said he was trying to extend life. He has a dog run or kennel and he said he used to have dogs and he stopped after he got sick. It was right after he went mad in Montpelier that he got sick and he blamed it on his mental condition.â€

â€œWe told him we were going to come get you,â€ Oâ€™Conner said. â€œHe invited us to stay at his house.â€

â€œWe can stay the night free,â€ Puccano said.

â€œHe said weâ€™d be safe there,â€ Oâ€™Conner said.

â€œHe said weâ€™d be safe from the evil there,â€ Puccano said. â€œWhich I think were these cult members.â€  
Dr. Brooks was somewhat anxious about going to the house and Puccano said they should all stick together. Brooks noted that if what she read about and what Dr. Adams was talking about were the same things, she was unsure. They discussed it for only a short time before deciding to at least return to the Adamsâ€™ house to talk to Dr. Adams.

â€œAre you going too?â€ Dr. Brooks asked Ms. Morgan.

She looked them over.

â€œIâ€™m always looking for a free place to stay,â€ she said. â€œYes, I believe all of you all are crazy. But, you know, in Hollywood right now, theyâ€™re big on these monster films and Iâ€™ve stunt-doubled quite a few times for these monsters and this is an amazing piece of material right here and Iâ€™m on board.â€

Dr. Brooks asked Ms. Morgan if she had any fighting experience and the giant of a woman clenched her fists and smiled.

â€œYes I do,â€ she said. â€œLetâ€™s just make it simple: I donâ€™t carry a weapon because I donâ€™t need to.â€  
Dr. Brooks asked the woman if sheâ€™d like a job as her bodyguard.

â€œYou make sure nothing happens to me and thereâ€™s a little something in it for you,â€ Dr. Brooks told the woman.

â€œI might take you up on that offer,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œMoney is no object,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

Ms. Morgan thought about it.

Puccano asked if they should wake Claire and Dr. Brooks asked where the woman was. Puccano pointed her out in the back seat of the automobile, still fast asleep. Oâ€™Conner described how the woman had gotten terribly anxious when they had arrived at the house. Puccano told them she had waited at the car for them, smoking a cigarette. He related that she had never come in and when they had come back out, they had found her asleep in the auto.

â€œI thought I smelled something on her breath,â€ Ms. Morgan quipped.

She had noticed a peculiar smell she couldnâ€™t recognize when sheâ€™d gotten into the automobile after the visit to Dr. Adamsâ€™ house. She assumed it was alcohol.

â€œSheâ€™ll be fine,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

Carthage looked at his watch. It was about 7 p.m. and he looked up to see that there were numerous stars in the dark sky. He also saw no moon and noticed that the clouds were coming in from the west.

They discussed a little more going back to the Adamsâ€™ house and though Dr. Brooks thought they should go back to the place during the day, Puccano pointed out that they were invited back to the house that night so someone should go back to tell them that they werenâ€™t coming. He noted that the telephone at the house wasnâ€™t working and that they had eaten a meal and nothing had happened to them.

â€œTerrible coffee,â€ he noted.

â€œThe coffee tasted acidic,â€ Oâ€™Conner said. â€œThat concerned me a little.â€

They talked a little about that and it made Dr. Brooks even more nervous. She turned to Ms. Morgan.

â€œYou are definitely coming with us, right?â€ she asked.

Ms. Morgan nodded.

Dr. Brooks said she was not totally opposed to going back and Puccano repeated that they should at least tell them if they were not going to spend the night. They finally decided to go and Dr. Brooks asked Ms. Morgan to take Claire back to her room at the hotel. The large woman carried Claire up to her room and left her there. Dr. Brooks tipped Ms. Morgan five dollars for the help and then they all climbed back into the Cadillac and headed back down Old Moretown Road.

They saw that the curtains had been opened in the front window of the parlor and a dim electric light burned within. Dr. Brooks parked the Cadillac out front and they quietly made their way to the front porch. Mrs. Noyes opened the door at their knock and thanked them for coming. He looked them over and asked if there was any baggage they needed carried.

He ushered them into the house and was introduced to Dr. Brooks and Mr. Carthage. He led them all upstairs where he showed them four bedrooms that they could share. One of the bedrooms was quite large and actually had itâ€™s own bathroom. The other three rooms were somewhat smaller, though still good-sized. They saw that the steps continued up from the second floor, probably to the turret above. He also showed them another bathroom off the hall between the master bedroom and the back bedroom.

He told them he could bring coffee or tea if they wished and then headed back downstairs. They picked their rooms, Dr. Brooks and Ms. Morgan taking the master bedroom while Oâ€™Conner picked the front bedroom at the top of the stairs and Puccano took the room just off the stairs. Mr. Carthage said he would take the smallest bedroom in the back of the house.

Mr. Noyes returned and told them that tea and coffee were in the parlor. They went down and found the tray with a teapot and coffee pot on it as well as glasses for tea and coffee. Sugar and cream were also on the tray.

â€œIs there anything else you think you need?â€ Noyes asked.

When they told him there wasnâ€™t, he told them heâ€™d be there for another half hour or so before he had to go.

â€œWould it be okay, Mr. Noyes, if we took a quick look around the library?â€ Puccano said. â€œI want to show them the â€¦â€

â€œDr. Adams is there, sleeping right now,â€ Mr. Noyes replied with a smile. â€œSo it would probably not be a good idea.â€

â€œDo you think we could talk to him again tonight?â€ Oâ€™Conner said.

â€œI donâ€™t know,â€ Mr. Noyes replied. â€œI can wake you in the morning when he might be up.â€

Puccano thanked him and he left the room. When Puccano tasted the coffee, he found it also had a weird acrid taste. He tried some of the tea and found it the same. They all found their drinks tasted strange and discussed it, noticing there was an extra cup on the tray. Carthage said there was probably something in the wellâ€™s water. Dr. Brooks put sugar in her tea.

â€œItâ€™s not as bad,â€ she noted.

Carthage was disappointed that the tea was off but Dr. Brooks drank her tea anyway.

After a half hour, Mr. Noyes returned. He looked over the tray.

â€œIâ€™m sorry, were the coffee and tea not to your liking?â€ he asked.

â€œIt had a funny taste,â€ Mr. Carthage said. â€œMust be your well.â€

Mr. Noyes explained that they had problems with the well in the past and apologized for it. He noted that he was getting ready to leave and asked if they needed anything else. When Ms. Oâ€™Conner asked what was ailing Dr. Adams, Noyes told them that he had a nervous breakdown some years before and it seemed to have stemmed from that. He noted that Dr. Adams had been getting better and some specialists were working with him. When Puccano asked, he said he had been working with Dr. Adams for a couple of years but knew nothing of his experiments.

They also learned from him that Dr. Adamsâ€™ relatives lived with him normally but they were presently away. Before he left, he asked if there was anything else they needed and when they said they didnâ€™t, he asked that they give Dr. Adams his privacy as he needed his rest. Noyes took the tray to the kitchen and then left the house, locking the front door after him with an audible â€œclick.â€ A few moments later, they heard the sound of an automobile start behind the house, drive around the front, and then the noise of the engine heading into the distance.

They were alone in the darkened house.

Dr. Brooks was feeling very drowsy and was ready for bed. Puccano blamed the tea sheâ€™d drunk. He also suggested that they look around the place though Carthage was against it. Dr. Brooks was tired and asked how long it would take.

â€œTen minutes,â€ Puccano said.

â€œAll right, Iâ€™ll come,â€ she said.

Puccano looked at Carthage.

â€œYou coming?â€ he asked.

â€œYes,â€ Carthage replied.

â€œShocking,â€ Puccano said sarcastically.

They talked about going into the library and Carthage was against it. Puccano noted that Dr. Adams was barely awake when they were there before; it wouldnâ€™t bother him if they just peeked into the archway. Carthage was adamant though and decided that he would go look in the kitchen since they insisted on searching the house.

â€œWhat kind of professor are you?â€ Oâ€™Conner asked Dr. Brooks.

She sleepily said she was a professor of science.

â€œI really think you ought to take a look at this,â€ Puccano said.

She finally agreed.

â€œWhat happens if we wake Dr. Adams,â€ Oâ€™Conner asked.

â€œYes,â€ Carthage said.

â€œWell, according to you, he lied to us from the beginning,â€ Puccano said, noting that the man had told them different from what they had read in the book. Dr. Brooks said that the things that she read about could speak but in a buzzing sounding voice.

â€œIt did say that we didnâ€™t want to listen to what it had to say,â€ she noted.

Puccano turned to Oâ€™Conner.

â€œEarlier, didnâ€™t you hear a kind of buzzing noise?â€ he said.

Carthageâ€™s eyes opened wide.

â€œI wish you had said that earlier,â€ he said.

â€œThere was,â€ Puccano said. â€œIt was a weird vibration. A kind of buzz in the air.â€

â€œThe book made reference to bees,â€ Dr. Brooks said. â€œEven when it talked it made a buzzing noise.â€  
â€œWhy didnâ€™t you say that earlier?â€ Carthage said to Puccano. He looked around nervously.

â€œYou can leave if you want to,â€ Puccano said to him.

Puccano still thought they should look around though Oâ€™Conner said she didnâ€™t want to go to the library. Carthage was holding his cane with both hands, making no pretense of using it to help him walk any more. He said that they could look around and if they heard any bees buzzing, they could flee. Puccano suggested that Carthage and Oâ€™Conner check out the kitchen and see if the well water tasted funny.

Puccano, Dr. Brooks, and Ms. Morgan crept to the library while the other two crept to the kitchen.

\* \* \*

Carthage and Oâ€™Conner tried the water in the kitchen and, though it tasted like well water with a slight metallic tang, it did not have the bitterness that they had both noted in their tea. Carthage started to check drawers and cupboards, looking for whatever Noyes had put in their tea.

To his growing horror, he found that the cupboards were mostly empty. There was a lot of dust within the cupboards and drawers but little else. He found no food, aside from a few small bags of flour and rice, and no sign of tea bags or a can of coffee.

â€œWhere did he get the tea and coffee?â€ Oâ€™Conner asked.

â€œHe may have brought it with him,â€ Carthage said.

He led her back out of the kitchen towards the library.

\* \* \*

While Dr. Brooks and Mr. Puccano had crept into the library, Ms. Morgan had gone to the back of the house and opened the door there. In the dim light from the single lamp in the foyer, she could make out a large space and guessed it was an attached garage. She could smell gasoline fumes and pulled the electric torch from her pocket to quickly illuminate the rough structure. There were no vehicles within.

Then she saw Carthage and Oâ€™Conner pass through the hall and into the library. She followed them.

\* \* \*

The library was still very dark with the remnants of the fire burning very low in the fireplace and the single electric lamp on the desk still burning. The dim light and the dark shade meant the electric lamp gave off very little light.

The chair where Dr. Adams had been sitting earlier that evening was empty.

Puccano pointed out the cylinders heâ€™d seen before and Dr. Brooks crossed the empty room and climbed up the bookshelf to retrieve one. The cylinder proved to be about a foot tall and half as wide. Three curious sockets set in an isosceles triangle covered the front, convex surface. She tucked the cylinder under her arm and climbed back down where the two examined it in the dim light.

Puccano crossed the room to get a better look at the desk and noticed something was lying in the chair that Dr. Adams had been sitting in before.

Carthage and Oâ€™Conner suddenly burst into the room and Puccano pointed out to them that Dr. Adams was gone. Ms. Morgan entered the room behind them.

â€œThe kitchen has not been used,â€ Carthage said.

â€œHow do you know?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œItâ€™s covered with dust,â€ Carthage told him. â€œOther than making some tea and maybe your soup that probably came from a can.â€

When asked, he told them there was no odd taste in the water. He said he thought Noyes had put something in the tea.

â€œIâ€™m thinking if Dr. Adams hasnâ€™t been controlled by the others, he is one,â€ Carthage said.

â€œWhat others?â€ Puccano said.

â€œThat we read about in the book,â€ Carthage said. â€œThe old ones. Thatâ€™s my feeling.â€

â€œThereâ€™s something in the seat,â€ Puccano said.

Dr. Brooks was examining the shiny cylinder and showed the rest. Puccano didnâ€™t recognize the sockets as like anything heâ€™d ever seen before.

â€œSomething strange is definitely going on here,â€ Carthage said.

â€œHave you ever seen anything like that before doctor?â€ Puccano asked, pointing to the cylinder.

Dr. Brooks just shook her head. The cylinder was light and Ms. Morgan suggested opening it up.

Puccano moved to the chair and, to his horror, realized that sitting upon it were what appeared to be the hands and face of Dr. Adams! The hands looked real and the face appeared to be some kind of mask with eyeholes. It was attached to a mop of gray hair and there was a beard and mustache on the face. He told the others as Carthage walked over and picked up a leather briefcase that lay on the floor by the desk.

â€œLet me see that,â€ Ms. Morgan said, crossing the room. â€œI have some experience with makeup and prosthetics.

She picked up the hands and saw that they were pinched at the wrist and had metal clasps that could probably be used to attach them to something organic. They were cold but otherwise seemed to be real! There was even hair that appeared to be growing out of the back of the hands. She dropped them on the desk, blinking rapidly, and picked up the mask. The hair was attached like real hair would be, the mustache and beard seemingly grown out of the cold flesh-like substance that made up the mask. It was complete down to the mole under the right eye.

They seemed to be alive.

â€œThis is not makeup!â€ she shrieked before she dropped the mask to the desk and started screaming, staring at the things.

It shocked all of them. Carthage dropped the briefcase on the desk and backed away from the woman, fearful of what she might do. Then he walked over to Ms. Morgan and slapped her hard in the face several times while she continued to stare at the things on the desk, screaming and screaming and screaming. Puccano drew his snub-nosed revolver.

She screamed for more than a minute before she finally stopped and just stood there, still staring at the things there.

â€œGet hold of yourself,â€ Puccano said.

â€œThatâ€™s real!â€ Morgan said. â€œItâ€™s Dr. Adamsâ€™ face!â€

â€œWhat?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œItâ€™s Dr. Adamsâ€™ face!â€ Morgan shrieked.

â€œLet me take a look at that,â€ Puccano said, putting his revolver back into his pocket.

â€œI thought this was a joke but itâ€™s not!â€ Ms. Morgan yelled, tears starting to flow down her cheeks.

Puccano found that the things did seem to be real though he couldnâ€™t for the life of him figure out how someone had make such a realistic mask out of living flesh

â€œItâ€™s real!â€ Ms. Morgan said. She felt like she was on the verge of screaming.

â€œIf thatâ€™s Dr. Adamsâ€™ face â€¦â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œProbably his briefcase too,â€ Carthage said.

â€œâ€¦ where, or perhaps I should say what, is Dr. Adams?â€ Brooks said.

â€œThe cylinders?â€ Carthage said.

â€œWhat?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œHis life force?â€ Morgan said.

They looked at the cylinders. Puccano looked again at the mask.

â€œItâ€™s a human face!â€ Ms. Morgan shrieked again.

â€œBut, he had to wear it,â€ Puccano said. â€œSomeoneâ€™s got to wear the face.â€

â€œOr some THING,â€ Carthage said.

Puccano noticed that there were eyeholes and the mouth was a slit but it had lips and everything. As Puccano examined the mouth, Ms. Morgan shrieked again.

â€œYou remember how he was talking!?!â€ she yelled.

â€œIn a whisper?â€ Puccano said.

â€œNo!â€ she replied. â€œHe couldnâ€™t move his mouth!â€

â€œItâ€™s true,â€ Puccano said. â€œHe talked very low.â€

â€œAnd his lips didnâ€™t move!â€ the woman cried.

Puccano noted that there was a vibration of some kind in the air when theyâ€™d been there earlier that evening and Oâ€™Conner said they should go back to the hotel and talk about it.

â€œI think we should go,â€ Dr. Brooks agreed.

â€œWhy donâ€™t we take the face?â€ Puccano said.

â€œUh-huh,â€ Carthage said.

â€œWhat?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œI donâ€™t want to take the face!â€ Ms. Morgan screamed.

â€œItâ€™s Katieâ€™s car, I think she decides if the face comes,â€ Oâ€™Conner said.

â€œTake a picture of the face!â€ Ms. Morgan shrieked. â€œTake a picture!â€

She pulled a Kodak camera from her backpack and dropped it on the desk. She also pulled out a flash and a box of powder, leaving them on the desk. Puccano was still for taking the face though Dr. Brooks didnâ€™t want him to.

â€œIf we take the face, theyâ€™re going to know we took the face!â€ Dr. Brooks said.

Oâ€™Conner noted that it would do no good to take it to the police – the things were killing the police. Puccano said they would just take it to their hotel.

â€œWhy?â€ Carthage asked.

â€œThen what?â€ Oâ€™Conner said.

â€œI donâ€™t want that face in the car with me!â€ Ms. Morgan said.

Puccano said that if they had the face and hands, whomever had been using them wouldnâ€™t be able to disguise themselves any more and they could see who it was. Carthage, who was also getting more and more unnerved in the dark, claustrophobic room, told the man he didnâ€™t want to see who was in the mask. Puccano walked to the curtains and flung them open but the darkness outside was almost impenetrable. He could see the great tree tops and the overcast sky above but little else.

Ms. Morgan begin inching towards the archway, wanting nothing more to do with the face, the hands, or anything else in the horrible room.

â€œAnyone want to check the briefcase?â€ Carthage asked.

â€œNo,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

Puccano put down the horrible mask and opened the briefcase even as Dr. Brooks moved towards where Morgan stood in the archway. He found several file folders in the leather briefcase. He pulled them out and found that each of them had a typewritten name upon it. The names were: Jason Carthage, Charles Puccano, Grace Oâ€™Conner, Claire McAdams, and Dr. Katie Brooks.

â€œYou need to see this,â€ he said.

Scribbled across the front of a sixth folder were the words Dorothy Morgan.

Both Dr. Brooks and Ms. Morgan crept back into the room. Dr. Brooks almost had to drag Ms. Morgan. There was not enough light in the room to really read the papers within so it was decided to take a picture of the face and hands. Puccano put the files back into the briefcase and they decided to get out of the house. It was brought up that there might be more information in the house.

Carthage loaded the flash cartridge and took a picture of the face and hands lying on the desk. The smell of flash powder filled the room and Puccano picked up the strangely lifelike face and hands and put them back in the seat where they had lain before.

â€œHere, Dorothy,â€ Puccano said. â€œHereâ€™s your camera. Hereâ€™s the briefcase. You want to run them out to the auto once we find the key?â€

He handed both items to the woman and she turned and left the room.

â€œI donâ€™t need a key,â€ she said under her breath.

â€œI want to look at my file,â€ Dr. Brooks said to Puccano.

â€œYou want to look at it here or at the hotel?â€ Puccano said.

â€œI donâ€™t think we should take it out of here,â€ Dr. Brooks said. â€œIf we take it out of here, theyâ€™re going to know we were in a room we werenâ€™t supposed to have been in.â€

â€œTheyâ€™re going to know anyway,â€ Carthage said.

â€œI think weâ€™re better off if we leave the things behind,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

They suddenly heard a wrenching crash from the foyer.

â€œWhat was that?â€ Dr. Brooks said. â€œWhat was that?â€

Puccano had his revolver in his hand and with a twist of his wrist, Mr. Carthage pulled the handle from his cane, revealing a long and deadly-looking blade hidden within. Puccano called for Dorothy and they ran into the corridor. They saw Ms. Morgan leaving the house.

â€œWhere is she going?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

Puccano told her that the woman was taking the camera and the briefcase to the car. They guessed she had broken the lock on the door to get out.

\* \* \*

Ms. Morgan reached the Cadillac and put the briefcase and her camera in the back seat. She got into the automobile and looked down to feel around where she had seen the rifle case before. She opened it up and found an immense, double-barreled rifle within. She picked it up and sat there, holding the weapon closely. She recognized it as an elephant gun and that made her feel better.

Her foot touched a small metal box that rattled and she assumed there were shells within. She cracked the gun open and found it was unloaded.

\* \* \*

Puccano suggested they keep looking around the house and wondered aloud if anyone was in the house.  
â€œOh, Iâ€™m sure somethingâ€™s here,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œIâ€™m sure somethingâ€™s here too,â€ Carthage said. â€œWhether itâ€™s paying any attention to us â€¦â€

â€œLetâ€™s just read the files and go,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

They discussed it for several minutes until they realized that Ms. Morgan had not come back. When they went outside, they found her in the Cadillac, clutching the elephant rifle to her chest.

â€œWhat are we doing?â€ she asked. â€œWhat are we doing now?â€

â€œUh â€¦ we want to read the files,â€ Dr. Brooks told her.

â€œIs that what you have?â€ Ms. Morgan asked. â€œThe files?â€

â€œTheyâ€™re in the briefcase,â€ Dr. Brooks said carefully.

â€œOh â€¦ I have the files,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œYes, you have the files,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

Ms. Morgan handed her the briefcase.

\* \* \*

Puccano had not followed Carthage, Oâ€™Conner, and Brooks out to the automobile. Instead, he had gone into through the archway that led off the foyer on the opposite side from the parlor. He found a good-sized dining room with a large table and chairs. He saw in the dim light that there appeared to be several books on the table.

Puccano touched the light switch on the wall and only about three bulbs in the electric chandelier above lit up. It was enough for him to see that books were strewn across the table. He began to look through the books and found they were covered with dust as if theyâ€˜d lain undisturbed for some time. They all appeared to be books about legends and lore of Vermont.

Dust began to float into the air.

\* \* \*

Dr. Brooks reached into the front seat of her Cadillac and flicked the switch that turned on the headlights of her automobile. She took the briefcase to the front of the auto and pulled out the file folder with her name upon it. She leafed through the file.

It had detailed information about her. Her name, date of birth, address, telephone number, names and address of friends and associates, and even notes on her daily routine. The amount of detail about her life was unnerving and there were even hospital records noted in the file. Information on the police report about the break-in at her house the week before was also there.

Dr. Brooks told Oâ€™Conner what sheâ€™d found and the other woman found that her own file had the same things.

Carthage was trying to calm Ms. Morgan down and was horrified when he saw her load the elephant gun and put several more shells in her pocket.

â€œMind where youâ€™re pointing that,â€ he muttered.

Dr. Brooks called to Carthage and he walked to the front of the automobile.

â€œRead this,â€ Dr. Brooks said, handing him the folder with his name on it. He looked it over and realized that though there was information from hospital visits and other records, there were no details of a personal nature more than a week old. He found that the traffic tickets he received in Boston were also noted. He felt a cold chill go down his back.

Dr. Brooks opened Dorothyâ€™s folder and found a handwritten note within with her name and a question mark.

Carthage grabbed Puccanoâ€™s file from Dr. Brooks and looked through it. Most of his contacts were listed as police officers though others had unusual names and were marked â€œUnderworld figure.â€ That got Carthageâ€™s attention but he realized it was going to take some time to fully go through the files.

Just then Puccano came out of the house. He told them he wanted to look upstairs. Ms. Morgan got out of the back seat of the auto, the elephant gun in her hand.

â€œIâ€™m ready,â€ she said.

Puccano was waving his revolver around and Carthage ducked. The barber noticed that the three were standing around the front of Dr. Brooksâ€™ Cadillac and looking through the files.

â€œWhatâ€™s in those files?â€ he said.

â€œWould you mind not pointing that gun at me?â€ Carthage said.

â€œWhatâ€™s in those files?â€ Puccano said again.

â€œEverything,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œEverything about what?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œEverything about you!â€ Carthage said.

â€œEverything about you, about him, about me,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œLet me look at my file,â€ Puccano said.

He jerked the file out of Carthageâ€™s hands and quickly looked through it. It was insanely detailed and he saw information on the police report heâ€™d made about the break-in at his shop and even a list of every person heâ€™d given a haircut to in the last week.

Dr. Brooks saw that there was a file for Claire McAdams as well. She looked through it and found nothing of interest though it was noted that she had lost her job.

â€œI donâ€™t know about you but this is all crap!â€ Puccano said, tossing the file aside. Papers scattered to the ground in front of the automobile. â€œIâ€™m going up that stairwell. I want to see whatâ€™s up in that tower up there.â€

â€œIâ€™ll go with you,â€ Ms. Morgan said. â€œI donâ€™t want to step foot in that room though.â€

He guessed she meant the library.

â€œAre you going to bring that?â€ Puccano asked, pointing at the elephant rifle.

â€œYeah,â€ Ms. Morgan replied.

â€œYou lead, Iâ€™ll get your back,â€ Puccano said to the wild-eyed woman. He turned to the professor. â€œDr. Brooks, do you have a weapon?â€

â€œI do,â€ Dr. Brooks replied.

Ms. Morgan was looking around nervously as they all headed back to the house. Dr. Brooks shut off the headlights and tucked the briefcase back into the Cadillac. Oâ€™Conner quickly gathered the papers Puccano had scattered and put them in to the automobile as well. Then she scurried into the house after the others.

They all crept up the stairs, passing the second floor, and then proceeding to the third floor. It was very dark and dusty on those steps and on the third floor, they opened onto a landing in what appeared to be a study or a reading room. Small doors opened off the room, probably leading to attic storage spaces. An archway to the left led to an area where windows looked out into the darkness beyond.

On the landing were a pair of soft chairs and a small table with a lamp upon it. It was very dark and Ms. Morgan switched on her electric torch.

â€œThank you Dorothy,â€ Puccano said.

They peeked into the turret room and saw there were windows on the other three walls. Brass rifle shells were scattered across the floor and a .303 Lee Enfield rifle was leaning in the corner. A box of shells was on the table as well as another clip that looked like it would fit the rifle. There were dozens of brass shells on the floor.

Carthage switched on the lamp that stood on the table in the reading room. He moved into the turret room and picked up the rifle, checked the clip and saw it was full, and then pocketed the shells and the extra clip, which was also full.

â€œIt looks like someone used this as a spot to shoot into the woods,â€ Puccano said. â€œLike a sniperâ€™s tower.â€

Puccano took the rifle and handed his revolver to Ms. Oâ€™Conner. Carthage gave the man the bullets as well, wishing the weapon had been a shotgun. He was a much better shot with a shotgun than a rifle.

It was very dark outside of the windows though when he looked down, Puccano could make out the shape of the automobile. He could also see the carriage house and make out a little of the kennel.

Ms. Morgan suggested that some of them should go search the carriage house and the kennel. Carthage asked her if she wanted them to split up after sheâ€™d found that face in the library. She replied that she wasnâ€™t scared of much though the face had unnerved her. When Puccano asked if sheâ€™d like to come with him to examine the bedrooms, she said sheâ€™d rather go outside. Carthage noted that there were two large weapons now with them and he thought they should keep one with each group if they split up.

As they walked back onto the landing, Carthage noticed a loose board on one wall. Ms. Morgan pried it open and shined the flashlight within. There was a book there. She pulled it out and gave it to Puccano, who looked it over and opened it.

It proved to be a handwritten diary. The first entry was in 1910 and noted that the writer had just moved to the area of Vermont near Montpelier. He guessed it was Dr. Adamsâ€™ diary and so flipped to the back.

The last entry was dated Sept. 6, 1922. It read:

â€œI will try to leave this place tomorrow. With the full moon, perhaps I can get as far as Northfield or even Montpelier, where I might take a train east to Boston or even Dover though I wish to leave these haunted hills. I only hope they let me go. I will leave this journal hidden here in the event of my demise. I fear that if the fungi do not get me, their human servants will.

â€œThe thingsâ€™ lair must be on the west face of Chase Mountain. There is a large cave there covered with a great boulder too heavy for anyone to move. However, erosion has left a place where a man might wiggle through. That must be where they are.â€

He put the book down and they decided they would read it later. He gave it to Ms. Morgan to hold onto and she stuffed it into her backpack.

They decided that Dr. Brooks and Ms. Morgan would examine the kennel and carriage house while the rest searched the bedrooms.

Â

\* \* \*

Â

Dr. Brooks and Ms. Morgan crept downstairs and exited the house. They found that the kennel was probably built within the last five or so years and had a rough look about it, as if it were built by an amateur or put up quickly or perhaps both. There were numerous large doghouses in the chain-link fenced run around the entirety of the building.

The small building appeared to have not been used in some time. Cupboards within held rotten dry dog food and one of them was full of bones. Careful examination proved that the bones were those of several dogs.

They crossed the yard to the carriage house and found that the building looked old though it was still intact. There was room within for a carriage or perhaps an automobile and a couple of stalls for horses, all empty. A ladder led up to a loft where two round windows bereft of glass looked out onto the yard. Cracks were in the walls where the wood had twisted and shrunk.

They headed back into the house.

\* \* \*

Puccano, Carthage, and Ms. Oâ€™Conner started with the master bedroom and found nothing of interest until Puccano tried to open a pair of double doors that led off the room. They proved to be locked but he kicked them open to reveal a room without windows. Light streaming in from the lamp in the bedroom revealed a large pentagonal drawing on the wall. The thing was marked with figures, mathematical formulae and unsettling symbols. It was some five feet across and looked unlike anything they had ever seen before.

Carthage went to examine the wall while Puccano headed into another bedroom to search on his own. The museum curator first looked over the thing and then touched it to see how thick the paint that had been used to craft it was.

His hand went through the wall as if it wasnâ€™t there!

He jerked his hand back, suddenly feeling weak, and then laughed strangely. Ms. Oâ€™Conner, who had been watching the man, jerked back and shook her head. She didnâ€™t think she could have seen what she thought sheâ€™d seen. Carthage laughed loudly again and Puccano came into the room.

â€œWhatâ€™s going on?â€ he said.

â€œTouch the wall!â€ Carthage said with another burst of laughter.

â€œWhy, whatâ€™s going to happen?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œTouch the wall!â€ Carthage said again with a maniacal grin.

Puccano moved forward and tapped the wall with the end of the Lee Enfield. It knocked smartly against the plaster.

â€œNo no, with your hand,â€ Carthage said.

â€œYou touch the wall with your hand,â€ Puccano said.

â€œI did that already,â€ Carthage replied. â€œShe saw me do it.â€

â€œI did,â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner said.

â€œThen why do you want me to touch the wall?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œItâ€™s strange,â€ Carthage said.

â€œHis hands â€¦â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner said. She stopped but didnâ€™t really want to say what had happened. It was impossible.

Carthage picked up the cane where heâ€™d dropped it on the floor and touched it to the wall. Then he thought a moment and touched its tip to the strange symbol on the wall. It didnâ€™t go through. He turned his cane around and then touched the handle to the wall but it was solid. He turned the handle so that his hand actually touched the wall and as soon as his flesh touched the wall, it went into it again. The cane went in as well.

He jerked his hand back, feeling uneasy and again weak for a few moments.

â€œWhen it touched your flesh first, it went through?â€ Puccano said.

â€œYes!â€ Carthage replied with a grin.

Puccano walked forward and tried it as well. His hand and the rifle both went into the wall and he stepped back, only a little unnerved by the impossible thing. They were still talking about it when suddenly Dr. Brooks and Ms. Morgan were in the doorway.

â€œYouâ€™ve got to see this!â€ Carthage said.

â€œReal close!â€ Puccano said.

Carthage shoved his hand through the wall and then pulled it back out.

â€œWhat?â€ Dr. Brooks said. â€œWhat did you just do?â€

Carthage grinned at her as Ms. Morgan walked forward and touched the end of the elephant rifle to the wall. It tapped there and didnâ€™t go through.

â€œIt only works with flesh,â€ Carthage said.

â€œYeah, right,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œDorothy, I want to show you that heâ€™s crazy,â€ Puccano said. â€œGo ahead and put your face right up against it.â€

She looked at him like he was mad as he told her to put her face up to the diagram on the wall, telling her it was an optical illusion.

â€œNo,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

Ms. Morgan walked to the wall and looked very closely at the diagram. Then she put her face against the wall and it sunk into the wall. Dr. Brooks backed away and almost screamed.

â€œWhat do you see?â€ Puccano said.

Her jaw moved and then she moved forward and disappeared through the wall.

â€œWhereâ€™d she go!?!â€ Dr. Brooks said.

\* \* \*

Ms. Morgan had seen only darkness beyond the hideous symbol on the wall and tried to tell the others when she heard Puccano ask what she saw. She had not been able to even hear herself speak, a strange and unnerving thing. So, she stepped into the room. As soon as she took that step, she saw a fungi or moss that was attached to the ceiling just over her bent head start to glow in an eerie green luminescence.

The walls, floor, and ceiling of the room beyond the wall were cold stone and appeared to have been cut perfectly, leaving a reflective surface. The room had only about a six-foot ceiling so she had to stoop under it. Walls on either side of her came closer together at the far end of the room and on that wall was a circular metal disk about five feet wide with cuts in the metal that all came together in the center, almost like the shutter of a camera. A small, metallic pentagon was on the wall with some kind of small, spindle-shaped mechanism upon it.

To her right was a shelf with a dozen more of the shiny metal cases like the ones that had been in the library.

On the wall behind her was a pentagonal symbol that looked much like the one she had just stepped through. Beside it was another, more intricate symbol of the same general size and shape though with different symbols and lettering. There were more of the symbols in the second pentagonal shape than in the first one.

She looked around the room carefully and then walked back to the wall where the symbol was.

\* \* \*

â€œDorothy!â€ Dr. Brooks and Ms. Oâ€™Conner called.

There was no answer.

â€œCharles, go into the wall and see what you see,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œMy God!â€ Carthage said.

â€œI will,â€ Puccano said though he made no move towards the wall. Instead he turned to Dr. Brooks. â€œWhat did you find?â€

She quickly told him of the rotten dog food in the kennel and the dog bones in the cupboard. She said there was nothing in the carriage house either. Puccano told her that the doors to the room had been locked and he explained what they had done in the room and what had happened when they had touched the painted wall with their hands.

Ms. Oâ€™Conner mentioned the diary theyâ€™d found in the room above and the boulder that had been written about. Dr. Brooks told them that theyâ€™d seen a great boulder on the mountain during their drive the day before when theyâ€™d hiked up a nearby mountain. She remembered seeing a house at the base of the mountain where the boulder was and guessed it had been the Adams house.

Just then, a hand came out of the wall and they all took a step back.

â€œIs that Dorothyâ€™s hand?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œIt looks pretty big so it might be,â€ Puccano said.

â€œGrab it!â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œCarthage!â€ Puccano said. â€œWhy donâ€™t you grab that hand?â€

â€œOkay, fine!â€ Carthage said.

He grabbed the hand by the wrist and it turned and grabbed his hand and pulled him through the wall!

\* \* \*

Carthage found himself in the small stone room. He looked around desperately and saw that Ms. Morgan was there, holding his hand. He had his sword cane in his other hand and was glad of that at least. He was also glad to see that Ms. Morgan still carried the massive elephant gun.

She quickly explained that she had found herself in the room and he carefully looked at the two symbols on the wall and at the cylinders on the shelf. He guessed that the iris on the opposite wall was some kind of strange door and eventually he manipulated the small spindle-shaped mechanism on the panel beside it.

Without a sound, the iris opened, revealing a larger area beyond. Carthage peeked out to see a five-sided room with a ceiling hidden in the darkness in the dim light that spilled from the room they stood in. Dorothy had just gotten out her flashlight to shine it around when another of the iris doors opened and something came out.

The horrible creature was about five feet long, nearly the size of a man, but crawled on the ground on numerous segmented legs. It had a crustaceous body with a vast pair of dorsal fins or membranous wings and the head seemed to be some sort of convoluted ellipsoid covered with a multitude of very short antenna. The thingâ€™s head glowed in strange colors and it suddenly stopped where it was for a moment, then lunged at Carthage with a terrible speed, snapping at him with claws at the end of its legs.

Carthage jerked back with a shout and then Ms. Morganâ€™s elephant gun roared, knocking her backwards as the stink of gunpowder filled the room. The great bullet had missed the target, however, and ricocheted off the stone walls of the outer room.

Carthage tried to stab the horrible thing as Ms. Morgan fired a second shot with little more effect than the first one other than to fill the room with the reek of the firearm and almost deafen the two. The thing continued to try to injure or grapple with Carthage while he tried to stab it as Ms. Morgan laboriously reloaded the rifle.

Then it slashed Carthageâ€™s arm with a razor-sharp nipper, cutting his left bicep almost to the bone. Carthage screamed and stumbled back and Ms. Morgan rushed forward and kicked the thing in the midsection, sending it crashing back into the outer room where slammed into the ground. Carthage, bleeding profusely from his arm, followed the thing and stabbed it with his sword blade but then saw that the thing was still alive. It dragged itself to the other open iris door as Ms. Morgan fired a shot into it. It jerked to one side but continued to pull itself through the door.

Blood seemed to be everywhere as Carthage tried to hold the horrible wound closed.

â€œI have to get out of here!â€ he cried.

He stumbled back towards the strange symbol on the wall and vanished through it.

\* \* \*

The others were still waiting to see what would happen next when Carthage stumbled out of the wall and into the room. His left arm was bloody and dripping and his coat sleeve was cut wide open. He stumbled out of the room with the symbol, made his way to the bed and sat down on the edge of it.

â€œWhat happened?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œSomething attacked me!â€ Carthage said, trying to apply pressure to the horrible wound. â€œHelp me out with this! Anybody got bandages?â€

â€œWhereâ€™s Dorothy?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œStill in the room!â€ Carthage said. â€œI need help!â€

Puccano suggested he use his tie like a tourniquet.

â€œI canâ€™t really do it myself people!â€ Carthage said. â€œCâ€™mon! I think Iâ€™m going to die here!â€

They helped him to get the bleeding stopped. Ms. Oâ€™Conner helped him the most, knowing some first aid and veterinary medicine. She patched him up as best she could.

â€œThereâ€™s a monster!â€ Carthage said. â€œI donâ€™t know if itâ€™s dead!â€

\* \* \*

Ms. Morgan went to the central room again, this time shining her flashlight up into the darkness. The walls there went up about 50 feet to 75 feet before it ended in a flat ceiling that reflected the light like the floors and walls of the rest of the place had. The five-sided shaft had an iris door on each wall.

She looked to her left where the iris door had closed a few moments before. She manipulated the spindle and the door slid open with the barest of hisses.

The room was the same size and shape as the room with the strange symbols on the wall. Across from the door she stood in was another iris door in the far wall. The room was filled with metallic containers filled with odd minerals. Most of stones were black with specks of white and she picked one up and examined it, finding it greasy to the touch but leaving no residue. She put it back down and then crossed the room to open the door on the opposite wall.

A crudely dug tunnel lay beyond. Even as the fungus on the ceiling of the room she was in began to glow, she closed the door again and exited the room, heading back for the room with the strange symbols on the wall.

\* \* \*

Something else came through the strange portal. It was Dorothy and they could smell gunpowder. There was still smoke coming out of one her the barrels of the elephant rifle. Ms. Morgan noticed it and blew it away.

â€œI didnâ€™t even hear a shot,â€ Puccano said. â€œWhat did you shoot?â€

â€œIt was the beast,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œHer beasties exist,â€ Carthage said.

â€œI told you!â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œYou saw one?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œA small one,â€ Carthage said.

â€œI shot it,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œDid it die?â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner asked.

â€œNo, but it dragged itself back into another amazing room,â€ Ms. Morgan said. â€œThere are minerals in there.â€

â€œThereâ€™s more than one room back there?â€ Puccano said.

â€œThere are different rooms in there,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

Dr. Brooks asked if they had doors or more of the odd, painted walls and Ms. Morgan told her some of the rooms had normal doors. When asked how many rooms there were, Ms. Morgan guessed half a dozen.

â€œDid you see anything in these rooms?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œWas it like a house?â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner asked. â€œFurnished? Wallpaper?â€

Ms. Morgan was unnerved and took some time to answer any questions.

â€œThe beast did not seem to-â€ She started.

â€œWhat happened, did you get attacked?â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner asked.

Ms. Morgan told them what happened when the beast attacked and how the thing got away, its head flickering in different colors. She described the thing as hissing at her as it fled but neither she nor Carthage were terribly coherent in their discourse of the events. It had all happened so quickly that they were both still unsure.

Mr. Carthage asked Dr. Brooks if she had her hip flask and the woman gave it to him. He took a solid slug of the whiskey within and thanked her for it.

â€œI know what door it went into,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œYou can find it again?â€ Mr. Puccano asked.

â€œI think so,â€ she said. â€œIâ€™m not as good a shot with this rifle as I thought so I didnâ€™t want to go after it alone. I think it was hurt pretty badly.â€

They talked about what Dr. Brooks had seen and Mr. Carthage noted that what she had seen seemed to have been larger than the creature they had seen just a short time before. Puccano was all for blowing a hole in the wall and destroying the symbol so that things would not be able to get in or out. They talked for some time about destroying the wall with rifles and Carthage wished he had a shotgun. Ms. Morgan was not sure that destroying the wall would have any affect on the portal on the other side. Puccano questioned her about he symbols on the wall on the other side and then asked if sheâ€™d take her camera back through the wall and take a picture of the thing on the other side. He went so far as to ask Dr. Brooks to offer Ms. Morgan money to go back through and take a picture. Dr. Brooks asked Ms. Morgan how badly hurt the thing had been and Morgan said she thought it was hurt fairly badly.

â€œAll right, Iâ€™m going through,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œYouâ€™re going to go through?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œIâ€™ll go,â€ Dr. Brooks said again.

â€œAnd take a picture?â€ Puccano said.

â€œWell, sheâ€™s not going alone, Iâ€™m not going alone,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œThereâ€™s more to discover in those rooms,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œAll right, Iâ€™ll go,â€ Puccano said.

â€œOkay,â€ Dr. Brooks replied.

Puccano suggested the others search the other bedrooms. Carthage said heâ€™d stay right there and would check the other bedrooms with Dr. Brooks.

Puccano and Ms. Morgan went through the wall.

â€œGood luck,â€ Carthage said after they vanished.

Iâ€™m going to die, he thought.

\* \* \*

Puccano caught his breath as he arrived in the strange room. He and Ms. Morgan looked around a little bit and he was especially intrigued by the other design on the wall. It looked much more complex than the one that he had seen in the sitting room and had different symbols and numbers. He decided to experiment with it and put his hand through. This time he felt terribly drained and his hand felt cold and numb as soon as he put it through. He left his hand there and it began to ache. The horrible cold ache continued and he finally jerked his hand back out of the room.

His hand was swollen and his fingernails had turned black. It was very red overall and there were spots where bruises were forming. It looked like blood vessels had burst under the skin and his entire hand ached and hurt. Frost was over part of his hand and his fingertips had turned gray as if they were frostbit.

â€œWe donâ€™t want to go there,â€ he said, holding his hand under his arm to try to warm it.

They did decide to take two of the cylinders from the shelf on the wall and Ms. Morgan tucked them into her backpack.

They crossed the room to the open iris door and then into the room with the containers full of the strange mineral. Puccano suggested that Ms. Morgan take some of the metal and she emptied her makeup kit into her backpack and put some of the metal within. Then they opened the far door and entered the narrow tunnels.

The ceiling in the tunnels varied from around five feet high to well over ten feet. The walls, floor, and ceiling, though not cut and perfect like the walls of the rooms they had been in, were very regular, almost like great scoops of dirt and rock had been taken out all at once. In places, the rock and dirt were scorched, while in other spots, rocks were sheered off as if by some great saw.

They went about 100 feet down that tunnel, their only light Ms. Morganâ€™s electric torch. Then they came to a place where the tunnel split. Puccano thought they should keep going and suggested they leave something behind to show where their path was. Ms. Morgan left some of her makeup and they followed the left tunnel for another 100 feet or so before it again split and also had a third tunnel that went up and to the right.

After some discussion, they left a lipstick and then helped each other to climb to the upper tunnel. They followed that for well over a hundred feet before a cross tunnel intersected it just before that tunnel split as well. By then, Ms. Morgan was becoming nervous but Puccano thought they should press on. They left some makeup and again took the tunnel that was to the furthest left.

After only a few dozen yards, the tunnel opened into what appeared to be a natural cavern. Moss and lichen grew in the humid atmosphere and stalactites hung from the ceiling. Stalagmites grew from the floor and the sound of water dripping came from deep inside the room. Other tunnels or holes exited the room and as they discussed continuing or heading back, they heard the sound of rocks striking the floor as if something had disturbed them.

Each of them armed with their rifle, they entered the cavern and soon found a spot where the rocks had fallen. It was completely flat and there was no where the rocks could have fallen from however. Thatâ€™s when they noticed other, small piles of rocks. Ms. Morgan kicked one over but nothing was within. Then she saw what appeared to be claw marks in one of the rock walls.

They left that room and headed back the way theyâ€™d come but when they reached the spot where the tunnel from above spilled down into the tunnel below, they couldnâ€™t find Ms. Morganâ€™s lipstick. Puccano wanted to continue exploring so they picked the corridor to the left again.

They found Ms. Morganâ€™s lipstick on the floor not far down that tunnel.

They again stopped to discuss whether they should press on but Puccano was adamant. Something in the place might five them a clue as to what was going on in the house or the strange place.

They had gone further down that tunnel than any other when Puccano stepped in something that seemed to splash. He assumed it was water but when he pulled his foot up, something stuck to it. He pulled his shoe back from the greenish-black substance that was sticking to it and rubbed as much of it off as he could.

The further down the tunnel they went, the more of the strange, plastic-like substance they came across. There was also an odd an pungent smell.

After at least a hundred yards, the tunnel opened into another natural cavern. This one was smaller than the one they had found before and rounded with several other entrances. In the center of the room was a pool of black water. The smell was very strong.

As they stepped into the chamber, Puccano ready to go around the pool of water, it started to roll and lap up against the sides of the hole that held it. Ms. Morgan shined her light directly on the vicious substance for the first time and they saw that it was not water.

The black iridescent ooze, a shapeless mass of protoplasmic bubbles, had a myriad of temporary eyes forming and unforming as pustules of greenish light all over the horrible mass. The terrible thing, whatever it was, splashed forward and came outward, slithering towards them with horrible intent.

Puccano screamed, turned, and bolted down the tunnel the way theyâ€™d come. Ms. Morgan was not far behind him and ran as fast as she could. She suddenly realized the implication of the slime on the walls, ceiling, and floor of the tunnel theyâ€™d come down. The thing must be huge! She could hear it moving behind her, sliding and slithering down the corridor, coming ever closer, ever nearer, with probably her death the only thing on its horrible, alien mind.

She ran after Puccano as fast as she could, turning down the tunnel where theyâ€™d found her lipstick and almost screaming as the smell enveloped her. She lost sight of the man at the next juncture and then stumbled and leaned against the wall, out of breath. She looked behind her finally.

There was no sign of the horrible thing. She did not know why it had not continued to follow them and didnâ€™t care. She just hoped she would never see it again.

She stumbled down the tunnel and soon found herself back in the room with the minerals in the containers. There was still no sign of Puccano and she hoped he was all right. Then she went to the shaft to one of the unopened iris doors and manipulated the control beside it.

\* \* \*

Dr. Brooks, Ms. Oâ€™Conner, and Mr. Carthage waited for what felt like a very long time in the bedroom, watching the strange symbol on the wall carefully. It had actually been nearly a half hour before Mr. Puccano burst out of the room again.

â€œWe saw we saw-!â€ Puccano said, stumbling out of the room, his eyes wide, his jacket torn and dirty, the rifle loose in his hands. Carthage took the rifle from the man.

â€œWhat did you see?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œThe-â€ Puccano said.

â€œWhat?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œThe â€¦ the â€¦ the thing!â€

â€œThe pink thing?â€

â€œNo!â€

â€œNo?â€

â€œNo!â€

â€œWhat? Something else?â€

Puccano was grunting and making strange noises that had no meaning.

â€œThe-â€ he said.

â€œSomething with lots of feet?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œThe water wasnâ€™t water!â€ Puccano said. â€œThe black water wasnâ€™t water came up and â€¦ eyes! Eyes popping! Popping!â€

â€œWhat do you mean?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œEyes in the water popping! The water came out of the ground was up and popping, popping, popping!â€

His eyes focused on Carthage.

â€œWho are you?â€ he said.

â€œJason,â€ Carthage said.

â€œPopping?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œEyes!â€ Puccano said, looking around wildly. â€œThey were eyes and the black water came out it was smoke, water filled eyes!â€

â€œWhereâ€™s Dorothy?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œI ran, I ran and she couldnâ€™t keep up,â€ Puccano said.

â€œDorothy couldnâ€™t â€¦â€ Dr. Brooks said. â€œIs she okay?â€

â€œI donâ€™t know,â€ Puccano said.

â€œIs she hurt?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œI donâ€™t know.â€

â€œAre you hurt?â€

â€œI donâ€™t know.â€

She saw that he didnâ€™t appear to be bleeding.

â€œDoes she still have my elephant gun?â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner said. â€œI have to give that back to the zoo.â€

â€œI donâ€™t know,â€ Puccano said.

â€œDid the eyes hurt you?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œThey â€¦ it was evil,â€ Puccano said. â€œThey came after us.â€

â€œThe eyes came after you,â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œThe whole black â€¦ we, we found this, this material, this black goop with â€¦ it was water you touch it and it wouldnâ€™t touch you,â€ Puccano said. â€œSo, if she comes back, she has some of that. She, she put it in her makeup. She put it in her makeup.â€

â€œHer makeup?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œIn her makeup case,â€ Puccano said. â€œIn the case in her bag! She put, she put, she put-!â€

Dr. Brooks tried to calm the man down and asked Carthage if he still had his flask and then handed it to Puccano.

â€œWhat is this!?!â€ Puccano asked.

â€œTake a drink,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

He drank down a good amount of the flaskâ€™s contents.

â€œShe took this black stuff,â€ Puccano said, still not making a lot of sense.

â€œGoo,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

He looked confused.

â€œLike a goo and we dumped out her makeup and we put the black stuff in the case,â€ Puccano said.

â€œHowâ€™d you get it in there?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œJust kind of held it and it was kind of oozing,â€ Puccano went on. â€œWe got some of it.â€

â€œOkay,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œBut then we went down these tunnels, dozens of tunnels, and the ceiling would glow and we went in the tunnel and there was this sticky, everything was sticky, and there was sticky on the walls of the tunnel, and we got to this pit, a room with a pit, and there was this black stuff that looked like water, but when the flashlight, she shined her torch and it started coming out at us and thatâ€™s when I ran.â€

He looked them over.

â€œDid you see that pink thing at all?â€ Dr. Brooks asked him.

â€œNo, I didnâ€™t see any pink thing,â€ Puccano said.

He told them that they had taken some of the cylinders and put them in Ms. Morganâ€™s backpack.

â€œI donâ€™t think youâ€™re in the right â€¦â€ Dr. Brooks started.

â€œFrame of mind?â€ Puccano said.

â€œâ€¦ to discuss what our plan was,â€ Dr. Brooks went on.

â€œYou have a plan?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œSort of,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œWhen â€¦â€ Carthage said. He stopped and thought for a moment.

â€œWhen what?â€ Puccano said.

â€œWhatâ€™s her name?â€ Carthage went on.

â€œDorothy?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œDorothy,â€ Carthage said. â€œWhen she comes back, weâ€™re going to burn this place to the ground.â€

â€œHow do you know sheâ€™s coming back?â€ Puccano said. â€œShe might not be coming back!â€

â€œDo we need to go in after her?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œI say we burn it now!â€ Puccano said.

â€œNo!â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œWeâ€™re not burning it now,â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner said.

â€œI say we burn it now,â€ Puccano repeated.

â€œNo!â€ Dr. Brooks said again.

â€œWeâ€™re not burning it now!â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner repeated.

â€œWe came here as a group, we stay as a group,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œShe wasnâ€™t part of our group!â€ Puccano said. â€œShe was a hitchhiker! For all we know, she was one of those things.â€

â€œBut she was in my employ so we have to wait,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

Puccano just stared at her. Then he turned to Ms. Oâ€™Conner.

â€œYou havenâ€™t been in, why donâ€™t you go in?â€ he said. â€œYou havenâ€™t been in, why donâ€™t you go in?â€

â€œI donâ€™t like the status of the people coming out,â€ she simply said.

Dr. Brooks nodded as Puccano muttered something incoherent.

â€œSheâ€™s dead,â€ he said. â€œDorothyâ€™s dead.â€

â€œNo sheâ€™s not,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œSheâ€™s got to be dead!â€ Puccano said.

â€œIs she hurt?â€ Dr. Brooks said. â€œYou said she wasnâ€™t hurt, why would she be dead?â€

â€œWe were running and -â€ Puccano said.

Dr. Brooks questioned what the things that chased them could do and then accused Puccano of leaving the woman behind.

â€œThey can grab you!â€ Carthage said.

â€œWhat grab you?â€ Puccano said.

â€œThey can grab you,â€ Carthage said again.

â€œWhat can?â€ Puccano asked.

â€œThe things.â€

â€œWhat things?â€

â€œThat are in there. They did this.â€

Carthage pointed at his arm.

â€œWho are you?â€ Puccano asked him.

Carthage rolled his eyes. The man was really in a bad way.

â€œJason Carthage,â€ he said.

Puccano nodded while Dr. Brooks and Ms. Oâ€™Conner quietly talked about what to do.

\* \* \*

Ms. Morgan, meanwhile, was exploring the horribly alien place she had found herself in. She opened another of the iris doors off the main shaft and found another room, this one with a number of small cells, each sealed with an iris door comprised of metal bars. The floors, walls, and ceilings of the cells were composed of some kind of pink material and each cell was just large enough for a single person.

One of the cells held a man who cowered in the back while the other held another man who just glared at the woman. She tried to talk to them but they refused to answer and she eventually left the room and tried another iris door.

That room was the same size as the others and had a number of plastic slabs, a single large table, racks of strange, alien equipment, and several large charts depicting what appeared to be the various portions of the human brain. Portions of the brain depicted on the charts were marked with symbols and complex formulae that she couldnâ€™t even begin to understand.

Hanging over the table were several tendrils and tubes of some kind.

To her left was a cabinet with glass windows in the front. Floating within, apparently held by nothing, were several human bodies that appeared to be alive. Tubes were connected to them in various places but they had a normal skin color. Their eyes were closed as if in sleep. A gray-orange tube connected to the back of each of their heads led to the back of the cabinet.

One table held a dozen more of the shiny cylinders and she examined them more carefully. At least half of them had names upon them, one of them marked â€œDr. Richard Adams.â€ There was also a tall rig with twin lenses mounted on the front, a box with vacuum tubes and sounding board, and a small box with metal disk. A cord came out of the back of each of the connected devices.

Against one wall was a strange mechanism covered with tubes and studded with lights. She looked around briefly and then left the room, going to the last closed iris door and opening it. The room there was filled with short shelves and tables filled or covered with instruments of alien design. The stone shelves cut into the walls were filled with what looked like mineral samples and bottles containing more minerals, some of them odd-looking and wholly unfamiliar to the woman.

She only spent a moment in the room before she went back out to the five-sided room with the shaft.  
Then, to her horror, she heard the sound of flapping wings. She looked up and saw another of the horrors floating down the shaft on its membranous wings. She took one look at it and ran back to the room with the strange designs on the wall, plunging into one without looking back.

\* \* \*

As Dr. Brooks and Ms. Oâ€™Conner talked about going back into the strange wall, Ms. Morgan burst through the wall.

â€œSheâ€™s back, letâ€™s burn the place!â€ Puccano said. â€œYou said we were going to burn the place!â€

â€œJust calm down!â€ Dr. Brooks said. â€œWhat did you see Dorothy?â€

â€œA lot,â€ the woman replied.

She stepped away from the wall and suddenly something else came through. It was one of the horrible pink things with the wings and the many, claw covered legs.

â€œOh God!â€ Dr. Brooks screamed.

â€œJesus?â€ Puccano said.

Ms. Morgan kicked the thing and sent it flopping across the room. Oâ€™Conner fired a shot from Puccanoâ€™s .38 revolver and the bullet seemed to strike the thing as it jerked away.

Mr. Carthage had gotten up from the bed and limped to the far side of the room.

The horrible thing leapt backwards and fell through the wall, disappearing as if it had never been there.

â€œNo!â€ Dr. Brooks yelled.

Her .45 automatic was in her hand and she ran to the far wall, flinging herself through and vanishing even as Puccano watched, horrified. Ms. Morgan ran to the wall and vanished through it as well.

â€œDonâ€™t go â€¦â€ Puccano said.

Then he ran out of the room.

\* \* \*

Dr. Brooks found herself standing by Dorothy Morgan on the other side of the strange wall. The horrible pink thing was moving out of the room and into the shaft beyond when Dr. Brooks opened fire and struck it. It jerked once to the side and then fell and lay still, the glowing tendrils on its head turning gray.

Both women ran to the thing and Ms. Morgan nudged it with her foot but it didnâ€™t move. They guessed it was dead and when Dorothy told Dr. Jacobs about what had happened to Puccanoâ€™s hand when he put it in the other strange painting on the wall, they decided to put the thing through it.

They found that it wouldnâ€™t go into the wall. Thatâ€™s when they really guessed it was truly dead.

â€œShow me this place,â€ Dr. Brooks said.

Ms. Morgan, carefully looking up the shaft in the center, began to show her the other rooms.

\* \* \*

Puccano had not only left the master bedroom, he had left the house. The barber had enough and didnâ€™t feel like he could take it any more. He fled the house and ran to Dr. Brooks Cadillac, dropping into the front seat and pressing the electric starter on the vehicle.

Nothing happened.

He looked at the starter and pressed it again and again before abandoning the car and running down the dirt road that led to the house. Then he turned west on Old Moretown Road and continued to run until he spotted the lights of an automobile coming from the other direction. He ran into the middle of the road and waved his arms over his head, flagging the aged soft top Model T Ford down.

â€œCan I help you mister?â€ the man on the passenger side asked.

He was a small man, about the same size as Puccano, and was solid and muscular. He looked somewhat familiar but Puccano couldnâ€™t place the face. The driver was strangely silent.

â€œThe house, the black eyes, the stuff, my friends are in the house!â€ Puccano said.

â€œAll right, get in the back,â€ the man said.

As Puccano climbed into the back seat, the silent driver put the car into gear.

â€œNo!â€ Puccano said. â€œDonâ€™t head back there!â€

The driver ignored him.

â€œYouâ€™re heading the wrong direction!â€ Puccano said. â€œYouâ€™re heading back to the house!â€

â€œWhat?â€ the passenger called over the wind blowing into the auto. â€œWhat are you talking about?â€

â€œThe the the doors and the black stuff and the eyes!â€ Puccano said.

â€œYeah?â€ the man said.

â€œMy friends with the guns and-â€ Puccano went on.

â€œOh, they got guns?â€ the man asked.

â€œThey got guns and the ooze with the eyes!â€ Puccano nearly screamed.

The auto slowed as it turned onto the dirt road leading up to the Adamsâ€™ house.

â€œOh no â€¦â€ Puccano said quietly.

He looked around wildly.

â€œNo!â€ he said. â€œNo! This is all wrong! This is still â€¦ no, I need to go to the hotel in Moretown! I want to go back to Boston!â€

â€œSure, sure, weâ€™ll take you back to Boston,â€ the passenger said.

â€œGood, good,â€ Puccano said. â€œYouâ€™ll take me back to Boston right now.â€

â€œYeah, weâ€™re not taking you back to Boston,â€ the man said turning around as the car pulled up at the front of the house. â€œGet out.â€

Puccano saw that the passenger had a .45 revolver in his hand and as the other man let the engine die, he saw that he had a smaller .32 revolver in his hand. The driver stepped out of the car and put a cigarette in his mouth, lighting it. In the light from the flame, Puccano recognized him as the man who had answered the door of the Adamsâ€™ house earlier that day. He tossed the match away and grinned at Puccano.

\* \* \*

Carthage and Oâ€™Conner, still waiting to see what, if anything, was going to come out of the horrible wall this time, thought they heard an automobile engine out front. Oâ€™Conner left the room while Carthage, the .303 rifle in his hand, ducked down behind the bed and aimed the rifle at the door.

Oâ€™Conner went to the darkened front bedroom and saw that there were now two vehicles in front of the house. Three men were leaving one of them and heading for the front door. One of the men was gesturing wildly.

â€œYou better get back in the room because Iâ€™m going to fire at the next thing to show his face!â€ Carthage called from the next room.

\* \* \*

Puccano got out of the automobile as ordered.

â€œI donâ€™t want to go back to the house!â€ he said.

The passenger took him by the right arm and led him into the house while the other man marched on his left side.

They entered the house.

\* \* \*

â€œHello?â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner heard someone call from below. â€œHello?â€

â€œI saw a car pull up and it looked like some men had him,â€ she called to Carthage. â€œIâ€™m going to go see them.â€

â€œHello?â€ the voice from below came again.

â€œItâ€™s me!â€ Puccano called.

\* \* \*

â€œShut up!â€ the man who had Puccano by the arm muttered to him.

Puccano flinched but didnâ€™t say anything else. A few moments later, Ms. Oâ€™Conner came down the steps with Puccanoâ€™s .38 revolver in her hand. She saw that Puccano was flanked by two men, one of them she recognized as the man who had answered the door that morning. The other man had Puccano by the arm and when they spotted her, they both raised their arms to reveal revolvers, now pointed right at her.

â€œDrop it lady,â€ the man who had Puccano said.

She dropped her pistol at the foot of the steps.

â€œWho else is in the house?â€ the other man asked her.

â€œUh â€¦â€ Oâ€™Conner said.

â€œNo one!â€ Puccano muttered.

â€œShut up!â€ the man next to him said, not taking his eyes off Oâ€™Conner. â€œCome on!â€

\* \* \*

Upstairs, Jason Carthage heard someone say to â€œshut upâ€ from below. He started to carefully sneak towards the door to the room. He crept to the top of the stairs and looked over the railing but could only see Oâ€™Conner standing at the foot of the stairs almost directly below him. Her hands were held out and he could see a revolver on the ground at her feet.

He guessed that whomever she was talking to was right under him.

He started to head down the steps.

\* \* \*

â€œThereâ€™s just a couple other people here,â€ Oâ€™Conner said.

â€œSheâ€™s lying!â€ Puccano yelped. â€œSheâ€™s lying!â€

â€œShut up!â€ Puccanoâ€™s captor said to him again. â€œCalm down.â€

Puccano suddenly broke free from the man on his right and leapt at the revolver on the floor. Both men tried to grab at the man but he was already out of reach and managed to get hold of the revolver before they could get him. He spun around and fired a single shot that struck the driver in the side. The man screamed and stumbled backwards.

Oâ€™Conner turned and fled up the steps as the man who had been holding Puccano fired a shot from his .45 revolver. With a grunt, Puccano fell back onto the steps, dropping the handgun and lying still. The other man stumbled back towards the library, holding his bleeding wound with his left hand.

â€œYou werenâ€™t supposed to kill him!â€ the injured man yelled.

Carthage had moved down to the staircase.

â€œNobody else has to die or get hurt!â€ he called.

He saw both of the men look up towards him though he doubted they could see him crouched in the dark stairwell. Both of them aimed their pistols up in his general direction.

â€œThereâ€™s a rifle on you!â€ Carthage called. â€œNobody else has to get hurt or die!â€

The injured man, blood still dripping from the wound, stumbled past the other man and towards the front door where he disappeared from Carthageâ€™s sight. Closer to him, Oâ€™Conner stumbled up the steps past him.

The other manâ€™s .45 revolver roared again and the banister near where Carthage crouched shattered as the bullet tore through it. He aimed the .303 and fired a shot that knocked the man off his feet to crash to the floor, his revolver sliding away from him.

â€œGot him!â€ he said to Oâ€™Conner. â€œPuccano is down.â€

He got up and ran for the front bedroom even as Ms. Oâ€™Conner turned and headed downstairs again.

It was dark in the front bedroom but the curtains had been pulled open and he looked down into the darkness of the clearing in time to see the other man limp out to the second automobile there and pull open the door. He fired a shot from the .303, shattering the glass in one of the panes of the window. He didnâ€™t think heâ€™d hit the man, who leapt into the automobile and out of sight.

He took aim at the vehicleâ€™s tires.

\* \* \*

Ms. Oâ€™Conner had run down the stairs and found Charles Puccano dead at the bottom. Heâ€™d been shot in the chest, almost directly in the heart, and the wound had probably been instantly fatal. She moved to the other man, who was gasping out his last breath on the floor but she saw that Mr. Carthageâ€™s shot had been very good and there was no way she could save the man. Even as she examined the horrible wound, death rattled in his throat.

She heard shots from upstairs as she gathered the .45 revolver and Puccanoâ€™s .38 snub-nosed revolver from the floor. She headed back up the steps.

\* \* \*

Carthage had fired two shots, each of which had missed the autoâ€™s tires as far as he could tell, when a figure leapt out of the opposite side of the automobile and made a dash for the woods. Carthage had already worked the slow bolt action on the rifle and took aim, firing at the figure. The man jerked forward and fell onto his face, lying still on the ground.

â€œI think I got him!â€ Carthage yelled and then ran out of the room.

He found Ms. Oâ€™Conner at the foot of the stairs and ran past her. She followed him out in the darkness. They found the man on the ground, dead, a bullet hole in his back. They quickly searched the Ford Model T and found a .22 bolt action rifle, a Springfield M1913 30-06 bolt action rifle, a hunting knife, and a large board with a nail in one end. They found no sign of the .32 revolver that the man in the house had. They gathered up the weapons and went back into the house, heading up to the master bedroom once again.

There was still no sign of Dr. Brooks or Ms. Morgan.

Ms. Oâ€™Conner picked up the .45 revolver that one of the men had used and found that it had a good balance. She kept that ready while she left the other weapons on the bed. Carthage talked to her briefly about going into the wall but she refused.

â€œWell, somebodyâ€™s got to,â€ he finally said. â€œDamn.â€

He gripped the .303 and walked into the wall again.

\* \* \*

Dr. Brooks and Ms. Morgan had dragged the body of the creature into the strange lab with the bodies in the glass case. They put it on the central table and then looked for something sharp to cut it open with. Dr. Brooks was curious as to what the creature was. Then Ms. Morgan pointed out the cylinders. Dr. Brooks noticed that the strange apparatus on the table had plugs that looked like they might fit into the sockets on the cylinders.

As she fiddled with them, Mr. Carthage suddenly came into the room.

â€œWe have to get out of here,â€ he muttered. â€œPuccano is dead. We have to get out.â€

Dr. Brooks pushed the last plug into the socket and the twin lenses started to glow faintly. There was a rattling noise from the box with the vacuum tubes and the sounding board. It almost sounded like a human moan, metallic and devoid of feeling.

Then it talked!

â€œWhere am I?â€ the voice said, completely devoid of emotion. â€œWho are you?â€

â€œUh â€¦ you are â€¦â€ Dr. Brooks stuttered.

â€œDr. Adams,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œI â€¦ I am Dr. Adams,â€ the metallic voice said. â€œAt least what is left of me. They have put my brain in their hellish cylinders. They have destroyed me. You must escape.â€

â€œDo you know how to beat these things?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œNo,â€ the voice replied. â€œFire. Nerve gas. You must get â€¦ you must get out. You must get out.â€

â€œCan we take you with us?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œIt will do no good,â€ the voice replied. â€œI am lost. I am lost. I am lost.â€

Dr. Brooks and Ms. Morgan looked at each other.

â€œWhat do you think?â€ Dr. Brooks said.

â€œWe need to ask him everything we can before we leave,â€ Ms. Morgan whispered back.

â€œThe journal,â€ the voice said. â€œMy journal is in the turret in the house.â€

â€œI have your journal,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œBurn the house,â€ the voice went on. â€œDestroy this place. Flee for your lives.â€

â€œLetâ€™s do it!â€ Carthage said. â€œI like that idea.â€

â€œWhat do you think?â€ Dr. Brooks said to Ms. Morgan. â€œShould be burn it?â€

â€œYou cannot escape them,â€ the voice went on in its damning monotone. â€œChange your names. Move elsewhere. Anything you have to. They will follow you to the ends of the Earth to protect the knowledge of them.â€

â€œDo you know anything about this place weâ€™re at?â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œThis is where they brought me, thatâ€™s all I know,â€ the disembodied voice said.

â€œLetâ€™s go!â€ Carthage said.

â€œDid you see those that brought you in here?â€ Ms. Morgan said. â€œAre they the pink beasts?â€

â€œThe fungi from Yuggoth,â€ the voice said. â€œThey have bases on the moon and on Yuggoth.â€

â€œWhatâ€™s Yuggoth?â€ Ms. Morgan asked.

â€œA planet that has not yet been discovered in our solar system,â€ the voice said. â€œYou must get out. It is the furthest from the sun, further than Neptune. You must get out before they return. Theyâ€™re technology dwarfs that of humanity. You must get out before they return.â€

â€œSounds like a good idea!â€ Carthage said. â€œLetâ€™s go!â€

Carthage felt unhinged, almost like he was loosing a little more of his mind every time he went through that horrible wall.

â€œHow can we bring the stones Dr. Adams?â€ Ms. Morgan asked.

â€œWhat stones?â€ the voice said.

â€œThat they are mining,â€ Ms. Morgan asked.

â€œI do not know,â€ the voice said.

â€œDo you know what it is theyâ€™re mining?â€ Dr. Brooks asked.

â€œNo, something that they cannot find anywhere else,â€ the voice said.

Carthage suddenly felt himself go completely cold. He could hear a flapping noise coming from the shaft outside of the room.

â€œTheyâ€™re coming back!â€ he shrieked.

â€œFlee,â€ the voice said. â€œYou must flee.â€

Ms. Morgan jerked the plugs out and grabbed the cylinder, shoving it into her backpack and replacing it with one of the cylinders sheâ€™d taken from the room with the strange symbols on the wall.

She and Brooks ran out into the pentagonal shaft. Carthage was fleeing through the door to the room with the symbols and the strange wall. Looking up, Morgan and Brooks could see two of the horrible things floating down the shaft. One of them had a cluster of twisted metal tubes held in several of its clawed legs. It also wore some kind of strange web of semi-luminescent green slime over most of its body.

The other creature started to make a strange noise and suddenly Ms. Morgan stopped completely and just looked up at the thing, wide-eyed. Her mouth fell open and a dazed look completely covered her face.

The other one dropped towards Dr. Brooks and manipulated the odd cluster of twisted metal it held. Mist came out of the device and struck the ground next to Dr. Brooks. Frost immediately formed on the floor where the mist touched.

Dr. Brooks fired a shot from her .45 automatic and struck the thing, which jerked backwards but didnâ€™t fall from the sky. The other creature dropped down and landed next to Ms. Morgan, continuing to hum in its odd way. The armed creature fired another burst of the mist, which completely missed Dr. Brooks. More frost formed on the walls and floor where sheâ€™d been.

\* \* \*

Jason Carthage burst out of the wall and into the bedroom of the Adams home once again. He found Ms. Oâ€™Conner waiting there, the .45 revolver in her hand. She had stuffed Puccanoâ€™s .38 special in her belt.

â€œTheyâ€™re going to be killed!â€ Carthage said.

Oâ€™Conner knew she had to go in.

\* \* \*

Dr. Brooks turned and fired her .45 automatic at the other creature and it jerked back and stopped making the strange noise. Ms. Morgan shook her head and came out of the weird hypnosis that the thing had her under. She found herself confronted by another one of the horrible creatures as it lunged at her. She fired a shot from the elephant rifle but missed the thing completely. They both heard the bullet ricochet and the stink of gunpowder filled the air.

\* \* \*

Oâ€™Conner pushed past Mr. Carthage and stepped into the weird wall. She suddenly found herself in a claustrophobic little stone room. Through a round opening in the far wall, she could see Ms. Morgan and Dr. Brooks fighting for their lives with two creatures like the one that had come through the wall earlier that evening.

Oâ€™Conner aimed the .45 revolver sheâ€™d procured at the creature near Ms. Morgan and fired at it. Her aim was off, however, and she missed.

Carthage appeared next to her and fired a shot with the .303, the blast filling the small chamber with noise. The thing threatening Ms. Morgan jerked to one side and fell to the ground. Carthage pulled back the bolt and the brass shell flew into the air trailing smoke.

The other creature had floated to one side and more of the icy mist flowed out of the strange device it held. Both Morgan and Brooks ducked to the side and the icy cold coated more of the floor with frost. The entire shaft felt like it was getting colder by the moment.

Dr. Brooks returned fire with her .45 automatic and the thing jerked back again. Then Ms. Morgan fired the elephant gun again, deafening both of them and missing completely.

As the thing landed, Ms. Morgan kicked it solidly and sent it reeling across the room where it struck the far wall and crashed to the ground to lie very, very still. The strange device slid across the room and Ms. Morgan picked it up.

â€œAre you sure these things are dead?â€ Carthage said.

â€œDead enough,â€ Ms. Morgan said.

â€œIâ€™m a vet,â€ Ms. Oâ€™Conner said. â€œMaybe I can tell.â€

The strange cluster of twisted metal tubes looked odd and gave Ms. Morgan a sick feeling in the pit of her stomach. She asked Dr. Brooks if they should take it and the other woman told her she might as well.

â€œShould we burn the house down?â€ Mr. Carthage said.

He pulled out a lighter from his pocket. He went to one of the things and held the lighter under the thing. It scorched the thing a little bit and he looked around for something flammable but saw nothing. Ms. Morgan told them they were going to burn the house down.

They all went back through the wall and felt unnerved and drained by whatever it did to them. Mr. Carthage went immediately to one of the curtains in the master bedroom and lit it on fire. They started fires on the top floor and then moved down to the ground floor, setting fires wherever they could before fleeing the horrible house, passing Puccanoâ€™s body on the stairs. Another dead body lay in the foyer and yet another lay in the clearing outside.

Dr. Brooks got into her Cadillac and pushed the starter but nothing happened. She pushed it again and again and again, cursing under her breath. Carthage saw that and went to the Ford Model T, getting out the crank and starting it up. Dr. Brooks climbed out of her automobile as windows started to break on the Adams house and black smoke began to billow out. She opened up the hood on one side and looked over the engine. Ms. Morgan used her electric torch to look over the engine as well but could not see what was wrong with it.

Carthage moved the Model T around and turned on the headlights, shining them on the Cadillac. Then he got out and looked at the engine as well but had no idea what might be wrong with it.

Ms. Morgan, meanwhile, had gone to examine the body in the clearing. She didnâ€™t recognize the man but heâ€™d been shot twice, once in the back.

Carthage suggested pushing the Cadillac into the fire and they emptied the Cadillac of the files theyâ€™d found and Ms. Morgan broke the license plates off the machine. Dr. Brooks got in and Carthage moved the Model T around pushed the other vehicle towards the house. Flames were showing on the outside of the house by then. When it got close enough, Brooks bailed out of the Cadillac and Carthage gave it one final push, slamming it into the front porch.

They all piled into the Model T and Carthage turned it around and drove down the driveway. He turned back to Moretown to pick up Claire and get their belongings and they rode in silence down Old Moretown Road.

At one point, they could all see the flames of the burning house over the treetops. As they watched, they thought they saw three winged shapes in the sky swoop down towards the burning house like moths to a flame.

They made it to Moretown without incident and quickly gathered their belongings and Claire McAdams, who was still asleep and impossible to awaken. The put everything in the back of the Model T and headed towards Montpelier with the intention of taking the main roads back to Boston.

### Comments

**Call Of Cthulu, The Post-Script | My Food Chain Gang**[...] met with a small group twice to play “Call of Cthulu”, and it was a fun experience.Â  Here is a link to my blog about the game - it reads like a novel, but keep in mind that all the action took place during two [...]

# Trickle-Down Crabonomics

Sunday is usually my favorite day of the week, butÂ our lastÂ one ranks low on a list of my favorites.Â  First, the kids started out the day by being terrible.Â  Our 4-year-old Sammie was excited to see the snow – all 20 flakes of it that fell that morning – and she asked her still-half-asleep parents if we could go sledding.Â  My husband groggily mumbled yes, apparently thinking she was saying something else.Â  Later when we were up and about, I told him what he had agreed to, and so we then had to find something else comparable in my daughter’s mind to sledding.Â  Giving them an outside toy, we bundled the 3 oldest kids and sent them outside, the oldest of whom wanted to stay inside – which began *her* downward spiral.Â  She went outside reluctantly, but as soon as she came in, she threw a major tantrum about who-knows-what.Â  This set off the other two – our toddler was upset because her almost-9-year-old sister was acting totally out of her mind, and our 4-year-old…Â  well, I guess it’s just that she never misses an opportunity to act like a nut.Â Â My husbandÂ dryly called it “Trickle-Down Crabonomics”, which I find the perfect term to describe the volatile cause-and-effect relationship between siblings in a large family.

Somehow, we were ready to leave the house for our favorite Sunday brunch, and we were only 7 minutesÂ past schedule, not bad.Â  The kids cheered up in the car,Â and they wereÂ good during the entire meal, butÂ unfortunately, I can’t say the same for the quality of the food.Â  It seems our favorite brunch has gone down a few steps in quality, to say the least.Â  They used to feature an all-you-can-eatÂ brunch buffet with delicious selections that varied from the usual scrambled eggs and bacon usually featured at these things.Â  TheyÂ even hadÂ a little table withÂ chicken nuggets, peanut butter and jelly, and pizza for the kids.Â  They had a make-your-own-omlette bar, which had a variety of ingredients, from spinach and feta cheese to onion and green peppers.Â  Our favorite was the pasta bar – the chef makes fresh pasta right in front of you, and the alfredo is simply delicious – somethingÂ even all the kids agreedÂ upon.Â  We’ve been visiting this brunch for about a year now, and slowly over time, there’s been a downgrade in quality.Â  At firstÂ itÂ wasn’t that noticable –Â cloth napkins going to paper,Â the end of the kids’ table, little things here and there.Â  ButÂ now, it’s down to a line of silverÂ servers containing things like scrambledÂ eggs, bacon, biscuits and gravy and a make-your-own omelet bar with about 4 ingredients: one kind ofÂ cheese, bacon, mushrooms, salsa.Â  No moreÂ onion, no spinach, no feta…Â Â Â Â Â and certainly no pasta bar, our favorite part.Â  And I never even got to try the marinara.Â  Well, anyway, that’s enough about that – another victim of this economy, I guess.Â  I know their menu is based upon the number of reservations they get, so maybe if the reservations somehow increase, so will the quality of the food again.

So after the disappointing buffet – which usually means I don’t have to worry about cooking the rest of the day since we’re all so full, this was not the case todayÂ – it was time to watch one of the biggest Chicago Bears games in recent years.Â  It was for first place and against their rivals, the Green Bay Packers.Â  The Packers scored more than 12 times as many points as the Bears did, and my kids weren’t very good during the game, so it was difficult for their father to even watch the slaughter.Â  Our 2-year-old fell asleep early, which we thought was a good thing, but she was woken up by her oldest sister during the battle we had about her cleaning the bathroom that was trashed during the sleepover she had had Friday night.Â  So now we had a late-napping toddler, and we spent the rest of the day fighting about the bathroom with our oldest.Â  Next thing I know, it’s time for bed for everyone, and we never even got any parent-alone-time, ugh.

Oh, well, just because the day wasn’t all I was looking forward to still doesn’t make it a “bad day”.Â  It was a weekend, which means family day, and I don’tÂ think those could ever be bad…Â  not like yesterday when I got to Walmart, unloaded two little kids, did some shopping and realized I forgot my credit card.Â  Had to set my stuff aside, bundle up the kids and go out to the car, but it wasn’t there either – it was at home.Â  So after re-loading the kids, going home, and re-unloading the kids at Walmart, I was more than a little irritated, not to mention *extremely* rushed now because I had to get to the school to pick up my oldest.Â  So no, I didn’t get all the shopping done, I was late to pick up my daughter, but at least I got her to Brownies on time.Â  Then I went to my meeting for 20 minutes, then left for a Brownie patches ceremony, then back to my meeting, kid in tow…Â  it was a hectic day, and I’m glad today is date night so I can spend some quality time alone with my husband and unwind.Â  Only problem there is that no housework gets done on date night, so big surprise, I’m behind yet again, sigh…Â  But then again, you probably guessed that based upon my lack of blog posting!

### Comments

**justj**Wow, that must have been some Sunday. Mine was much more relaxed, but then there was only one daughter at home and she generally doesn't fight with herself.  
**derek**I know you probably don't want me to mention this, but you can always replace your time at the brunch with an even more traditional Sunday activity, starting the day even better! :)  
**jamiahsh**WOW... I don't envy the rest of your weekend day at all. My apologies to C over the devastation Sunday afternoon. Trickle Down Crabonomics (you should submit to Webster's) indeed.

# Gas Prices

Unlike previous posts of mine, this one is being written to compliment the status of gas prices these days.Â  Here in NW Ohio, we ‘re paying $1.99 for gas – it was actually weird looking to see a 1 up there on the price board at the gas station.

But I’m really happy about it, of course, seeing how gas prices have been cut in half from only a short time ago.Â  All of a sudden, it’s taking me twice as long to pump gas – but I am NOT complaining!Â  Also, it’s now feasible to round up to the next dollar amount when topping off your car’s gas tank.Â  Did you notice that when gas prices were so high, one squeeze of the gas pump cost, like 6 or 7 cents?Â  If I wanted $15 worth of gas and I stopped the pump at $14.96 or above, there was no way to get it so I’d be paying the $15.Â  One squeeze of the pump and my total was now $15.03 or above all of a sudden!Â  So now, even though it takes me twice as long to pump gas, I appreciate being able to choose a dollar amount to spend and be able to stick to it.Â  And when I was in Illinois last weekend, I asked my grandpa what he remembers the gas prices being when he owned his gas station way back when.Â  I don’t know what year he was talking about, but he said he remembers gas being 19Â¢ per gallon!

What was the reason for the sky-rocketing gas prices, and how did the problem seemingly fix itself?Â  Something to do with politics, I’m sure, but I don’t really care as long as they keep getting lower.Â  Since I spent so many posts complaining about the gas prices when they were horrible, I thought I’d try to send out a little bit of good karma by noticing and sharing my appreciation for the low gas prices we have now – cross your fingers that they’ll stay!

### Comments

**justj**Well, the gas prices should have been under $2.00 for quite some time now. Since we are told they base the cost of gasoline on the cost/barrel of oil, the oil has been down to around $65/barrel for some time now. Last time it was that low, the cost of gas was around $1.80. But it comes down slower than it goes up. Anyway US dollar has been up on foreign exchanges, demand for oil is been down. Supply is usually regulated by OPEC. So cost for Gasoline should be down. I'm still wondering why the Diesel prices are still so much more than Gasoline when it used to be the other way around. In the mid 1960's Gas was around $0.25. I remember taking our 2 gallon gas can down to the corner station and filling it up for $0.50. Now you couldn't even send your 6 year old down to fill up the gas can, much less doing it for less than a dollar.  
**derek**I saw a price that began with a 1 at a station by me, too. Of course that was after the discount for getting a wash... Still, I am happy that prices are half what they were at the peak of the prices. For now.

# Windy City White House

“Windy City White House”Â is more of a reference to our visit to the Windy City rather than a blog post about the recent election – it’s over and done with, and although I won’t talk much about the outcome, I am happy to not have to hear about it on the news anymore.Â  While in Illinois, my mother-in-law kept talking about what huge news it is thatÂ Obama was elected and howÂ his pick for Chief-of-Staff, Rahm Emanuel is a fellow Chicagoan – making it a ‘Windy City White House’.

But back to our familyÂ – it’s my blog, after all.Â  We scheduled an early Christmas with our family in Illinois this past weekend (the early Christmas theme is something that seems popular with tangents.org bloggers), and overall, it was great.Â  There are a few reasons we decided to do things this way – 1) We’re sick of the hustle and bustle of opening our presents from Santa and then rushingÂ off to Illinois on Christmas DayÂ  – add to that having the flu during this trip twice and UGH.Â  Best to travel *before* flu season.Â  2) My daughter was off school Friday for parent/teacher conferences 3) We wanted to beat the rush and other travelers.Â  Overall, it was a really great decision, although the trip was last minute, and so we did forget a few of the presents which we’ll now have to send.Â  We left Ohio on Friday morning and after a bit of traffic-sitting (of course), we got to my grandparents house about 40 minutes past schedule.Â  But no matter, they’re fully aware of the traffic problems plaguing their area.Â  We were treated to a delicious lunch of my grandma’s sloppy joes (love ’em), and the girls got to open presents.Â  My grandpa gets tired really quickly, and so we didn’t stay too long there, and then it was on to our hotel.Â  My husband uses hotwire.com and got us a suite at the Sheraton for $49 – a nice price for the area.Â  When we pulled up to our hotel, we were pleased to see it was the same hotel where we spent our wedding night – that was a nice surprise.Â  My mom and my sister brought her two boys over for some swimming, and we all had a blast even though their indoor pool was chilly.Â  Luckily, I had thought to turn up our room’s thermostat so when we got back to the room we didn’t freeze, although it was quite crowded trying to get 10 hungry people changed out of bathing suits and trying to order pizza at the same time.Â  It was a suite, but it was probably the smallest suite I have ever seen, and we had 6 little kids and 4 adults in there.Â  My mother and sister wisely decided that they couldn’t wait for the time it would take to get pizza, and they got something to eat on the way home.Â  That was a good idea because my mom had to get up early the next day and didn’t want to be out too late.Â  They know their area well enough to realize that pizza delivery on a Friday night would take over an hour – and they were right.Â  My poor kids were starving and I had to raid my diaper bag.Â  I found a little bag of oyster crackers and two small bags of peanuts, so I divied everything up 3 ways (Survivor-style)Â and it quieted them a little until the pizza came.Â  Overall, the kids were kind of spastic all day, especially my oldest for some reason…Â  My husband blames the tension of the Chicagoland area, but then again, he hates it as much as I do.Â  We love seeing family, just wish we could visit them somewhere else!

Saturday morning we were up bright and early to meet my mother-in-law for breakfast at Uptown Cafe in Arlington Heights – the place has the best eggs benedict in the nation.Â  And I know this because way back when, before we had all these kids, my husband and I used to travel constantly, and one of the things we would look for was good hollandaise sauce.Â  We never found any that came close to Uptown Cafe’s.Â  And the owners remember us – we used to go there a lot when we lived in the area; I was pregnant with my first daughter.Â  They are surprised every time they see us because we usually have a new baby or two.Â  After breakfast, we went back to my mother-in-law’s house, and I felt badly for dropping in on my husband’s sister and her family without any notice.Â  This is one of the details that was overlooked in the last minute planning.Â  But it was ok; I didn’t have my gifts for their 3 kids, so I’ll have to send them.Â  But our kids had lots of fun playing together, and it’s important to me that my kids know their extended family, especiallyÂ since a lot of hatchets have been buried over the years on this side of the family.

Next, it was time to see our good friend, the author of the sublife blog on tangents.org.Â  It was great to see him, especially on his own turf, but he’s right in his blog – there really wasn’t much time for chatting.Â  The kids wouldn’t have allowed us to just sit and talk peacefully, and we wanted to take them somewhere fun, so we went to an overflowingÂ Chuck E. Cheese.Â  After waiting in line to park, I realized that I hadn’t seen our camera since I took a picture of the kids on the luggage rack at the hotel that morning.Â  Sound familiar?Â  Yes, I have terrible luck with digital cameras.Â  And worse, this one was not mine – I had borrowed it from Jamiahsh for the trip, so I was sick about losing it.Â  Luckily for me, it turned up when we got home though – YAY!Â  I was especially upset because I knew that I had put it in my diaper bag – I really thought someone had taken it.Â  Pessimistic of me, you’d think, except that we did have our tokens stolen from our table at Chuck E. Cheese with my husband less than 5 feet away.Â  Takes all kinds to steal game tokens from little kids, doesn’t it….Â  at least they didn’t also steal my digital camera.Â  We got lunch at a Vienna Beef hot dog place in Arlington Heights called Jimmy’s – highly recommended you get real Chicago-style beef sandwiches and ‘dogs if you’re in the areaÂ – YUM!

The ride home was uneventful – the kids slept most of the way, thank goodness.Â  We did manage to stop and get me my crave case of White Castles, and so our car reeked of steamed onions – thank goodness we weren’t pulled over or we may have gotten a ticket for disturbing the peace.Â  Maybe I wouldn’t have stopped if I’d known what White Castles would do to a 2-year-old’s diaper.Â  I tried to deliver some to my friend Carol who graciously pet sits for us, but for some reason, she neglected to pick them up.Â  My husband says that not everyone likes White Castles.Â  We picked up the slyders (as White Castles are known) in Dolton, Illinois; not the best area, but it just off the expressway so we made it unscathed.Â  Ironically, something made me talk about Dolton just before the stop; I was telling my husband how it’s gotten to be a really bad area and that I knew a family that had left there in the ’80’s because it was getting so bad, so imagine it now.Â  Then we saw a sign that said “Dolton Bowl” right across the street from the White Castle, and we laughed at the irony.Â  But overall, a nice trip, especially considering the area where we had to take it.Â  One positive thing I will say about the area is that they have excellent food.

Three quarters of my kids on the luggage cart:Â 

### Comments

**dmv approved traffic schools   
dmv approved traffic schools...** traffic survival school...  
**» Windy City White House | My Food Chain Gang White House On Best Political Blogs: News And Info On White House**[...] City White House | My Food Chain Gang Posted in November 13th, 2008 by in Uncategorized Windy City White House | My Food Chain Gang Windy City White House is more of a reference to our visit to the Windy City rather than a blog [...]  
**jamiahsh**I think it is great to have your kids know their extended family. Growing up, my cousins and I were almost inseparable. Grant it, your family is far away but nice nonetheless.  
**derek**Hmm. Something about this post sounds familiar...  
**Prog Gold Â» Blog Archive Â» Way Too Ruin our Fun, Alex**[...] Windy City White House | My Food Chain Gang [...]

# CMA Awards - LIVE Blogging!

Many of you have read a live blog before; ie people posting comments while an awards show is airing on tv.Â  But have you ever read a live blog that is being composed within the vicinity of 4 crazy kids?Â  The followingÂ represents my best shot at attempting the previous description:

PRESHOW  
7:30 pm – It’s Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban on the red carpet.Â  They’re a cute coupl…Â  wait a minute, they look weird together.Â  Well, actually, just Nicole Kidman looks strange.Â  Kinda like Janice from the Muppets meets theÂ thin spaced-out version of Anna Nicole Smith.Â  It’s mean to be critical of people based on their appearances, but in this case, I suspect a nasty mistake in the plastic surgeon’s office.Â  Since she did it to herself (and spent thousand$ to do so), no holds barred – I can joke all I want!Â  AndÂ Nicole doesn’t seem very comfortable with playing second fiddle (it’s a country music awards show – appreciate the fiddle joke!) on the red carpet.Â  I give this marriageÂ 3 years, 4 tops.

7:35pm – Jack Ingram?Â  Who IS that?Â  If you read my previous blog post about the awards, then you know that I don’t get toÂ listen to that much radio lately, and I don’t have the slightest idea who this is!

7:37 – Fans overwhelmingly choose Carrie Underwood to take Female Vocalist – both hubby and I agree.Â  That reminds me, it will be a tight race in our household tonight – my husband and I only have 3 votes different from each other!Â  And a reader / fellow blogger asked in a comment what the winner gets…Â  we will have to choose our stakes before show time…

7:38 – So THAT’S the other half of Sugarland

7:38 – Julianne Hough from Dancing With The Stars?Â  Didn’t she just have her appendix out?Â  She’s hosting the pre-show with Craig Morgan?Â  Isn’t THIS the pre-show?

7:45 – Awww – Alan Jackson has a cute family.Â  One of his 3 girls is off at college this year though.Â  What is with male country superstars having 3 girls?Â  Alan Jackson, Garth Brooks, Tim McGraw all have 3 daughters each, to name a few…

7:46 – Every time I see her, Reba looks younger.Â  Glad to see she can afford a better plastic surgeon than Nicole Kidman.Â  Reba better watch out though – any more nose jobs and she’ll end up with a nose (or lack thereof) like Michael Jackson’s.

7:53 – Charlie Daniels – that’s my guess when Kid Rock (my new favorite artist – kidding) says he’s going to have a very special guest guitarist.

Â 7:56 – Taylor Swift is growing up…Â  after the things I’ve read about her since her breakup with the Jonas Brother, she might make a creepy adult.

Â 7:58 – Ew, I can’t stand Reese Witherspoon.Â  What’s she doing here?Â  Oh, she grew up in NAshville and is promoting a movie.

7:59 – My husband leans over and says, “Reese Witherspoon?Â  I can’t stand her.”

7:59 – Time to switch to the network for the real show!

2008 CMA AWARDS!  
8:00 – We are off!Â  Brad Paisley and Keith open the show with their much hyped collaboration.Â  I like the blue glitter guitar.Â  The song is nothing special.Â  I dig the duel guitar solo at the end.

Â 8:06 – Our hosts for the night – Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood (from American Idol to HOSTING the CMAS?Â  Whatever…)Â  She looks like a Barbie.  
8:07 – Brad makes a “boots to fill” joke involving Dolly Parton – he did say *boots.Â* Hahaha – that’s the joke.Â  Country music stars are creative song-writers…Â  we never promised anything about their comedy skills.Â  But I liked the joke, because the country music awards show I saw live (it was an ACM awards show though) was hosted by Dolly Parton.

8:10 – What are Hollywood A-listers doing here to present the first award?Â  Oh wait, Nicole Kidman is married to a country music superstar.Â  So what is with the random Hugh Jackman appearance though?

Â 8:11 – Strait wins the first award of the evening for Single of the Year.Â  0/1 are we since we both guessed Sugarland.Â  But who was that man George Strait kissed before his acceptance speech?

Â 8:17 – Is it Kellie Pickler or a bad Madonna impersonator who sound like Belinda Carlisle?Â  I don’t like it.

8:18 – My husband leans over and says, ” This is like an American Idol performance.”Â  Ironic, because he relies on me for pop culture info and therefore did not know that this is Kellie Pickler who IS from American Idol!Â  Glad to see she got herself out of the dress she said it took her hours to get into before she had a bathroom emergency.

8:20 – Alan Jackson – probably my favorite country artist of all time, ever since Garth Brooks sold out.Â  Not sure what I think of his new song Good Time, though…Â  It seems like a run-of-the-mill Alan Jackson song, which isn’t a bad thing, just heard before.Â  My husband feels badly for Kellie Pickler whose awfulness had to be followed by Alan Jackson’s legendary stage presence.

8:23 – What the heck is with the college-age line dancers lining the aisles – that’s stupid.Â  Are they trying to make a new linedance?Â  This one looks just like the electric slide with a little wiggle thrown in…Â  dumb.Â  Alan Jackson squints into the camera – he’s getting old.

8:25 – the Cyruses, yuck.Â  Saw Billy Ray live in 2002 when he was still a has-been playing town festivals.Â  He ignored the ~~legions~~Â  dozens of fans trying to slap him five on his way to the stage.Â  At least my daughter is a big fan of Miley’s – that makes this tolerable.

8:26 – Stay wins Song of the Year, and I’m 0/2, possibly my worst ever.Â  Husband is up and I have only 2 more chances to catch up…Â  mood turning sour…Â  at least it’s aÂ good song.

Â 8:32 – Miranda LambertÂ performs.Â  I like her.Â  And I like these simple performances of songwriter sings simple song with guitar –Â songs like theseÂ are building blocks of country music.

Â 8:35 – Reese Witherspoon is *crying* about Miranda Lambert’s performance?Â  Really?Â  Or is she acting?Â  What is she doing here again?

8:36 – Oh good, Lady Antebellum.Â  I was wondering who they are and what they sing.Â  They sound just like a ’90’s band – I can’t think of who right now!Â  Any ideas, please comment – it’ll come to me!Â  Hubby says the lead singer looks like Lance Bass.Â  At any rate, they’re nothing to write home about.Â  Can’t see them having staying power – not country enough.Â  2/3 of the group too replaceable, remaining 1/3 not that noteworthy.

8:40 – getting a little greedy with the commercials – here’s yet another.

Â 8:43 – Martina McBride is introduced by Brad Paisley, who could use some acting lessons from his actress wife; his script-reading is terrible.Â  Martina is one of my favorite singers

8:44 – and she’s singing a VERY ordinary song.Â  See my plea in a previous post – Martina and Alan Jackson NEED to seriously come out with some good stuff and soon!

8:48 – Rodney Atkins – HELP!Â  This is the guy who sings about kids eating nuggets in the car and other mundane every day tasks…Â  He is the kind of singerÂ country music bashersÂ use to make fun of the genre!Â  AND HE:S OFF-KEY!

8:51 – Heidi who?Â  Someone should pass her a cover-up in case her dress finishes falling down.

8:53 – PUT ME ON THE BOARD WITH MY FIRST CORRECT PICK FOR RASCAL FLATTS – VOCAL DUO!Â Â  I really enjoy their music…Â  please tell me they’re performing later!Â  I hear that Kid Rock will be performing “the song we’ve been singing ‘All Summer Long'”.Â  I love that song, however upset I was to learn it was Kid Rock’s music I was enjoying…Â  Opening another window to download a sample of ‘Werewolves in London’.

8:59 – Taylor Swift performs.Â  I love the stage, the costumed dancers, the dancing…Â  the song sucks though.

903 – IsÂ Taylor SwiftÂ lip-syncing?Â  Why are the dancers suddenly surrounding her, do they know she gets off sync in that part of the song?Â  Unless…Â  COSTUME CHANGE!Â  I was SO right!Â  Called it seconds before it happened!Â  Bool-yah!

9:04 – My new favorite song – All Summer Long – is cool as a live performance.Â  But where is the guest guitarist we were promised?Â  Was it someone I didn’t recognize?Â  And Kid Rock probably smokes too many cigarettes, judging by his singing voice.

9:13 – Carrie Underwood has found herself a sarapi.Â  Isn’t that what that type of dress is called?Â  I don’t know how to spell it, can’t find it on a search…

9:14 – I like George Strait’s new song more than I’ve liked most of the other live performances.Â  But why do country stars keep attempting to emulate Jimmy Buffett’s laid back beach style?Â  It’s been done, and done very well, I might add!Â  Let’s stick to country – especially you George Strait!

Â 9:17 – Jason Aldean – one of those newcomers I’m not quite familiar with.Â  Ah, I see he’s of the bad-a\*\* variety style of country…Â  I’m familiar with it.Â  As a person who vents anger byÂ performing 80’s and 90’s raps in the solitary confinement of my car, I appreciate the wailing guitars and the bad-a\*\* attitudes that are breaking onto today’s country music scene.

9:21 – Best New Artist – goes to Lady Antebellum.Â  Darnit, I really thought we had a shot for this one.Â  We picked Kellie Pickler, and she is a good friend of presenter Taylor Swift and everything!Â  Dang nabbit – I didn’t even like the sound of Lady Antebellum.Â  Well, eat it up kids – you won’t last in Nashville.

9:28 – God bless the late great Jerry Reid – I’m sorry and ashamed to say that I’ve never heard of him.

9:30 – an enjoyable performance of “Cowgirls Don’t Cry” by Brooks and Dunn and Reba.Â  And I like what these entities do together.Â  We saw them perform in concert together twice – awesome both times.Â  Too bad Reba’s plastic surgery doesn’t look as good as Nicole Kidman’s under the stage lights.Â  They seem to have opposite effects – Reba’s new face looked great on the red carpet, Nicole’sÂ was horrifying.Â  Reba’s was nothing short ofÂ freaky on stage, whereas Nicole’s lookedÂ almost humanesque.Â  You could have convinced me that Brooks and Dunn had a Reba animontronic made for this performance.Â  Anyway, enough about the obvious plastic surgery plaguing us tonight…Â  I should save that sort of commentary for the Oscars since there’s always plenty of fodder there…

9:35 – We both get another point since SugarlandÂ wins Vocal Duo – BOOLYAH

9:40 – Darius Rucker – yes, he was in Hootie and the Blowfish and they were good.Â  So what brings him to country music?Â  I like him better as a blowfish.Â  Wait a minute…Â when I heard this song he’s performing on the radio, I always thought it was Daryl Worley, who sings these types of songs.Â  You mean to tell me the whole time that it was the work of a blowfish?Â  A fish out of water, I would say – HA.Â  He looks as out of place as he feels, and Alan Jackson squints up at the stage again – this time because he can’t believe there was actually an African-American on stage at the Country Music Association’s awards.

9:45 – Brad Paisley performs a mediocre tune

9:48 – LeeAnn Womack and Josh Turner show up to present the award for Album of the Year – one of the few categories where hubby and IÂ differ.Â  Good to see that Ms. Womack has tamed her bee-hive hairdo.Â  YEE HAW!!!!Â  I am back in the saddle with my George Strait pick; we are tied!Â  Although it was announced that we both lost out on Video of the Year…Â  shucks.Â  I am not doing so well but still tied with hubby.

9:56 – A thought that crossed my mind as Brad Paisley introduced Keith Urban’s live performanceÂ – is it just me, or is Brad Paisley doing a lot more hosting than ~~Barbie~~ Carrie Underwood?Â  I wonder about the politics involved in the decision to let those two be the hosts…

9:58 – Keith Urban’s performance, like so many before him, is mediocre at best.Â  Thank goodness he’s an awesome guitarist.Â  And they still use his song, “Somebody Like You” in my favorite dinner show at Arabian Nights in Orlando Florida – that’s what sold me on the show in the first place!

10:00 – Is it just me or are they giving everyone a standing ovation, as seen after Keith Urban’s performance?

10:01 – A woman talks about her husband who was killed in battle.Â  She gets a standing ovation.Â  Sadly though, at the beginning of her speech, people didn’t know who she was or what she was doing, so they kind of chuckled, thinking she was joking because they didn’t know who she was.Â  A silent moment to reflect upon loved one’s lives lost and those who fight and fought for our country…

10:08 – I missed the second half of Carrie Underwood’s performance and whatever followed that because of a kid “emergency”.Â  But now I see Vince Gill hands an award to…

10:09 – Carrie Underwood.Â  As predicted by both of us in this house.Â  And conveniently, she was waitingÂ in the stage wingsÂ after performing, seeminglyÂ in positionÂ toÂ rush on stage to accept her award.Â  Curious…Â   
So far, my husband and I are tied at 5/8 – not bad.Â  Our personal tie-breaker will come down to Musical Event of the Year – a category that I joked existed only to flaunt the compromising of the big-name record labels.Â  We both guess Kenny Chesney.Â  But my guess is his collaboration with George Strait, and hubby’s guess is his Reba duet – Stay tuned to see the winner!

10:18 – Sugarland’s performance has been wailing on my tv in the backround while I typed some other stuff.Â  Not very impressive.Â  I’m beginning to wonder if it’s me or if all the performances tonight have been somewhat lackluster.Â  Not only that, but the songs being performed aren’t that great to begin with.

10:20 – Just Got Started Lovin You is one of my favorite new songs!Â  And James Otto is milking his big performance.Â  Otto’s range in the song reminds me of Josh Turner, but I don’t give him credit for staying power.Â  It’s a good song, but he doesn’t have the best stage presence.

10:29 – Whoa, my channel cut off Carrie Underwood.Â  Anyone else’s?Â  Kenny Chesney is performing his Jimmy Buffett knock-off routine with the beach combing sh\*t.Â  Sorry for the language.Â  I need to see a really GOOD musical performance.Â  This sounds like a callypso version of an elementary school chorus concert.

10:32 – My husband leans over and says, “Does this guy have eyes?” – referring to Kenny’s accomplice.Â  I don’t think he likes the beachcomber crap any more than I do.

10:33 – Strangely, the intro to Trace Adkin’s performance sounds like a Carrie Underwood single, “Jesus Take the Wheel”.Â  Subliminal marketing maybe.Â  Conspiracy theories abound, the more tired I get…

10:37 – Another standing ovation?Â  This time for Trace Atkins…Â  ok, whatever.

10:37 – Reese Witherspoon – I can’t stand her.

10:38 – Reese Witherspoon gushes, “I am SOOOO glad to be here!”Â  My husband leans over and says, “I can’t stand her.”

10:39 – Brad Paisley wins Male Vocalist of the Year.Â  We are now tied at 5/9 since we had Keith Urban.

10:41 – Ooh – more hints about the surprise person.Â  Evidently, they are going to present the Entertainer of the Year award.Â  This marketing ploy has intrigued me, although you know that the astonished faces reacting to the surprise guest they show in the commercials have nothing to do with who it is – this is a live show!

10:44 – Ooh – Lost premiere January 21.Â  Wait, do I still watch that show?Â  It’s been so long, I forget.

Â 10:48 – mediocre Eagles performance.Â  What is with their new tidy look?Â  What is with me and thinking all the performances are mediocre?Â  Is it just me?Â  Not in this instance – the Eagles in their suts suck – they look old and tired.Â  Good music from a great group, they just need a smart manager – oh, big surprise, ANOTHER standing ovation.Â  Is that just what you do nowadays, the stand’n’clap?

10:54 – The best selling female country recording artist of all time is Shania Twain?Â  YUCK!Â  Another standing ovation!Â  And they haven’t even given out the award yet!

10:56 – And now they have…Â  Entertainer of the Year goes to Kenny Chesney, yuck!Â  But at least we both got it right!

10:59 – “The votes in tonight’s award show were cast by the six thousand members of the Country Music Association”…Â  kinda like our local theater group, the WCCT.

But what the heck?Â  Seems we are missing a category detrimental to our outcome?Â  Does anyone have the results for Musical Event of the Year?!?Â  That was our tie-breaker, and evidently we missed it, so break the tie for us!

Ok – Krauss and Plant won for Vocal Event – neither of us had them chosen.Â  So, it ended in a tie.Â  Overall, an entertaining show, as always.Â  I really could have used some more good musical performances, however…Â  Good night!

And as a final footnote – I got my sample of ‘Werewolves in London’.Â  The melody is obviously borrowed for ‘All Summer Long’,Â but I do like the new Kid RockÂ song much better.Â  Who knew that plagarizing two popular songs and then splicing them together would earn critical acclaimÂ instead ofÂ a lawsuit?

### Comments

**Attecuhneat**taylhis.tangents.org - now in my rss reader)))  
**derek**Sorry about the double post yesterday. The smiley didn't render on the first post so I had to post again.  
**derek**8O 8O  
**derek**8o  
**jamiahsh**Nope... live November 23... sorry can't help with the Musical Event... I missed the first hour though  
**taylhis**You're kidding about NKOTB... didn't see that.  
**jamiahsh**I think Carrie's entire wardrobe was a major malfunction.  
**jamiahsh**Kenny Chesney and his reggae friend?  
**jamiahsh**There you go... NKOTB LIVE on the AMAs  
**jamiahsh**Yeah, mediocre... really showing their age... o/c they have been around since the EARLY 70s.  
**jamiahsh**And you thought Alan Jackson looks old?  
**taylhis**4 Christmases - also has Tim McGraw in it. Where ARE the McGraw's tonight, anyway?  
**jamiahsh**The Eagles... sweeeet  
**taylhis**hi def channel, not sure where it's out of  
**jamiahsh**Oh, yes my channel did cut off Carrie. Toledo channel... u?  
**jamiahsh**So... who is the surprise star going to be. It's all they have promoted for the last three weeks?  
**jamiahsh**reese witherpoo... four Christmases. Think i'll skip it.  
**jamiahsh**OIc... Kenny's co-star was the horrid raggae wannabe  
**jamiahsh**Who does Carrie's wardrobe?!  
**jamiahsh**So that was Kenny Chesney doing reggae, callypso... horrid :(  
**taylhis**I really like that song... nice vocal range. It's a VERY country song - twangy, cheesy lyrics, awful sounding to those who dislike country... sounds like you're converting!  
**taylhis**There was a late show joke once about George Strait - "George Strait? I don't think so!" Can't remember anything else about it, but yes, he kissed a man tonight.  
**taylhis**Long enough commercial break for me to be able to read your comments!  
**jamiahsh**Just Got Started.... nice song (and I'm not a HUGE country fan). I see our favorite is about to hand out an award... see my first comment.  
**jamiahsh**Convenient how that happens... the black dress looked much better on Carrie... maybe she will keep that on.  
**jamiahsh**Music videos? they still make those?!  
**jamiahsh**Is that what Carrie is wearing? Doesn't do a thing for her.  
**jamiahsh**Jerry Reed? Smokey and the Bandit  
**jamiahsh**Oh yes, the family from Toledo on Home Makeovers Sunday... yay  
**jamiahsh**He does look a little like Lance Bass  
**jamiahsh**So... that is how you vent... original  
**jamiahsh**Boy... are they reading from teleprompters or what  
**jamiahsh**I'm sure that he does... very smokey sound  
**jamiahsh**All Summer Long... great song yes... here it comes  
**jamiahsh**Heidi Fleiss... is that who? Rascal Flats... ok.. WTG, L  
**jamiahsh**OOOPs... guess not :)  
**jamiahsh**Is Lady Antebellum a female group? Ironic if the lead looks like Lance Bass  
**jamiahsh**Don't Break Her Heart; Her Achy Breaky Heart  
**jamiahsh**Kellie Pickles... yuck  
**jamiahsh**George Strait kissed a man? So much for that name.  
**jamiahsh**sugerland was robbed  
**jamiahsh**Hoot, Hoot  
**jamiahsh**Reese Witherspoon, I can't stand her.

# Our Friend, The Doctor

With 4 kids, many of them small in years, we are at the doctor’s office lots.Â  We are so lucky to be really happy with our pediatrician, especially since weÂ see him often.Â  Today was another such visit – time for our 2 year and 4 month check-ups for the little ones.

Disney (2 yrs. old)Â liked the fishies in the waiting room and the Dora sticker she got at the end but that’s about it.Â  She didn’t want the doctor near her, she didn’t want to be weighed, measured, nor have her heart listened to, and she didn’t want to walk in front of the doctor like he asked.Â  Best we could tell during all the kicking and screaming, she is 2 feet, 10 inches tall and weighs 25.5 lbs.

On the other hand, Disney’s baby brother Christopher seemed to love the doctor’s office.Â  Then again, he smiles all the time, so it’s hard to tell.Â  He smiled when they measured his head – both times, since the nurse forgot the measurement from the first time (43 cm).Â  He smiled when he was weighed (15 lbs. 6 oz.), and he smiled some more when his length was measured to be 25.5 inches.Â  He’s a really good baby – the doctor says he acts more like a 5 month old than a 4 month old because of the strength in his limbs and how he uses them.

Disney’s a great kid also, but she is two years old.Â  And “terrible two’s” is not just one of those sayings; it’s based on truth.Â  Disney was the sweetest baby and toddler you could imagine…Â  then she turned two.Â  And she’s still sweet, she just has a miniscule amount of patience and tolerance for things that don’t go her way.Â  She could be chatting happily about doggies one minute, and the next thing I know, she’s melted onto the floor into a puddle of two.

But there must be something going on with the body chemistry of two-year-olds.Â  Everyone knows they’re like that, and it’s not just an unearned bad reputation.Â  If it weren’t for the “terrible two’s”, I think I would want an even larger family – but it’s the dreadfulness of the terrible two’s that give me pause – only one more bout of terrible twos to battle, if we can survive Disney’s, of course!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**What a baby!!! Christopher is indeed a happy one... must be Cancer babies ;) . Disney is indeed sweet... terrible twos aside.

# CMA TIME!

Â It’s fall – time for the CMA Awards already!Â  If you don’t know that CMA is short for Country Music Association, then you have my permission to skip this blog post – it will only bore you anyway!

For other country music fansÂ like me, this is one of our two biggest nights of the year – the Superbowl for country fans.Â  I get really excited, and unlike other awards shows like the Oscars, I don’t like to ~~tape~~Â  (I am a child of the ’80’s) record country music awards, and I especially don’t like to miss anything – the live performances are some of the best parts!Â  I always play along and try to choose the winners, but I don’t think my picks are going to be that strong this year because I’m listening to country music radio less than ever – I enjoy talking to my kids in the car, or they’re watching dvd’s.Â  At home I’m usually listening to Dora, the DoodleBops or Noggin.Â  But the CMA Awards show will be a blast to watch, as always, and there are only two nights like this a year – cross your fingers for me that my kids decide to act like human beings tonight and let me watch the show.Â  My picks for the winners, however uneducated they may be, are made obvious by my *comments in itallics:*

**ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR**Kenny Chesney – *ok, so he doesn’t dominate this awards show like the ACMs, but I’m going with him anyway – just because he is not one of my favorite singers and I’m not expecting the show to go well for me*Brad Paisley  
Sugarland  
George Strait  
Keith Urban  
**Â  Top Female Vocalist**Alison Krauss  
Miranda Lambert  
Martina McBride  
Taylor Swift  
Carrie Underwood – *I called her from one of her first appearances in American Idol.Â  I said – she’s going to win Idol, but she has a voice for country.Â  Now she’s established herself as one of the best female country singers out there today.***Top Male Vocalist**Kenny Chesney  
Alan Jackson – *my favorite of those nominated, but what’s he done lately?*Brad Paisley  
George Strait  
Keith Urban – *my pick to win – tough call between Keith and Brad, but you gotta congratulate a guy for a successful stint in rehab***Vocal Duo of the Year**Big & Rich  
Brooks & Dunn  
Montgomery Gentry  
Sugarland – *their unique sound will win them many awards – just one question:Â  who else is in Sugarland besides Jennifer Nettles?*The Wreckers  
**Vocal Group of the Year**Eagles  
Emerson Drive  
Lady Antebellum  
Little Big Town  
Rascal Flatts – *tried and true, these guys have talent.Â  So do Brooks and Dunn, but they haven’t come out with anything lately***New Artist Of The Year**Jason Aldean  
Rodney Atkins  
Lady Antebellum  
James Otto  
Kellie Pickler – *another AmericanÂ Idol ~~reject~~ crossover***Album Of The Year [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]**Carrie Underwood’s Carnival Ride Produced by Mark Bright  
Brooks & Dunn’s Cowboy Town Produced by Tony Brown, Ronnie Dunn and Kix Brooks  
Alan Jackson’s Good Time Produced by Keith Stegall  
Kenny Chesney’s Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates Produced by Buddy Cannon and Kenny Chesney  
George Strait’s Troubadour Produced by Tony Brown and George Strait – *gotta give him something***Single Of The Year [Awarded to artist and producer]**“Don’t Blink” Kenny Chesney Produced by Buddy Cannon & Kenny Chesney BNA Records  
“Gunpowder & Lead” Miranda Lambert Produced by Frank Liddell & Mike Wrucke Columbia Nashville  
“I Saw God Today” George Strait Produced by Tony Brown & George Strait MCA Nashville  
“Stay” Sugarland Produced by Byron Gallimore, Kristian Bush and Jennifer NettlesMercury Nashville – *not really sure of the difference between single and song of the year, but Stay has to win one of these.Â  I’m going with Single, I guess.*“You’re Gonna Miss This” Trace Adkins Produced by Frank Rogers Capitol Nashville  
**Song Of The Year [Awarded to songwriter and primary publisher]**“Good Time” Alan Jackson EMI-April Music/Tri-Angels Music  
“I Saw God Today” Rodney Clawson/Monty Criswell/Wade Kirby Big Red Toe/Extremely Loud Music/Steel Wheels Music/Blind Mule Music – *like I said, I don’t think Strait will walk away with nothing tonight – just hope I didn’t reverse the single and song of the year!*“Letter To Me” Brad Paisley EMI-April Music/New Sea Gayle Music  
“Stay” Jennifer Nettles Jennifer Nettles Publishing  
“You’re Gonna Miss This” Lee Thomas Miller/Ashley Gorley EMI Blackwood Music/New Songs of Sea Gayle/Noah’s Little Boat Music/Songs of Combustion Music  
**Musical Event Of The Year [Awarded to each Artist]**“Another Try” â€” Josh Turner featuring Trisha Yearwood MCA Nashville  
“Every Other Weekend” â€” Reba McEntire and Kenny Chesney MCA Nashville  
“Gone Gone Gone” â€” Robert Plant and Alison Krauss Rounder Records  
“Life In A Northern Town” â€” Sugarland featuring Little Big Town and Jake Owen Mercury Nashville  
“Shiftwork” â€” Kenny Chesney (duet with George Strait) BNA Records – *What does ‘vocal event’ mean anyway?Â  By the looks of how they wrote the nominees, I guess ‘vocal event’ means ‘when record labels lease their stars’.Â  Chesney always wins big at awards shows, but I personally prefer Jimmy Buffet’s beachcomber style over Kenny Chesney’s knock-off version.Â  I’m guessing the Country Music Association does not agree.***Music Video Of The Year [Awarded to artist and director]**Don’t Blink Kenny Chesney Directed by Shaun Silva  
Good Time Alan Jackson Directed by Trey Fanjoy  
Stay Sugarland Directed by Shaun Silva – *everyone knows by now that Jennifer Nettles cried real tears during the filming of this video, is it enough to win her the award?Â  My vote is yes, but maybe it’s just wishful thinking.*Waitin’ On a Woman Brad Paisley Directed by Jim Shea  
You’re Gonna Miss This Trace Adkins Directed by Peter Zavadil  
**Musician Of The Year**Jerry Douglas, Dobro â€” Drums  
Paul Franklin â€” Steel Guitar  
Dann Huff â€” Guitar – *will win.Â  But then again, this is the blind lottery award for viewers.Â  Like I know who any of these people are, so I just picked the name that jumped out at me, and Dan Huff it was.*Brent Mason â€” Guitar  
Mac McAnally â€” Guitar

For sure, a great time will be had by all.Â  I might update my blog with winners as I watch tonight.Â  And after reviewing my reasons for my picks for tonight’s awards, it needs to be said that it’sÂ been way too long since someÂ classic artists (and my personal favorites) came out with anything noteworthy!Â  Alan Jackson ~~Garth Brooks~~Â and Martina McBride, you know who you are!

### Comments

**justj**I'm just covering parts of my anatomy at work to make sure I don't get caught in stuff that's going to fly soon. It's going to hit the fan soon. I'm not into country music and didn't even know there was an awards show today.  
**Patiounit » Blog Archive » Buffet Style Foods**[...] CMA TIME! [...]  
**taylhis**Pardon?  
**justj**Funny, I thought you may have been over my shoulder at work today. It was covering my a... time. Things are jumping, and I have to get all the ducks in a row.  
**jamiahsh**Good luck with your picks. But what does the poll winner get?

# Vacation Diary - Chapter Five

Thursday, October 23, 2008 – Started off the day at Golden Corral for breakfast again, and then we stopped at a Wi-Fi place so my husband could download the Chicago Bears game from the previous Sunday because the internet was too slow in our condo to do anything.Â  That’s a good thing though, I wasn’t able to check email all week and it was nice to take a break from bad news on cnn.com and the real world.Â  We were lucky enough that it didn’t rain during our trip to Florida until this day when we were already done with the parks. It really didn’t rain much, just a little drizzle, and even though the day was overcast, we spent much of it at the two pools in our condo complex, followed by a nap while my husband juggled the kids, the Bears game, and his own nap.Â  We then went to our favorite flea market place and let the girls spend their money that Grandma had given them.Â  NOTE FOR NEXT YEAR – the souvenir shopping was kind of a mistake. Sammie (4 year old) wanted to be impulsive with her money, and we got tired of telling her to wait to spend it. Finally she was allowed to buy something, and then she saw other things she wanted after she was out of money. She also spent the rest of the trip whining and pitching fits about wanting the same souvenirs that her older sister Taylor had picked out. Disney’s (2 year old) idea of “shopping” was running around and picking up things she wanted and playing with them, so overall, I would not recommend the souvenir shopping for kids this age; if we go back within a year or two, we’re going to skip this aspect of the trip.Â  If they earn spending money for next time, maybe we’ll pick out something for them with it!

Dinner that night was interesting.Â  My husband has wanted to take me to a Japanese restaurant for awhile, so we decided to try a place called Kabuki.Â  I was always under the impression that Japanese food would be like Chinese food, but I was wrong.Â  We sat at a “cooking table”, which is where the chef comes and does little tricks and stunts with the food and cooking utensils while he cooks right in front of you.Â  At first, I was a little nervous about this because we were seated with a couple from a country called [Luxembourg](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lu.html), and having strangers at our table was a little nerve-wracking because my kids can be wild at the dinner table at times.Â  Everything was fine; the kids were really entertained by the chef’s show.Â  Better yet, they were mindlessly eating their food without thinking to complain about it or ask for something else.Â  And the couple from Luxembourg took pictures and later emailed them to me – check it out:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/11/kabuki-restaurant.jpg)

Overall, I liked the Japanese food experience – taste and show – Â and I would recommend it to others if it’s something you’ve never tried before.Â  As you can see, our chef was not Japanese – the guy from Luxembourg predicted that and recommended we retry the experience with a Japanese chef.

Â

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Sounds like a fun experience... where was the chef from? How about a chef from Liswathistan?

# Fast and Dirty

My friend Sue has been using that term a lot lately – fast and dirty.Â  It means basically a rough copy of something done quickly.Â  Thus,Â a shortÂ post with just the basic information.Â Â  What did you think I meant?Â  Shame on you.

A beautifully choreographed piece from beginning to end:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**derek**Japanese and their robots. One thing is for sure, their obsession makes for more and more realistically-looking robots, in their fluid movements in this case.  
**jamiahsh**Robotic fan dancing... very unusual, fun

# The Haunting of Molly Hartley

Even though our car is out of commission, we were still able to get out to vote yesterday with our rental car, courtesy ofÂ our carÂ warranty.Â  I have to say that after years of driving a loaded mini-van, I kind of enjoy zipping around in the little Malibu they gave us.Â  My husband pointed out that it’s probably because all the kids won’t even fit in it, so for the first time in a long time, I find myself alone in the car,Â which means blaring country music of my choosing rather than listening to kids fighting, KidsSongs, or Veggie Tales.Â  He’s probably right; although I do enjoy the quick pick-up and the fact that I can easily back out from any parking spot I find myself wedged into.Â  So anyway, the movie theater in the neighboring town was offering free popcorn to those who voted in the election yesterday.Â  They had a movie called, “[The Haunting of Molly Hartley](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1045655/)“, which I hadn’t heard about.Â  But the title sounded promising, as did the fact that the movie came out on Halloween.Â  But then I looked it up on imdb.com, and it had a 3.8 rating.Â  Ouch – that’s a pretty stinky rating!Â  Not only that, but examples of users’ comments on the movie include:Â  “What’s the point of this movie?”Â  “Don’t worry about getting up for a snack, you won’t miss anything.”Â  “A fright fest without the scares.”Â  “Reminds me a of a Nickleodeon movie.” – you get the idea.

But we decided to see it anyway, and I’m glad we did.Â  It really wasn’t that bad – it even has replay value; I’d watch it again.Â  The plot centers around a young girl named Molly who, days before her 18th birthday,Â begins to have episodes characterized by nosebleeds, anxiety attacks, and hearingÂ voices.Â  She is really worried that she isÂ “going crazy”, especially given her mother’s mental instability.Â  The audience doesn’t really know if everything is just in this girl’s head because of past trauma or if there is really more to it.Â  I would describe the movie as [Rosemary’s Baby](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0063522/) meets [Proof](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0377107/) (I’ve only seen the stage play, not the movie though).Â  In Rosemary’s Baby, a woman is having a baby and is paranoid that her neighbors are demons who will harm the baby.Â  The movie is done in such a way that the audience is left guessing the entire time if she’s just being paranoid or if her concerns are legit.Â  And Proof is the story of a woman who is following in the footsteps of her mathmatical genius father, only to worry if she is also inheriting his mental illness.

And I disagree with some of the comments made about the Haunting of Molly Hartley – there were plenty of scares.Â  The movie had a creepy mood to it, and there were plenty of jump-out-of-your-seat startles.Â  They were quite predictable, but I’ve seen lots of scary movies, so the predictability of the scares probably had lots to do with my experience of knowing when to expect them.Â  Overall, I’d definitely recommend this movie to people who like horror movies.Â  I liked it much better than [Saw V](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1132626/), and they’re really two different types of movie since unlike the entire Saw franchise, this one had no gore and was rated PG-13.Â  Apparently it was too tame and lame for teenagers, which scares me to think about what it must take to shock teenagers these days.Â  But forÂ grown-up thrill movie fans, it’s worth a view!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**WOW... yes, Rosemary's Baby is creepy. Sounds interesting. It does seem that a lot of teenagers like slasher movies as opposed to scary movies. It sounds like The Saw franchise took an interesting premise and killed it. I guess we have Freddy and Jason to thank for a lot of it.

# About This Blog...

For some reason, I was inclined to go to my “About this blog” page today.Â  I knew it would be outdated, but I was still surprised about how wrong it really was, check it out:

*This is a blog about my life as a mom of 3, (soon to be 4!), girls.Â  I am the matriarch of a family that includes 2 dogs, a parrot, and kids ages 8, 3 1/2, and 1 1/2, and coming soon, a newbornâ€¦Â  Wish me luck!*

That was the old original version I slapped up in a hurry way back when I started this blog.Â  In case you’re not a regular reader, I should tell you that girl #4 was actually a boy (surprisingly, my doctor has a reputation in town for reading the ultrasound wrong when it comes to gender – I always thought the circumstances were exaggerated until it happened to us), and so I now have three girls, ages almost 9 years, 4 years, and 2 years old.Â  We also have a little boy who is almost 4 months old.Â  I was right about the needing luck part – 4 kids at one time, especially ones this little (and spoiled!),Â can be very needy all together andÂ quite a handful.Â  We still have the parrot and the dogs, and they just add to the chaos.Â  It’s stressful, but that’s my problem, I have to learn to lighten up about some things.Â  Most of the time, I have great fun watching them all interact as the daily chaos unfolds.Â  The little guy loves his sisters!

### Comments

**justj**Well I checked my about and it is still up to date. Thanks for the reminder. ;)  
**derek**Though not the *same* "2 dogs." Picked up Beesly :) , had to give up Scooby :( .

# Bad Luck Turns Good!

We’ve been hit with some bad luck lately in our household.Â  First, our beloved family dog of almost 11 years was diagnosed last week with a few potentially life-threatening illnesses.Â  Aside from our obviousÂ concerns about our dog’s health, this has also incurred large vet bills.Â  Next, we lost our expensive digital camera while trick-or-treating, and it contained priceless family photos, including the kids in their Halloween costumes.Â  Finally (hopefully!) our car decided to conk out – engine wouldn’t turn over.Â  My husband did some research online and found that it was most likely the pass-key system, which can be quite costly to fix.Â  While we were trying to jump start the car to fix it ourselves, the keys got locked in, which also stalled our efforts to fix it.

However, the bad luck is slowly changing to good, an unheard of phenomenon for us as people who have experienced more than an average person’s amount of bad luck, I’d guess.Â  For a few years, we really got dumped upon, one horrible thing after another, but we’ve also had more than our fair share of good luck in life as well, especially lately, and we count our blessings every day.Â  But rarely has our bad luck turned good like this.Â  Yesterday, as I was walking my daughter to school (no car, remember?), I found a $10 bill on the sidewalk.Â  I immediately felt guilty and thought about how much I would like the person who found our digital camera to turn it in, so we called the police – again – and asked if anyone reported it missing.Â  So far, they haven’t, which means I get to keep it.Â  The police must be getting sick of us by now since we’ve called about 10 times in the last few days looking for our camera and trying to get into our locked car…Â  but oh well, in a sleepy rural town such as ours, I’m sure they’re just happy to have *something* to do.Â  So anyway, I find the $10, and I think I get to keep it, and then I walked to the local car dealer yesterday, and they gave me a key to get into my car for only $2.50 when we thought it would be at least $35 for a locksmith!Â  So we find money, save money getting into our locked car, and then today we find out that our car is still under warranty, so the expensive pass-key replacement system will be covered!!!Â  HOORAY!!!Â  And get this –Â we are under warranty for ***only 24 more miles!***Â Â  What a blessing of a coincidence, although it makes me afraid to drive the car for fear that something else will go wrong and next time, it won’t be covered!

But anyway, besides the vet bills, as far as the car goes, I think we actually came out ahead on the whole deal.Â  We saved $ on gas these past two days when I had to do all errands on foot, I found the $10, and there’s no charge for repairs, so yeah, we’re actually $10+ ahead!Â  Hopefully everything wil go ok with the car repairs so that we can still make it to the early Christmas celebrations we had planned for this weekend in Illinois.Â  And they say bad things happen in sets of three, so hopefully this is it for at least a little while anyway…

### Comments

**derek**Big whew! there. I hope that someone finds your camera and recognizes you from the pictures- a far more likely occurrence where you live than here.  
**jamiahsh**I was going to ask if the car was still under warranty. Thank goodness you did not take any unnecessary (or too many, anyway) on your trip. Have fun this weekend!

# Vacation Diary - Chapter Four

Wednesday, October 22 – Breakfast at Golden Corral – best omlette I’ve had in a long time.Â  Then it was off to the Magic Kingdom where our group got separated.Â  It was ironic because they make an announcement on the monorail on the way over to the Magic Kingdom about picking a meeting place in case your party gets separated, and during that announcement, I had a feeling we should probably do that.Â  We ended up finding everyone but not at the meeting place we had desigated.Â  The Monsters Inc. show is funny as always, and my husband was chosen *again* to participate, this time playing “Sully”.Â  We skipped Space Mountain this time around because the line was long and by the time we remembered to get fast passes, we were ready to leave Tomorrowland.Â  I also skipped one of my favorites, Peter Pan’s Flight, but it was well worth it to get my husband a wheelchair so he could get off his extremely painful infected toe.Â  Besides, the girls still got to ride it with our friend, Jamiahsh.Â  Splash Mountain was fun, although the recent updates the ride incurred saw the song onÂ it changed from the extremely catchy “Zippidy Doo-Dah” to something else I don’t even remember.Â  That’s 0/2 for me liking the rides they’ve updated this trip, if you’re keeping track.

And this is the second Florida trip where both my husband and I saw a strange and unidentified creature.Â  We’re not crazy, but both times we both saw the same things.Â  This time, it was a black figure running across the road which was actually a bridge over another road.Â  When it got to the edge of the bridge, the black shape just kept going – which means it was airborne.Â  I didn’t see it “running” really; to me it was a black oval traveling across the road – I couldn’t make out any legs.Â  My husband, who has better eyesight than I, saw something running and then flying.Â  Either way, none of this describes any animal I’m familiar with, especially one who is native to the United States.Â  And since I’m on the subject, I will describe our first unidentified creature encounter.Â  It was a few years ago on our way down to Florida, somewhere in the wilderness of Georgia in the middle of the night.Â  I saw something sitting by the side of the road, and then it opened and flapped a LARGE pair of wings and flew a short distance upwards onto a low branch in a tree.Â  It’s wingspan was huge – a diameter of a full grown man at least, 6 feet or more.Â  This sighting was witnessed by my husband also, and we call it “Batman”.Â  I’ve looked up various birds and the largest I’ve found is a condor, but this creature seemed even larger and its body was bigger and shaped less like a bird’s body.Â  Mysteries as yet unsolved…

Well, anyway, talking about the strange creature on Wednesday night disoriented us, and after we got outÂ of Disney World’s hugeÂ tangle of roads, we went to the Boston Lobster Feast where at least one kid stayed passed out.Â  Because we had 3 of the 4 kids asleep by the time we got back to the condo, Chris and I decided to take our night out that had been scheduled (and cancelled due to kid neediness) for the previous two nights.Â  We went over to the Fun Spot, a newer amusement park next to Old Town.Â  We went on an extreme ride – check this out:

Â 

It actually was much more mild than it looks – and no, that’s not us in the picture.Â  The ride was kind of lame, really…Â  Conversely, two of the 4 go-cart tracks at Fun Spot are wicked, simply put.Â  And I’m not exaggerating when I say that someone might be killed on those tracks.Â  Unfortunately, I had to witness a little girl speed out of control and hit the wall at a high rate of speed.Â  I think she was alright; she was conscious at least, but she was very scared, and it was terrifying to witness.Â  The one track starts by winding up a ramp, and then when you’re at the top, the track drops off so suddenly that I’m sure a cart could get some air if one was on a suicide mission and wanted to try it.Â  So your cart picks up speed down this steep hill, and before the track even levels out, there’s a hairpin turn – looks like you’re driving in a bowl – followed by another downward slope.Â  I can’t believe they let kids drive the course, and I shudder to think what careless, invincible (so they think) teenage boys would do with a go-cart on that track – especially aÂ whole packÂ of them driving it together.Â  But for us adults, it was lots of fun, although I prefer something much more mild in a go-cart – the things have no padding!Â  Another course they had there was very small but it had a lot of sharp turns, and it reminded me of a live version of Mario Kart – without the fake gift boxes and shell weapons, of course ðŸ˜‰

Here is aÂ picture of crazy go-cart course – it doesn’t even show the “32 degree banked bowl”, just the “shear drop”:

Â 

### Comments

**derek**3rd in line for that go-kart track!  
**jamiahsh**And it really was worth it to push C around in the wheelchair. He would have been REAALLLY miserable had I not.  
**jamiahsh**Yes... SIGN ME UP!!!  
**justj**That looks like a go-cart track that I would really enjoy. WOW!!!

# Halloween

Our trick-or-treating was actually on Thursday, and we had lots of fun.Â  It’s a darn shame though that we lost our camera along the way, and even after numerous calls to the police station, it hasn’t turned up.Â  But after trick-or-treating, we went to our friends’ church party, and they took a Halloween picture of our whole family.Â Â I wonder if they’llÂ sneak it into the newspaper next year to advertise their party.Â  They did that this year – imagine my surprise when I’m flipping through theÂ paper the other day and there’sÂ a picture of us from Halloween last year, dressed as a fish with my husband the monk beside me holding Pebbles Flintstone.

I just hope there wasn’t anything else too important on that camera.Â  Also, it was an expensive camera which my husband had won, not to mention the fact that we’re now without a camera.Â  We had to finish the rest of our Halloween celebrations without taking any pictures.Â  On tap today was the community Halloween party at the ice rink – there’s no ice in there yet.Â  Instead, they set up carnival games, bouncy castles, a cardboard box maze,Â and face painting for the kids.Â  They have hay (straw)Â ridesÂ through theÂ “haunted” fields, and each kid that attends gets a bag of popcorn and a trick-or-treat bag to put their candy inÂ when they win it from the games.Â  It’s very cool, and the best part is that it’s all free – including hot dogs and punch for the whole family.Â  For some reason, this year’s turnout was a bit lacking – less than 1/3 of the people from last year I would estimate.Â  I guess it’s because they had it after Halloween this year?Â  I don’t really get why that would scare (haha) people away – a free fun thing for the kids including dinner?Â  It’d be hard to keep us away!Â  Since I only have one Halloween picture of the kids and they’re cute, I’m reluctantly sharing the whole family’s Halloween picture, myself included – I love dressing up for Halloween and wanted to get more mileage out of my less-than-$5 80’s costume.Â  One of the funnest things about dressing up is being creative and finding things that make a costumeÂ for a bargain.Â  Next year I want to be Dorothy from Wizard of Oz, so I’ll have to be on the lookout all year for a dress and shoes I can use.Â  Here is a list ofÂ people and costumes from this year:

Taylor – almost 9 years old – a costume she put together herself involving a dress, a cape, and devil horns  
Sammie – 4 yrs – a princess  
Disney – 2 yrs – a unicorn  
Christopher – almost 3 mos. – a lion cub  
Dad – an escaped inmate  
Mom – a time traveller from the 80’s

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/11/halloween-08.jpg)

Hope everyone had a great Halloween!

### Comments

**derek**Glad *someone* got trick-or-treaters Jamiahsh! C has the wrong number on his convict uniform- it should be 24601! :P And why doesn't Talyor look happy?  
**jamiahsh**I've always wanted to be the Cowardly Lion. According to reports, we had approximately 100 trick or treaters Halloween night. That is more than we have had the last several years... especially given our prime location. I guess the fact that it was actually on Halloween night on a Friday had something to do with it.

# Vacation Diary - Chapter Three

Tuesday, Oct 21 – WeÂ visited Universal Studios, Islands of Adventure, and the Out of Control Magic Show at Wonderworks.Â  Universal and Islands are right next to each other, but there is a lot of walking between the two.Â  A lot of walking and not so much for the kids.Â  But they did have fun, especially Disney who got to see Barney Live.Â  I missed the Animal Actors show this year, but I was more in the mood for rides, and we got to ride plenty.Â  The new Simpsons ride is actually better than I expected.Â  It’s the old Back to the Future ride except you are now riding through Springfield.Â  The waiting area is themed well, and you get to watch little Simpsons snippets while you wait – talk about making the time go by fast!Â  The ride is very cool, and you actually feel like you’re riding around Springfield.Â  The Mummy ride is still my favorite thing in both parks, and it’s as cool as I remember.Â  I especially like sitting near people who haven’t been on it before – it’s a blast to see the reactions to the haunted house meets roller coaster.Â  Over at Islands, we got positively soaked to the core riding the Bluto boat ride, but that was expected because I rode it twice – those huge raft rides are my favorite type of water ride.Â  My 4-year-old Sammie hated it, much to my surprise because she was just playing in the sprinklers at Epcot the night before.Â  But she felt better after going on one of the kids’ favorites, the Cat in The Hat ride.Â  Our two-year-old loved that one too.Â  We were a bit strapped for time and didn’t get to try some of the coasters and other rides I’ve never been on over at Islands, but oh well, we still had fun.Â  And my husband got chosen again (4th time now) to be an “actor” in the skit they do before the Earthquake ride which isÂ now known as “Disaster”.Â  They redid it and added a cool hologram of Christopher Walken.Â  And they chose my husband to be the “hunky” lead actor – but then, I always knew that 

The magic show was a lot of fun and it made me want to produce something like it locally for our community theater.Â  It’s kind of like stand-up comedy AND magic in one, with lots of audience participation.Â  My husband, daughter, and our friend were all chosen to go on stage, and I filled up the camera’s memory card trying to record everything.Â  And a note to Jamiahsh – you really don’t know me well enough by now to not point at me when they’re asking for volunteers?!?Â  You are so lucky he didn’t pick me – I would have blamed you and had your head!Â  Just kidding…Â  well, kind of, but don’t do that again!

### Comments

**derek**:D  
**taylhis**Yes, did I mention he was chosen to play the "hunky hero"?  
**jamiahsh**I had a momentary lapse of judgment. But as soon as I saw the look across the table, my lapse ended.  
**derek**There's just something about that guy you call husband... :D  
**justj**Please, if jamiahsh ever 'volunteers' you again, can I be there when you have his head? Sounds like my kind fun BWAAA HAA HAA... Yes the Halloween season has taken over....

# Vacation Diary - Chapter Two

Monday, October 20 (Disney’s 2ndÂ birthday!!) – Started off bright and early in Orlando with a time share presentation – yuck.Â  We’ve been to a few of these, and we try to schedule at least one every time we’re in the Orlando area because they pay well.Â  This time, we got $100 cash.Â  It took over 3 hours, but hey, that’s over $30/hour – well worth it in my opinion.Â  I could go on and on about time share presentations because there are always certain things they do to get you to buy one – there must be a formula to the presentations.Â  And let’s face it, they’re one of the biggest rip-offs that exist.Â  The last few we’ve gone to, we’ve played a little game where I think of a random word my husband has to say to the time share people.Â  This time it was “gondola”.Â  Unfortunately, we didn’t get the word in because the presentation took much longer than they said it would (big surprise) and we had our friend jamiahsh waiting for us.Â  This also saw us getting to Epcot later than we would have liked, but we still got to do most of everything we wanted at Epcot.Â  If you’ve been to a time share presentation (or 2 or 3 or more), then you should check out the South Park episode about it.Â  I’m not a huge fan of the show, but the time share episode is hilarious.Â  It was actually recommended to us by a time share salesman once!

The manatees are my favorite thing at Epcot.Â  My husband makes fun because we have manatees right here at the Columbus Zoo in Ohio, but that’s 3 hours away and I’ve only been there once.Â  Besides, I’ve been to Epcot a bunch and I’m starting to get to know their manatees.Â  Last time I was lucky enough to see them hugging!Â  A peaceful feeling comes over me as I watch them swim.Â  We did miss the Crush (from Finding Nemo) show, and we meant to go back for it but forget – oh well.Â  And for those of you who’ve been to Disney World before, you should know that they’veÂ updated the Spaceship Earth ride – that’s the one in the big huge golfball that is Epcot’s signiture.Â  I don’t like the new version nearly as much as the old one.Â  The ride needed updating.Â  It takes riders through the history of human communication, and ome of the scenes had become outdated as time passed because peopleÂ don’t communicate in the ways that theyÂ visualized we would when the ride wasÂ built.Â  Soarin’ is my favorite ride at Epcot, but it always has HUGE lines.Â  This time we were able to get a fastpass, but we could only ride once and my husband wasn’t able to ride because our 2 year old was in a Daddy-clingy kind of mood.Â  We ended the night at Epcot by running all over the park in a desperate search for a soft pretzel.Â  Our 4-year-old was being so uncharacteristically well-behaved that I was willing to get her anything she wanted, especially sinceÂ she was asking about it nicely.

### Comments

**derek**Epcot- isn't that a kind of been there, done that place by now? Just curious. I remember the big turkey legs from last time, though I don't think I ever got one.  
**taylhis**Did you see all the people staring at us with that huge turkey leg? Usually people come up and ask about it - everyone who sees one wants one! It is a good snack and protein boost for the price - feeds the whole family.  
**jamiahsh**Ah, yes the pretzel. I also forgot about the HUGE turkey leg that is a family tradition... walking around EPCOT with a huge turkey leg... BARBARIANS!!! HAHAHHA

# Stress

I feel like I can barely keep my head above water these days – I’m so incredibly overwhelmed with things to do!Â  To top it all off, our dog had a huge swollen lump on her face that just kept getting worse so we had to take her to the vet.Â  It’s an abscess tooth, and the vet also found a few other problems.Â  In short, we have to decide how much we can afford to fix.Â  This dog is like one of our kids; we got her before we were even married, and at the time, we had trouble adopting a dog because we were so young and lived in an apartment, so shelters wouldn’t let us adopt.Â  But finally, we found Charity, and they let us adopt her, and she was the most terrible puppy you can imagine.Â  We stuck through her puppy years, and by age 2 she was the best dog ever.Â  She is now almost 11 yrs old and a major part of our family, to say the least.Â  So anyway, she needs some treatment at the vet and at home, which will increase our busyness considerably.Â  Add to that some household stuff I’ve been backed up with for months (still haven’t unpacked all my hospital stuff from when the baby was born in July!), and it just keeps getting worse.Â  It’s really hard to do all the laundry and meal preparation and cleaning up after a family of 6 when I have two little kids to watch all day!Â  Thank goodness the other two are in school, but between errands, feedings, diaper changes, cleaning up spills and messes, and playing, I don’t have enough time left over for household duties, much less stuff I’m backed up on…Â  And forget about hobbies; which is why I might have to let my blog go.Â  I really don’t want to; I enjoy writing on it; especially cuz it gives me a nice way to preserve memories for our family.Â  But right now, it’sÂ  a source of stress as it’s just another thing I’m trying to work in.Â  I wish I could be more passive about housework and laundry and stuff like that, but it just bugs the heck out of me when I let stuff go.Â  And for good reason – I never have the time to catch up on stuff that’s put off until later!Â  But enough of that, I’m just venting my stress, and also warning you that my blog posts are going to become even more infrequent.Â  It’s a shame too…Â  I have a lot left of our trip to FL to share that I’d also like to record in my diary…Â  might not be able to write about it until 2009!

### Comments

**derek**Hmm. Seems I keep missing you with Messenger. Anyway, I hope Charity is doing okay! And two posts after you warn about less frequency... Won't get as infrequent as me! :P  
**jamiahsh**Poor Charity... pray for her. She IS a very good pup. I agree... just take things in stride one thing at a time. Don't be afraid to ask for help.  
**justj**So sorry about the problems with your pup. She is a nice dog and has treated your family well. As for your other stresses, small little bites. You did just get back from vacation. Everything seems to pile up doesn't it. Blessing in disguise that there wasn't a haunted theater waiting for you on your return.

# Vacation Diary - Chapter One

Because Disney World and the Orlando area in Florida are our favorite places to vacation, we make it a point to go as often as we possibly can.Â  The last few trips we’ve made, I’ve been careful to keep a trip diary – a notebook log of things we do as well as hints that might help us make the next journey.Â  Each trip to FL sees me taking a notebook for our trip diary, and I write about various things in it, depending how much downtime I have to write while the kids are sleeping.Â  Here is an excerpt from the diary for this trip:

FRIDAY OCT 17, 2008 – Left town about 5:30pm.Â  Unfortunately, our local Burger King we decided to get for dinner took about 30 minutes!Â  Kids were rambunctious, so we stopped at a McDonald’s Playland in downstate Ohio, wondering how we were ever going to make it the remaining 1,000 miles and back again (at least I was!).Â  The good news is, the Playland seemed to tire out the kids and they fell asleep.Â  They woke around midnight, but a trip into the gas station seemed to comfort Disney (almost 2 year old) and the kids slept until about 8 am Sat morning.  
SAT OCT 18, 2008 – We stopped at another McD’s Playland to blow off some steam, but it was raining, so their outdoor playplace was closed.Â  The kids handled it well.Â  This was north of coastal Brunswick, GA, so we made pretty good time the night before – thanks to sleepless driver Chris!Â  Since the weather was nice, when we saw a sign around Jacksonville, FL that the beach was only 4 miles away, we decided to stop.Â  We had a great time, and the kids had lots of fun wading in the ocean and collecting seashells.Â  After that, it was on to Orlando, and we stopped and picked up the key for our condo rental when we got there.Â  We then made it to the condo – which was over 10 miles away, much to our surprise – where our faithful driver promptly crashed leaving me to facilitate the activities of 4 well-rested kids.Â  But no problem, I was glad to do it.Â  After all, I had been afforded a nice nap in the car on the way down, a luxury my husband didn’t get.Â  Of course, I’m a person who does best with 8-10 hours of sleep, not that I ever get close to that, but still…Â  So I’m doing my best to summon all the patience I have so I can watch the kids who would not let me nap, and I ended up taking the younger two to Walgreens with me to get some supplies.Â  The place we stayed in was very nice, but it didn’t come with anything – no soap, shampoo, paper towels, beverages…Â  for a family of 6 staying for a week, these were necessities I would need at the local Walgreens.Â  I killed some time there, got lost on the way back, and by the time I had unloaded kids and groceries, my husband was rested andÂ ready for some fun.Â  We went to Golden Corral for dinner…Â  delicious.Â  Reminder for those of you who live in urban areas – we’re not used to a variety when it comes to eating out.Â  So, when we eat out, even at major chain restaurants, we appreciate them in a way we never did when they were available constantly.Â

SUN OCT 19 – slept in, had lunch at Golden Corral.Â  Read my post about the previous night’s activities if you don’t understand why we had two meals in a row with Golden Corral.Â  I would say the lunch is even better then the dinner.Â  So then we went to Old Town, which is a row of shops fashioned like an old fashioned Main Street – there’s even a general store where they sell little glass bottles of Pepsi for 50Â¢.Â  When we first started going to Old Town 10 years ago, those little bottles were a quarter, but I’m not complaining – there’s something about the glass bottle that makes that Pepsi taste extra good.Â  Maybe it’s the thirst quenching reflief it provides after walking around in the Florida heat, or maybe it’s the always much needed caffeine boost – whatever the reason, that little bottle always hits the spot.Â  The Main St. part of Old Town is about 4-5 blocks long, and at each end, there are carnival rides.Â  The roller coaster is jerky but fun, and I went on the swinging boat ride which was scarier than it looked!Â  My fearless daughter, who always wants to try the big rides but isn’t tall enough yet, was shaken enough on the swinging boat ride that she cried.Â  We sat on the end, which I knew would be more thrilling than the middle, but I didn’t realize how much more mild the middle would be until I rodeÂ there with our friend Jamiahsh.Â  We had lots of fun at Old Town and kinda lost track of time.Â  We wouldn’t have been late for the dinner show Arabian Nights if we hadn’t left the tickets back at the condo…Â  oops.Â  We had to walk around in the dark and missed the first few minutes of the show.Â  At least they let my husband in, who let us out at the door and had to park the car.Â  The worker in the parking lot told him to give all the tickets to me, but when my husband tried to get in, they gave him a hard time without a ticket!Â  Thank goodness he was able to get in and also find us in the dark.Â  [Arabian Nights](http://www.arabian-nights.com/) is a great show.Â  Think Medieval Times (if you’ve been there) without the chivalrous games.Â  Well, there is a chariot race, but there are more acrobatics and horse dancing – the horses are gorgeous.Â  My husband calls it Medieval Times for girls, and all us girls in the family love it.Â  My husband was able to get a good deal on tickets online, so the show cost less than a regular dinner!Â  And their food is really good.Â  It’s served with all-you-can-drink pop, which backfired a little bit because in the dark with the show going on, it was difficult to notice that our 2-year-old Disney was drinking A LOT of pop.Â  So next thing I know, she’s walking around, and she starts going up the stairs and tells me she’ll be right back.Â  I said, no, Disney let’s stay in our seats, and then she YELLED at me – “I’LL BE RIGHT BACK!”.Â  It wasn’t a really angry outburst, but if you know sweet little Disney, it was so out of character for her that it was hilarious.Â  She was all hepped up on sugar and pop.Â  So there’s our first 2 days in Florida.Â  We started Monday off with a time share presentation – ugh – so I’ll take that as my cue to stop posting for now.Â  This post is long enough, wouldn’t you say?

### Comments

**derek**Ah- glass bottles. I remember when we had our own local soda bottler. It was called the Pop Shop, and you could get cases of pop in 7 or 12oz bottles. They had quite a variety if I recall correctly. Do they still have those extreme thrill rides down there? I remember getting vertigo just looking at them when we were there several years ago.  
**jamiahsh**I actually do remember the days of the small glass bottle pop (prior to the more environmentally friendly(?) plastic. But I did like what I saw of Old Town... will def. need to spend a few more hours there next time?

# Cold

It’s a strange sensation; something I haven’t experienced for about a year.Â  Last winter I was pregnant, and due to the fact that pregnant women have 2/3 more blood coursing through their bodies than non-pregnant people, they rarely get cold.Â  Then I had the baby in the middle of summer, went to Florida, and now that we’re back in NW Ohio, it’s cold!Â  The older I get, the more I dislike the cold weather.Â  Not only do I dislike bundling everyone up, including myself, but I especially dislike the winter gas bills.Â  We have a humongous furnace that increases our gas bill by 144% in the winter months, which is why I opt to freeze a few months out of the year.Â  I just can’t bring myself to turn on that huge furnace for the season yet.Â  Every year when we get our first winter-sized gas bill, we vow to winterize the house and we talk about getting a new furnace, but somehow, we never get around to doing anything.Â  Maybe this year will be different, but in the meantime, I’m going to try to hold out until at least November 1.Â  Maybe I should check the weather forecast before I say that…

### Comments

**derek**Distant? Until it turns cold again a week or two later. Last couple of years had the coldest spells end of November and December- *before* the official start of winter...  
**jamiahsh**Yes... according the the weatherman, this cold spell is SUPPOSED to seem like a distant memory by Halloween. But since when does one believe weather people.

# Fall Back

It’s been over a week since we’ve been in NW Ohio, and really, not much has changed.Â  There are many less leaves on the trees than there were when we left for Disney World last Friday, but other than that…Â  We haven’t yet had a chance to check in with friends, so hopefully all is well everywhere.Â  I have to admit that I was a bit scarred from our last vacation – we returned to the horrible news that my beloved kitty had passed away.Â  So this time, I was nervous about coming home.Â  I told our pet-sitter that if anyone dies this time to not tell us while we were in Florida, thinking, what good would that do…Â  but that decision ended up backfiring majorly because then the whole time I was worried that something had happened and I didn’t know about it becuase I had left the instructions not to call us…Â  But nothing catastrophic occurred, at least not to us or any of our pets, and we had a wonderful time.Â  Now more than ever I know what people mean when they say that they need a vacation from their vacation.Â  After taking 4 little kids on a 1,000+ mile road trip each way and returning with the trashed car andÂ the dirty laundry and housekeeping catch-up for a family of 6, I could really use a vacaion!

Oh well…Â  we had a great time and I wouldn’t trade our experiences for the world – or all the laundry in the world.Â  More to come about the trip after I unpack some and get used to the fact that I did not gain an extra hour this weekend like Jill my GPS friend told me I had – guess she (along with my alarm clock – glad I noticed that before tomorrow morning) is pre-programmed for the “fall back” switch for daylight savings time.Â  The only problem is that Jill and my alarm clock were programmed before the daylight savings hours were adjusted thanks to President Bush.Â  So they are now an hour behind…Â  but no matter, they can stay that way for another week or two, whenever we change the clocks…Â  and then, I will get my extra hour of sleep – always fun!

### Comments

**derek**My VCR decided to change a week early too... Well, I hope you had a good time outside of the worry!  
**jamiahsh**I definitely know what you mean about needing a vacation from the vacation. I am still trying to catch up on my sleep. I did not know you were so anxious about the pets. And the switch is next weekend... November 2nd. A happy hour of extra sleep to all.

# Kids' Birthday Parties

Had my daughter’s 2nd birthday party over the weekend, and it was a blast.Â  Family and friends came from far and wide, and my daughter recognized the “Happy Birthday” song I’ve been singing to her the past couple of weeks when everyone sang it to her.Â  On a side note, I have a hint for parents everywhere, including myself the next time I throw a kids’ birthday party:Â  have something ready to give the kids to occupy them before the party, otherwise excitement and anticipation will get the best of them, ruining moods of kids *and* parentsÂ  My 3 kids were so anxious before the birthday party last weekend that they were running around, fighting, and even tantruming.Â  I would advise giving the birthday child his or her present early (if they can all play with it without fighting!)Â or setting aside some kind of toy for all of your kids.Â  Better yet, line up someone who can take the kids out of the house all together and let them arrive a mere 15 minutes before the rest of the guests – now that would have been bliss.Â  It’s just impossible to get last minute party preps finished with 3 (or any number, for that matter) wild children running amok.Â  And forget about keeping the house clean while waiting for the guests to arrive.Â  Here we are on Saturday, trying to keep the kids sane and serve lunch all while getting things ready for the party.Â  Then we had to clean up the mess the kids made during lunch really quick before the guests began arriving, after making sure that they actually ate something in their excitement.Â  The formula added up to one hectic pre-party morning and early afternoon, with the tantrum-thrower losing her voice before the party began.

But overall, it was lots of fun; especially getting to see familyÂ who aren’t often able to make the journey to Ohio from Illinois.Â  I know the birthday girl appreciated it and had lots of fun too, and I want to thank everyone who was a part of her special day.Â  Thanks for the gifts andÂ thanks most of all for being there to wish Disney a happy 2nd birthday.Â  Special thanks goes toÂ justj and his family for the very special gifts they bestowed upon our family; as well as Carol and Megan who also were thoughtful about giving each of the girls a present.Â  This helped alleiviate much fighting later in the day while we were suffering birthday party comedown.Â  Another special thanks to the family who travelled hundreds of miles to be there for Disney on her special day.Â  Family and friends are the BEST!

*BELOW: Disney eating her birthday cupcake*

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/10/disneys-2nd-bday-party-weekend-10-11-and-12-2008-004.jpg)

### Comments

**derek**Happy 2nd- Dis, even if you can't read this... :P

# The Office - Great As Ever

Well, we’ve now gotten a taste of two new episodes for this season, and I think I can safely say that the Office is back on track and as funny as ever!Â  It’s always been funny; it’s just that the few episodes that aired after the writer’s strike weren’t the best ones.Â  But I’m happy to see that so far, this season is a riot and will keep me looking forward to Thursday nights.

Entitled, ‘BusinessÂ Ethics’, the 2ndÂ OfficeÂ episode of the season saw Michael and Holly in a major disagreement.Â  But no need to fret, it was resolved by the end of the show, thank goodness.Â  Sorry if I spoiled something for you, but you wouldn’t want to be left hanging about that, now would you?Â  I think I’ll copy n paste the tvguide.comÂ episodeÂ sysopsis and comment on it.Â  That’s an easy way to write a review of the show and share the tvguide.comÂ summary which I always enjoy.Â  Tvguide.com is in *italics*, my comments are inÂ **BOLD CAPS**.

Â

*With the exemplary premiere behind us, in which we were treated to Jim and Pamâ€™s engagement, Dwight and Angelaâ€™s torrid and super-secret affair, Michael and Hollyâ€™s evolving â€˜friendshipâ€™ and Ryanâ€™s return as Pamâ€™s temporary replacement, does the second episode of the Office continue the momentum? The answer, my friends, is â€¦*

*Definitely. Maybe. Ummm â€¦ Not so much.*

*Itâ€™s hard to follow up near-perfection.Â* **WHILEÂ I AGREE WITH THAT COMMENT, I WILL DISAGREE WITH THIS WRITER TO SAY THAT I THINK THE 2ND EPISODE WAS ALMOST AS GOOD AS THE FIRST – THERE’S JUST NO COMPETING BETWEEN AN HOUR OF THE OFFICE AND AÂ HALF-HOUR OF THE OFFICE.***Â â€œWeight Lossâ€ was a one-hour gem, while â€œBusiness Ethicsâ€ had some nice moments, particularly during the beginning of the show, but it had some disappointments for me as well. Iâ€™ll list out my quibbles with this episode first, and then Iâ€™ll get to the funny:*

*1) The Absence of Pam  
After their shocking engagement, Pam is relegated to a disembodied voice on the telephone at the beginning of the show. No doubt there will be plenty of opportunities for her to take center stage as the season develops, and I understand that sending her to school makes it difficult to include her in the officeâ€™s day-to-day, but it was jarring to all but ignore the Jim and Pam relationship right after their shocking engagement.Â* **AGREED – I MISSED PAM TOO, BUT IT WAS ONLY ONE EPISODE, AFTER ALL.Â  IF SHE ISN’T THERE NEXT WEEK, I WILL HAVE A BEEF.***2) Ryanâ€™s ethics  
Reflecting back on an episode entitled â€œBusiness Ethicsâ€ I guess I was surprised that it focused primarily on Michael, Holly and Meredith, and only tangentially referred to the busted and now-humbled Ryan. I was expecting the episode to center more on Ryan somehow (donâ€™t ask me how, Iâ€™m just a recapper).Â* **RYAN CAN BE ANNOYING IN LARGE DOSES, SO I’M GLAD HE WAS ONLY ON THIS EPISODE FOR A LITTLE BIT.***3) Holding back the crazy  
Creed didnâ€™t say or do anything [Creed-like](http://www.theofficequotes.com/character-quotes/Creed-Quotes); Andy didnâ€™t sing a capella or punch a wall; even Michael and Hollyâ€™s â€œLetâ€™s Get Ethicalâ€ intro was a schtick weâ€™ve seen before. So even in an episode with Dwight peeing into a soda bottle, the usual absurdities of the Office family felt somehow muzzled or restrained.Â* **CREED DID SAY AT LEAST ONE REALLY FUNNY THING – SEE BELOW.**

*But enough with the criticisms. Letâ€™s get to the kudos. I thought the â€œpersonal timeâ€ subplot was the highlight of the show, and led to the episodeâ€™s two best scenes:*

*1) Battlestar Galactica.  
This scene was so pitch-perfect, especially for a sci-fi nerd like me, that the only way to do it justice was to transcribe it:*

*Jim: Hey Andy  
Andy: Yo  
Jim: By any chance did you see Battlestar Galactica last night?  
Andy: No I did not. Is that any good?  
Jim: Actually not, itâ€™s really so-so.  
Jim: I donâ€™t like all the crazy monsters and stuff, like Klingons and Wookies and all that.  
Jim (looking at Dwight): Sorry, is there something you wanted to add Dwight?  
Andy: Is that like the original Battlestar Galactica?  
Jim: You know whatâ€™s weird, itâ€™s practically a shot-for-shot remake*

*(Dwight crumbles paper in frustration)*

*Jim: The story is kinda bland, itâ€™s about this guy called â€œDumbledore Calrissianâ€ who needs to return the ring to back to Mordor  
Andy: That doesnâ€™t sound right â€¦*

*2) 19:48*

*Itâ€™s easy for Jim to push Dwightâ€™s buttons, and itâ€™s easy for us to laugh at it. Jimâ€™s pranks on Dwight have been the stuff of legend, but this was the first time that Dwight had it over on Jim â€“ and Jim didnâ€™t even know it.*

*The smugness on Jimâ€™s face when he got Dwight to admit that he took â€œpersonal timeâ€ paled in comparison to the sidelong glance Dwight gave the camera when he admitted that â€œYes, maybe Iâ€™m notâ€ ethical. The camera panned over to Angela buttoning up her shirt, and we understood how Dwight spent that 19:48. I loved that the writers gave Dwight this moment over Jim â€“ unexpectedly turning the tables and making Jimâ€™s prank just seem irrelevant.Â* **THAT WAS A NICE MOMENT.**

*And finally, here are my favorite one-off lines:*

*â€œThe tall guy got engagedâ€ â€“ CreedÂ* **CLASSIC CREED, HILARIOUS!**

*â€œIâ€™ve listened to Cookie Monster Sings Chocolate Rain 5,000 timesâ€ â€“ Michael. (By the way, I tried like heck to find this video on You Tube, but no luck. [But hereâ€™s the consolation prize](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6dUCOS1bM0&feature=related))*

*â€œYouâ€™ve been cuckolded by a stronger, smarter maleâ€ â€“ Dwight*

*So, what did you guys think?Â* **LOVED IT.Â** *Am I right that this episode â€“ while good â€“ did not live up to the season premiereâ€™s lofty heights?*Â Â  **I THINK YOU’RE WRONG.Â  IT WASN’T AS GOOD AS THE PREMIERE, BUT PROBABLY ONLY BECAUSE IT WAS ONLY HALF AS LONG AND FOR THE PREMIERE EPISODE, WE WERE SO HAPPY TO HAVE THIS AWESOME SHOW BACK AFTER SUMMER HIATUS!**

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I just saw a preview for this weeks ALL NEW EPISODE and it looks just as hilarious.  
**Weight Loss » Blog Archive » The Office - Great As Ever**[...] Original post by My Food Chain Gang [...]

# Silent Politicians

What an oxymoron this post title presents, doesn’t it?Â  Silent politicians…Â  is there such a thing?Â  The proof was sighted in NW Ohio last weekend – here it is:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/10/disneys-2nd-bday-party-weekend-10-11-and-12-2008-013.jpg)

*That’s Obama on the left and McCain on the right – true to real life politics.Â  Hillary is in the middle…Â  the display must have been designed months ago…*

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Agreed... was this taken at Cousin Ed and Barb's... haven't made the trip over yet this year. I suggested taking the nieces and nephews this weekend... b4 Sunday of course.  
**derek**Silent- the best type of politician. :D

# More Recipes

I sent some recipes to my sister and since I had to type them into the computer anyway, I will post them on my blog.Â  The first two are great for Thanksgiving, and the last one is a yummy version of lasagna that is great for moms to make because you can do the preparation while the kids are napping or eating lunch, and then it will cook all day in the crock pot.Â  Also, you make it with cottage cheese instead of ricotta cheese which can be expensive.Â  Enjoy!

**Pearl Onions in Cream Sauce**1 – 10 oz pkg red or white pearl onions, peeled according to package directions  
3 TBL butter or margerine  
3 TBL flour  
1 1/2 cups milk, heated almost to boiling point  
2 TBL cream sherry (optional)  
1 drop tabasco sauce  
dash ground nutmeg  
white pepper and salt to taste  
chopped parsley for garnish  
To cook pearl onions, drop peeled onions intoboiling water.Â  Cook for 10 mins. and drain.Â  To make cream sauce, melt butter or margerine over medium-high heat.Â  When melted, add flour, stirring constantly with wire wisk, until all butter is absorbed.Â  Turn heat to low and add milk slowly (make sure to continue stirring with the wire wisk).Â  Add sherry, tabasco sauce, nutmeg, pepper and salt.Â  Fold-in cooked onions and mix well.Â  Before serving, garnish with parsley.Â  Variations:Â  When folding cooked pearl onions into cream sauce, add 3/4 cup cooked green peas.Â  Makes 4-6 side dish servings.

**Sweet Potatoes With Blue Cheese and Pecans**4 lbs sweet potatoes  
3 TBL olive oil  
6 sprigs thyme or 1/2 tsp dried  
1 cup pecans  
1 cup blue cheese

Combine sweet potatoes and oil in a roasting pan, sprinkle with thyme.Â  Roast for 30-45 min at 425 or until tender.Â  Transfer the sweet potatoes to a serving bowl.Â  Gently toss with pecans and cheese.Â  Salt and pepper to taste.Â  Garnish with remaining thyme.Â  Serves 6.

**Crock Pot Lasagna**1 lb lean ground beef  
1 onion, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, smashed  
1 – 28 oz can tomato sauce  
1 – 6 oz can of tomato paste  
1 tsp dried oregano  
1 tsp salt (approx.)  
12 oz uncooked lasagna noodles  
12 oz cottage cheese  
1 cup parmesan cheese (approx.)  
16 oz shredded mozzarella cheese

In a skillet, cook ground beef, onion and garlic until beef is browned.Â  Add tomato sauce, tomato paste, oregano and salt.Â  When sauce is thoroughly warmed, spoon a layer of the meat sauce into the bottom of the crock pot.Â  Add a double layer of uncooked lasagna noodles, breaking to fit if necessary.Â  Top with a layer of each of the cheeses.Â  Repeat process until sauce, noodles, and cheeses are gone.Â  Cover and cook on low for 4-5 hrs.Â  NOTE:Â  My lasagna began to overcook a little before 4 hrs in the crock pot!

### Comments

# Brain Fart = Abandoned Child

I’ll start right off with the excuses.Â  I have a lot going on right now.Â  My October is booked solid.Â  I’ve adopted the philosophy to just take one thing at a time because if I try to think about it all at once, I will end up breathing into a paper bag.Â  Last week, my focus was on my daughter’s 2nd birthday party – inviting guests, buying supplies, getting the house ready, etc.Â  I decided to put this week on the back burner last weekÂ and not try to do things to plan for our trip to Florida we’re taking at the end of this week.

So this morning, I got up and when I went to check my oldest daughter’s backpack for school, she said Dad had already signed her papers that needed to be signed – which is why I missed the memo.Â  All was well, I thought, until the school called our cell phone.Â  It was RIF week at my other daughter’s school (Reading is Fundemental), which means parents can come in and read books to the class.Â  Normally we would just drop off our daughter and be on our way, but of course today we stayed at the school for awhile to read books, which is why my other daughter’s school called our cell phone – thank goodness we had picked up the lost cell phone at the corn maze place Friday night – see one of my [previous posts](http://taylhis.tangents.org/page/2/) if you’re curious about the adventures of the cell phone.

So anyway, they were calling to tell us that today was Columbus Day, there was no school, and could we please come pick up our daughter.Â  Talk about embarrassing.Â  I realize it happens; everyone forgets something now and then, but why did it have to involve one of the kids?Â  And I’m out of good excuses – I’m not pregnant anymore or recovering from surgery or anything like that…Â  just an average, run-of-the-mill brain fart.Â  It’s not a big deal; we retrieved my daughter, and both she and the people at the school were laughing about it (and probably will be for years to come).Â  But this really stinks because this is really bad for the way my mind works.Â  I’m obsessed with detail and constantly worried about forgetting things; I’m always trying to relax about these things but when something like this happens, there’s a little voice in my head that says, “See?Â  Look what happens when you weren’t so obsessive about details!”.Â  Oh, well…Â  the good news is today my oldest is perfectly happy spending time with her little sister, and likewise.Â  So withoutÂ our trouble-makingÂ middle daughter around (she had school today – or did she?!?Â  I was at the school with her, but now I better double check!), they should get along quite well giving me some much needed catch-up time for housework and vacation packing.Â  So why am I sitting here blogging?!?

Here’s a footnote – it’s now later in the day, I was able to sort thru some of the acrued clutter in our house, and I found a newsletter from my daughter’s school.Â  Guess what?Â  October 13 is not listed under important dates in the newsletter for having a day off!Â  So there!Â  Not completely my fault!Â  I can transfer 2% of fault to the school!

### Comments

# Blindness

[Blindness](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0861689/)Â is anÂ interesting movie starring [Julianne Moore](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000194/).Â  Think [Outbreak](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114069/), except this time the disease that’s afflicting people at a record rate isn’t fatal, but it causes sudden blindness.Â  The movie was alright; I liked the ending, but there are a few scenes that are extremely disturbing to watch.Â  As always, I don’t want to go into much detail to avoid spoiling it for people.Â  Julianne Moore is a great actress, and her performance in this movie is not an exception to her reputation as such.Â  She plays a woman who does not contract the disease, therefore she still has her sight but she pretends like she doesn’t in order to be able to stay with her afflicted husband.Â  There were several large flaws with the movie (and the husband’s character), but it was entertaining and thought-provoking; never a bore.Â  Would I recommend it?Â  Probably not to the average movie-watcher, but if you like disaster films, medical dramas, or if you just want to see what a large city would look like if it were abandoned by all that could see, leaving only thousands of blind people, then check it out.Â  But I’m warning you, the view of the cityÂ isn’t pretty, and at times, neither was the movie.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Hmm... Daniel Craig... the newest 007. Must have been a little movie made between Casino Royale and the new Quantum of Solace (whatever that means) coming in November.

# Parents Just Don't Understand?

Some of you may remember the ’80’s song called “Parents Just Don’t Understand” performed by a musical act called DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince – the Fresh Prince is known nowadays as an actor named Will Smith.Â  But anyway, the song was about teen angst and how parents just don’t understand teens.Â  What I’m talking about is something completely different – see the below story about the woman who threatened to post naked pictures of her daughter’s ex-boyfriend (the kids are 13!) on the internet as blackmail in hopes of getting the pair back together.Â  Talk about parents just don’t understand!Â  This lady doesn’t understand values, morals, or appropriate social conduct just to name a few things.Â  Not to mention the fact that things don’t seem to be wired right upstairs, and that’s an understatement.Â  My children will not be dating at 13, andÂ they will not have cell phones for any purpose outside of emergency or family use only at that age.Â  I would never try to get my daughter “back together” with a boy, especially at 13, and if IÂ were ever unfortunate enough to come across such pictures, I, like most people I’m sure, would turn them over toÂ authorities instead of conspiring to use a child’s mistake against himÂ andÂ put him in danger.Â  And perhaps the kicker?Â  The woman is a teacher.Â  Well, *was* a teacher…Â  There is so much wrong with this story, I’ll let you sort out the details:

***Chicago Tribune – October 8, 2008****An Elgin woman is under investigation in connection with a strangeâ€”and possibly criminalâ€”campaign to reconcile her 13-year-old daughter with a former boyfriend.*

Authorities say she threatened to publish nude pictures of the boy on the Internet unless he contacted the girl.

The 42-year-old woman reportedly peppered the Sleepy Hollow boy, also 13, with phone calls, e-mails and thousands of text messages aimed at reuniting the young couple, according to a search warrant and affidavit filed late last month. The Tribune is not naming the woman because she has not been charged.

When those tactics failed, the woman threatened to publish photos online of the naked teen that he had sent to her daughter via cell phone, the records say.

“It’s odd, to say the least,” said Kane County State’s Atty. John Barsanti, who said the woman is under investigation. “It’s not a fact pattern we normally come up against.”

The woman could face charges of child pornography, intimidation and harassment, the documents say. Police seized cameras, computers, cell phones and other items from her Elgin home and the private school where she works. The boy received 12,302 text messages from the woman between January and July, according to records. The boy’s family contacted police in late August.

The girl’s brother also took part, allegedly threatening to go to the boy’s parents with the pictures unless the boy saw the girl twice a week, according to records.

On Sept. 23, the woman left a message warning the boy she would “send the pictures and video of him to his teacher and minister to show them he is not a nice person,” the search warrant stated.

Oh, and this mother’s job at the school? She’s a teacher.

### Comments

**derek**Such a wonderful world we live in, isn't it? What's with teens and taking nude pics of themselves anyway? I read another story recently about the kids getting into trouble with this, with threats to bring them up on child pornography charges. Talk about ruining a life for being stupid.  
**jamiahsh**I dunno, but could be the mother wants the bf back in her daughter's life for other reasons? Maybe I'm grasping at straws here. But whatever her motives are ther are sick.

# Teenagers Driving You Crazy?

Then drive to Nebraska and drop them off.Â  For good.Â  Seems Nebraska has a “safe haven” law like a lot of states, however, they are the only ones to have neglected placing an age limit on the kids who are left at the safe havens.Â  These laws are designed to protect the safety of unwanted infants, encouraging mothers to drop them at hospitals instead of getting scared and doing something horrible and regrettable to the babies.Â  Most states set their age cap at 72 hours, but since Nebraska failed to set a cap, they are seeing an influx of people dropping off their troublesome teens, including people who don’t even live in Nebraska!Â  Read about it below:

*(CNN) — Frustrated parents are dumping their teenagers at Nebraska hospitals — even crossing state lines to do it — and the state Legislature has scheduled a special hearing to try to stem the tide.*

*A 14-year-old Iowa girl was left Tuesday at Creighton University Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska.*

*Â Nebraska’s “safe haven” law, intended to allow parents to anonymously hand over an infant to a hospital without being prosecuted, isn’t working out as planned.*

*Of the 17 children relinquished since the law took effect in July, only four are younger than 10 — and all four are among the nine siblings abandoned by a man September 24 at an Omaha hospital.*

*On Tuesday, a 14-year-old girl from Council Bluffs, Iowa, was abandoned at Creighton University Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska, just across the Missouri River from Council Bluffs. The case marks the first time a parent has crossed state lines to abandon a teenager in Nebraska, authorities said.*

*“The few situations we’ve seen so far demonstrate the need for a change in Nebraska’s safe haven law,” Gov. Dave Heineman said in a statement Monday. “In the coming legislative session, I will advocate for changes that put the focus back on protecting an infant in danger. That should be our priority.”*

*All 50 states have safe haven laws, but only Nebraska’s lacks an age limit. Nebraska’s part-time Legislature is adjourned until January, but two state legislative committees will hold a joint hearing November 13 to discuss a remedy.*

*“They’ve got a huge problem,” said Linda Spears, vice president for policy and public affairs for the Child Welfare League of America. “It’s a pretty poorly constructed law to meet its original intent.”*

*When it was introduced in the Legislature, the bill had a presumed age limitation of 72 hours, said Todd Landry, director of the state’s Division of Children and Family Services.*

*“The original intent was to protect infants from the immediate danger of being harmed,” he said.*

*However, the law’s final language uses the word “child” and does not specify an age limit, leaving it open to interpretation. Other states’ laws specify the maximum age at which a child may be relinquished, ranging from 72 hours in several states to 1 year in North Dakota, according to the National Center for State Courts.*

*“Clearly in these cases so far that we’ve seen, none of these children were in any immediate danger of being harmed,” Landry said. “It is our opinion that the law does need to be modified.”*

*The law is being abused, Heineman’s statement said.*

*“Safe haven laws were not designed to allow families having difficulty with older youth and teenagers to abandon their children or responsibilities as parents,” he said.*

*The parents may not always be to blame, the Child Welfare League’s Spears said.*

*“The original safe haven laws were created for young moms who are having babies who didn’t know how to get help. I think these are families with older kids who don’t know how to get help and who are in desperate need,” she said.*

*Most state laws fail to provide for research into who is abandoning babies and why, league spokeswoman Joyce Johnson said.*

*“Those are the kinds of things we’ve been wondering about and saying we need to know more about, and you’ll never know if you just have a law that says you can anonymously leave a child somewhere, no questions asked,” Johnson said.*

*New Jersey, she said, is an exception. That state’s safe haven law provides funding for research and evaluation as well as $500,000 a year for public awareness, according to a September 2007 report by a New Jersey safe haven task force.*

*A woman who dropped her 15-year-old nephew at a Lincoln, Nebraska, hospital told CNN affiliate KETV last month that she and the boy’s guardian could no longer handle his behavior problems.Â  Watch woman explain why she left 15-year-old at hospital Â»*

*The woman, Cathy Poulin, said she tried discipline and medication, but nothing worked. The boy’s mother died several years ago, and his father left him, she said.*

*“We had to go to the next level,” Poulin said. “He can be made to get help.”*

*The Omaha man who left his nine children, ages 1 to 17, at Creighton University Medical Center was overwhelmed by the sudden death of his wife after the youngest child was born, he told KETV.*

*“I was with her for 17 years, and then she was gone. What was I going to do?” Gary Staton said. “We raised them together. I didn’t think I could do it alone. I fell apart. I couldn’t take care of them.”*

*Staton is just the kind of parent whom safe haven laws fail to help, Johnson said.*

*“He was grieving, he didn’t have a lot of money, and all those children — he was trying to figure out how to feed them, how to clothe them, and deal with the grief of losing his wife. He needed help,” she said.   
Heineman and Landry urged Nebraska parents who are having trouble coping to call the United Way’s 211 resource line or Boys Town, a nationally known nonprofit child services organization based in Nebraska.*

*Other options include community and faith-based support groups, crisis hot lines, treatment centers and other services, Landry added.*

*By Jim Kavanagh*

Â

Â

Â

### Comments

**justj**Well, I guess I don't have to worry much about driving to Nebraska. I can kick my last teen out next year. She turns 18 and is a legal adult. Really though, unless the teenagers dropped off were from the state of Nebraska (that has no limits), the home states could prosecute the adults that dropped the kids off. The adults dropping kids off would have to stay in Nebraska to avoid charges. I can see the need for the law with newborns, but there should be an age limit.  
**derek**I heard about this law a few weeks ago on the radio. Mostly teenagers have been dropped off? That's sad. And to cross state lines to do it speaks of desperation. I would rather see such parents helped.

# The Office - Season Premeire!

**WARNING – SPOILERS AHEAD!Â  THIS POST DETAILS THE HAPPENINGS DURING THE OFFICE PREMIERE – YOU’VE BEEN WARNED!**

I can’t believe I didn’t get around to writing about the Office season premiere until now!Â  For goodness sakes, it airedÂ almost two weeksÂ ago!Â  It all began when our kids were acting up so much that we didn’t catch the premiere episode when it aired on tvÂ the ThursdayÂ night before last Thursday night.Â  Still with me?Â  Doesn’t really matter…Â  just skip to the part of the post you like.Â  Thinking we had set our computer to tapeÂ The Office premiereÂ or that we could find it online, we didn’t fret too much until it was time for bed and we still hadn’t found it.Â  Finally got ahold of it late Friday night after some corn maze fun, stayed up way too late to watch it, followed byÂ a busy weekend, a chaotic week, and another bustling weekend before I got a chanceÂ to write about it!Â  So anyway, here is my take on The Office’s premiere episode.Â  I always like what tvguide.com has to say in their tv show blogs, so I copied and pasted their tv show blog synopsis of the premiere and that’s in italics.Â  I will interject my own comments throughout the article, and those are in **BOLD CAPS**.Â  A brief break for the Vice Presidential debate last Thursday, and then some more funny new Office episodes begin this Thurday!!!

*Last season ended with cliff-hangers galore: Andy proposed to Angela, Jim was thwarted from proposing to Pam, Michael commited to playing babydaddy to Jan’s mystery spawn, and â€” this really killed me because my DVR cut off early and I only found out about this the next day â€” the cameras, those ubiquitous Office cameras, caught Dwight and Angela boinking minutes after she accepted Andyâ€™s proposal. The writers developed great storylines last season, and this premiere episode did a great job picking up those threads and setting up some great arcs for this season.*Â  **(AGREED!Â  AT THE RISK OF ALIENATING POTENTIAL VIEWERS, I WILL SAY THAT THIS SHOW IS A COMEDY WITH SOAPY CHARACTERISTICSÂ  GIVEN ITS CONTINUING STORYLINES AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.Â  BUT IF YOU’VE NEVER WATCHED THE OFFICE, DON’T LET THIS OBSERVATION DISCOURAGE YOU!Â  MOST TV SIT-COMS HAVE CONTINUING STORYLINES – YOU JUST DON’T ALWAYS REALIZE IT!)**

*\*\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*\**

*Thursday’s premiere was chock-full of big shockers: Jim’s proposal to Pam at a rest stop, Ryan’s return as a receptionist bent on revenge* **(IT’S GREAT FUN TO SEE RYAN AT THE BOTTOM ONCE AGAIN – EVEN MORE FUN TO SEE HIM AT THE BOTTOM NOW AFTER HIS SMARMY ATTITUDE ALIENATING HIS CO-WORKERS)**, *and Dwight and Angela’s secret affair — consummated in an out-of-the way warehouse closet. Lots to talk about, so letâ€™s get started.*

*The episode begins with the announcement of a corporate weight-loss contest, a still-unengaged Pam leaving for Pratt Design in New York (â€œwhat up, 2-1-2?â€) and Angela beeping Dwight for some Office lovinâ€™, right after Andy serenades her with a personalized version of Rihannaâ€™s â€œUmbrellaâ€ (â€œAngela-ela-elaâ€). Honestly, I would page Dwight for a booty call if somebody did that to me, so Iâ€™m definitely not going to moralize.*

*Meanwhile, Michael is in the â€œfriend zoneâ€ with Holly, and, according to Jim, “killing it” because “sheâ€™s kind of a dork.” Cut to the “wicka-wicka-wicka” bebop (I think thatâ€™s what the kids call it), and you appreciate that thereâ€™s a special chemistry there. (I also loved the â€œActing!â€ and Yoda impersonations in last seasonâ€™s finale.) Clearly, Jan and the baby are going to complicate matters, but since Michael may have found in Holly the only woman with whom he could possibly have a healthy relationship, Iâ€™m rooting for them. The writers, though, seem hell-bent on making his journey with Jan and the baby as difficult as possible. Iâ€™m looking forward to the ride.Â* **(I SO WANT MICHAEL AND HOLLY TO END UP TOGETHER – THEY’RE PERFECT FOR EACH OTHER AND SHE SEEMS TO ACTUALLY LIKE HIM.Â  HE KEEPS BEING SO CLUELESS ABOUT IT THOUGH, ITS FRUSTRATINGLY FUN TO WATCH!)**

*As for Jim and Pam: The writers really have it in for them, donâ€™t they? First, unrequited love. Then, Jim leaves and returns with a girlfriend. When he comes back, Jim is almost killed by Roy â€” thank God for Deputy Dwight and his can of mace! â€” and now, a long-distance relationship? Really? The Office has been great at avoiding clichÃ©s, and I hope it continues to do so by not sucking Pam into a complicating “friendship” with some college dude.Â* **(I WAS NOT HAPPY TO SEE THE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE COLLEGE DUDE.Â  PAM HAD BETTER NOT PULL A “ROSS” (REMEMBER THE TV SHOW FRIENDS?)Â AND CHEAT ON HER SOULMATE – SHE AND JIM ARE MADE FOR EACH OTHER, AND I THINK THE SHOW WOULD BE JUST AS ENTERTAINING IF THEY GO AHEAD AND LET THESE TWO GET MARRIED.Â  IF THEY WANT TO FOLLOW IN CHEESY SITCOM FOOTSTEPS, THEN ADD A BABY OR TWO DOWN THE ROAD, BUT DON’T BREAK THEM UP!)**

*And now on to my favorite scenes:*

*The return of Ryan  
I found myself clapping out loud, it was that awesome that a humbled, court-ordered-community-service-oriented Ryan returns as Pam’s temp fill-in. Ryanâ€™s out for some weird revenge angle, as evidenced by his menacing goatee, his black attire and his anti-Earl list, which includes Jim and â€” strangely enough â€” Kevin. Iâ€™m sure Michael will figure out a way to keep him around longer, but I wonder if the once-humble intern truly has turned irrevocably to the dark side.Â* **(I** **THINK SO – RYAN WAS NEVER A NICE PERSON.Â  SURE, THEY MADE YOU FEEL SORRY FOR HIM WHEN HE WAS A TEMP THE FIRST TIME, BUT HE WAS STILL A JERK.)**

*“So you think itâ€™s a choice?”  
The patented Office awkwardness of Oscar and Holly having the “Iâ€™m a lesbian… No, Iâ€™m actually not” exchange was fantastic. It certainly didnâ€™t reach the cringeworthy heights of last yearâ€™s classic dinner-party episode, but it still managed to make me laugh and squirm like no other show on TV does. For some reason, that appeals to me.Â* **(THIS SCENE WAS HILARIOUS AND ONE OF MY FAVORITES – NUFF SAID!)**

*“That wasnâ€™t a tapeworm.”  
I would like to proclaim, in this, my initial Office blog, that Creed is my hero. He may be my favorite sitcom character of all time. Kelly says she swallowed a tapeworm to lose weightâ€¦ that Creed sold her. Cut to Creed: “That wasnâ€™t a tapeworm.” The only question that remains, and I’m afraid of the answer: What was it?Â* **(I AM A BIG FAN OF CREED ALSO – HE IS AN AWESOME CHARACTER, SOOO FUNNY.Â  MY FAVORITE CREED LINE IS WHEN HE SAYS “YEP, IT’S CRAZY.Â  IT’S CRAZY.” IN THE EPISODE WHERE DWIGHT WANTS TO COOK A GOOSE IN THE OFFICE.Â  IT DOESN’T LOOK NEARLY AS FUNNY IN TYPE; YOU HAVE TO SEE THE EPISODE.Â  AND THEN THERE’S THE EPISODE WHERE CREED DYES HIS HAIR AND STARTS USING SLANG TO APPEAR YOUNGER – CLASSIC!)**

*“Iâ€™ve replaced Angela as head of the party-planning committee.”  
Phyllis reveals her Machiavellian side with this power play. As she caught Angela and Dwight doing their illicit dirty deed, her little upward smile indicated at the very moment she caught them that the party-planning committee chairmanship was all hers. You go, girl!*

*The big shocker: Jim and Pam get engaged!  
On exit 17 off of what I can only assume is the New Jersey Turnpike, Jim drops on one knee and pops the question. Iâ€™m really glad they didnâ€™t drag it out and save the engagement for some sweeps or finale ploy. The unexpectedness of the proposal, and how unassuming it was, really kept true to the nature of their relationship. For me, this is one the main reasons why this show is so great: The writers donâ€™t betray their characters.Â* **(AGREED!)**

*So, what did you guys think? Was the Season 5 premiere worth the wait?Â* **(IT WAS GREAT, BUT NEVER WORTH THE WAIT CUZ THAT MEANS THAT WE HAVE TO GO WITHOUT THE SHOW!)Â** *What did you think of the engagement?Â* **(VERY HAPPY ABOUT IT – CALMS MY FEARS ABOUT THAT RANDOM COLLEGE DUDE A LITTLE BIT – I WAS FEELING JEALOUS *FOR* JIM!)Â** *Did you see it coming or were you, like me, totally shocked?Â* **(I WAS SHOCKED, DIDN’T SEE IT COMING AT ALL, BUT IT WAS SOMETHING I WAS REALLY HAPPY ABOUT.Â  I’M GLAD THEY DIDN’T SHOW IT TO US IN A PREVIEW!)Â** *Finally, what were your favorite scenes?Â* **(THE OSCAR / HOLLY EXCHANGE AND THE CREED / KELLY TAPEWORM INCIDENT WERE MY FAVORITES – KELLY LOOKING SO SICK AND PASSING OUT WERE PRICELESS!Â  OVERALL, AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS WITH TV SHOWS, THE SEASON PREMIERE DID NOT DISAPPOINT IN THE SLIGHTEST!Â  CAN’T WAIT UNTIL THURSDAY!!!!!)**

### Comments

**derek**Nothing to be sorry about- I knew it would be an episode discussion. I was just being dramatic. :mrgreen:  
**taylhis**OOPS - SORRY! At least I put the spoiler alert... here, I'll make a bigger one at the top of the post...  
**derek**la-la-la-I-can't hear-you! I'm still waiting for season 4 to come in at the library- just a few weeks now... Then I will have to download all the season 5 episodes I missed and I will be caught up! :)

# Disappointment Is An Understatement

I am still a Cubs fan; I will admit it.Â  Even after the 2003 Steve Bartman episode, after the 100+ (now it’s officially time to add the + to 100)Â year World Series drought, and the disasterous playoffs of the 2007 and now 2008 seasons.

I just cannot believe the season is over.Â Â The seasonÂ started off so promising this year, and picked up momentum all summer, only to leave us bewildered and disgusted in October once again.Â  So what happened that made them look so terribleÂ during all theÂ playoff games?!?

You know what?Â  I don’t even want to talk about it.Â  At least I don’t have to worry about missing the World Series while I’m in Florida!Â  Frickin’ Cubs.Â  Maybe next year…Â  UGH!

### Comments

**taylhis**Eww, yuck. I would never make that bet.  
**derek**Sox (you know which one) didn't make it either, as if we care... Only one game longer, but enough to cause a diehard Cubs fan teacher to lose a bet and have to wear a Sox jersey to school yesterday. :P  
**Terror In Terror Town | Morat's Blog**[...] The let down of the terribly un-terrifying Terror Town led the group to return to watch the Cubs game which was also a let down.Â  But the Buckeyes won and are now 5-1 overall and 2-0 in the Big [...]  
**jamiahsh**that's prolly the best thing about it... we won't have to worry in FL about it. But, spoken like a TRUE Cubs fan. Next year.

# Farm Adventures - Part 2

One thing I forgot to touch on in my previous post is the danger of corn mazes.Â  Maybe I’m just a paranoid person – well, that I already know – but I was wondering how come there’s never been a major disaster at a corn maze?Â  I mean, what if the thing goes up in flames?Â  It’s a concern I was able to stash in the back of my mind during our visit Friday night; mostly because the particular maze we visited seemed safe.Â  They have a watch tower in the middle of it along with various emergency exits and “corn cops” to help guide you out should an emergency occur.Â  But the first corn maze we visited a few years ago had none of these precautions, and I couldn’t help but let my mind wander, exploring various disasterous scenarios in my head.Â  “Maybe they’re not very flammable.” my husband said about corn mazes, but that theory was dispelled the other night when we saw all the signsÂ warning aboutÂ how flammable the corn maze was.Â  Well, anyway, nothing horrible happened, thank goodness, and I’ve never heard of disaster befalling a corn maze, so until something happens, we’ll be able to enjoy the pastime of corn mazing for years to come.

So onto the rest of the weekend…Â  Saturday was the day of our town’s Fall Fest, so we walked the kids up to the town square, enjoyed the ambience and picnicked for lunch.Â  We ran into a few friends, and came home with an extra kid who spent the afternoon with us when we visited a local alpaca farm.Â  Here are the kids enjoying the bouncy castle at the fall fest with their friend.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/09/sept-27-2008-001.jpg)

Before the alpaca farm,Â we visited another local farm where they have an annual Halloween display – it’s really neat.Â  They go all out for Halloween, and they even made a little train for the kids to rideÂ that’s pulled by a tractor.Â  Every family that visits gets little Halloween toys, home-grown apples,Â and a plate of cookies to take home – and it’s all free; done by nice people who just want to share Halloween with their visitors.Â  Last year we asked about donating money so they can continue their yearly traditions, but they said their insurance company said they can’t except cash butÂ baking supplies and Halloween props would be appreciated.Â  MyÂ parents visited with us last year and enjoyed theÂ Halloween farmÂ so much that they gave me some baking supplies to donate, so Saturday while we were out that way in the country, we dropped them off.Â  Of course, they wouldn’t let us drop stuff off without taking home a plate of homemade cookies…Â  these are the nicest people.Â Â Their home isÂ sparsely furnished – yes, they invite everyone in for a visit – which leads one to think thatÂ if they have extra money, it’s spent on baking supplies and Halloween stuff.Â  Also, the woman is in a wheelchair, but none of that stops them from putting up this elaborate Halloween display every yearÂ and baking hundreds of cookies to give away.Â  When we went to their place for the first time a few years ago, we had just moved here from Chicago, and I’mÂ embarrassed toÂ admit that we wereÂ confused.Â  In the suburban Chicago area, there just aren’t many nice people doing things soley for the enjoyment of others, especially at their own expense.Â  People like that are few and far between and in an area that’s soÂ over-populated, you’re lucky if you run into anyone like that.

Wow, I find myself having to recover from yet another tangent!Â  So anyway, after the Fall Fest downtown we went to the alpaca farm.Â  Saturday was National Alpaca Farm Day, meaning that any alpaca farm who wanted to participate had an open house on their farm for people to visit and learn about these animals.Â  Not only are they cute, but they are profitable as well.Â  Their fur sells for $12/oz, and one alpaca can yield 140 – 160 oz per year!Â  And it’s a method of farming that I approve of since it doesn’t injure nor kill the animal.Â  This farm had a 3-week-old baby alpaca (top picture below), and another one due any day, which is also fascinating because the expecting alpaca didn’t even look pregnant.Â  The farm also had a wild mustang that they had just rescued from Wyoming (bottom picture below).Â  Apparently the wild mustangs out there are running out of pasture and food, so people are bringing them to farms so they don’t starve.Â  This gorgeous animal had never touched a human being until a few weeks ago, and his first contact with humans was them putting him into a trailer and driving him across the country – that must have been frightening for him.Â  But you couldn’t tell by looking at him.Â  He was so well-adjusted and was coming up to all the people who were visiting.Â  They said he had gained lots of weight since he had arrived on the farm also, so that’s great.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/09/sept-27-2008-0031.jpg)Â  [](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/09/sept-27-2008-0051.jpg)

There is just something about being on a farm that makes me feel peaceful.Â  The rolling countryside is beautiful, and I don’t even mind the stench of farm animals.Â  I would love to have a farm some day, providing we had enough money to pay a staff to maintain it.Â  They are lots of work I know, and I don’t know the first thing about running a farm.Â  But someday I think I’d like to try, and if that’s a route we explore in the future, alpacas will definitely be part of the venture!

Â

### Comments

**Funny Halloween » Blog Archive » Farm Adventures - Part 2**[...] taylhis wrote an interesting post today onFarm Adventures - Part 2Here’s a quick excerptLast year we asked about donating money so they can continue their yearly traditions, but they said their insurance company said they canâ€™t except cash but baking supplies and Halloween props would be appreciated. … [...]  
**jamiahsh**Yes, and the Geren's are related to me somehow on my dad's side. Neat place to visit.

# How Hot Is TOO HOT?

I was working on my second post about my weekend at the farms, but my attention was diverted by the following news story.Â  Since I know a few people who really enjoy spicy food, I’m sharing this as a warning to you!

***An aspiring chef died after eating a super-hot chilli sauce as part of an endurance competition with a friend.***

*Andrew Lee, 33, challenged his girlfriendâ€™s brother to a contest to see who could eat the spiciest sauce that he could create.*

*The fork-lift truck driver, who wanted to cook for a living, prepared a tomato sauce made with red chillies grown on his fatherâ€™s allotment. After eating it, however, he suffered intense discomfort and itching. The following morning he was found dead, possibly after suffering a heart attack.*

*Toxicology tests are being conducted to try to establish if he suffered a reaction to the food.*

*An inquest was told that Lee, from Edlington, England, was in perfect health and had just passed a medical examination at work. He was a keen cook and would often prepare meals for his parents. It is believed that Mr Lee had never prepared a dish as hot as the one he made the night before his death.*

*Leeâ€™s sister, Claire Chadbourne, 29, said that he took a jar of the sauce to the home of his girlfriend, Samantha Bailey, and challenged her brother Michael, 29, to see who could eat it. â€œAndrew just ate the chillies with a plate of Dolmio sauce,â€ she added. â€œIt was not a proper meal because he had already eaten lamb chops and potato mash after work.*

*â€œHe apparently got into bed at 2.30am and started scratching all over. His girlfriend scratched his back until he fell asleep. She woke up and he had gone. It is incredible. Who would have thought he could have died from eating chilli sauce? We donâ€™t know of anything else that could have caused his death. The postmortem showed no heart problems.*

*â€œHe loved cooking for his friends. He always said he wanted to be a chef but didnâ€™t want to start at the bottom.â€*

*An inquest was opened and adjourned in Doncaster last week.*

### Comments

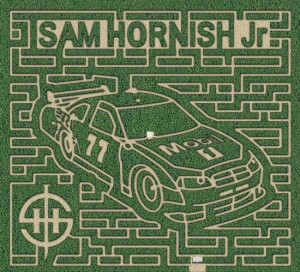
**jamiahsh**Surin it a was a spicy sauce-a. Agreed, allergic reaction intensified by the spiciness.  
**justj**I can't find it, but this was the 2nd death after eating spicy food. The first one was a couple of weeks ago. A young lady died after eating Chinese food. I'm thinking food allergy too. Put enough peppers too make it that hot, could trigger some sort of allergy. Symptoms sound like allergy too. Almost what I get when I eat shellfish.  
**taylhis**Agreed - sounds more like a food alergy. I just thought it was ironic that the article suggested it was the hot sauce that did him in. Even more ironic is that an aspiring chef died from what seems like a food related cause.  
**derek**I just read about this. I will probably be surprised if they don't find his death to be related to something other than how hot the chilies were. The spiciness killing someone simply doesn't make sense to me.

# A Twisted Episode of Survivor

I had a wonderful weekend.Â  It all started with another visit to a haunted house on Friday night.Â  Although I enjoyed my previous haunted house experience at Ghostly Manor earlier this year, I just wasn’t feeling the Halloween vibe enough to subject myself to scariness – I didn’t sleep well the night beforeÂ and little sleep makes me feel claustrophobic – weird.Â  But anyway, the haunted house was actually a haunted corn maze and they had other things to do at the farm, so I enjoyed myself immensely hanging out with my kids and the coolest teenager I know.Â  There is just something about farms that make me feel an inner peace; something that was illustrated again during the weekend – more on that in my next post.

Literally a cornfield in the middle of nowhere, [Leader’s Family Farms](http://www.funtimefarm.com/) has things to do to keep all ages entertained.Â  There were even a few things we didn’t even get a chance to try after spending so much time being lost in the corn maze.Â  Next time I will have to check out the hayride and the coop shoot – I have a special affinity for hayrides because they remind me of the week-long vacations to a dude ranch I took with my family as a kid.Â  But one thing aboutÂ Leader’s that really impressed me was their ability to make appealing and fun attractions without the large budget or theÂ mechanical reliance that a major theme park would have.Â  The “Barnyard” or family area had several things for the kids to play with: bouncy castles, a zip line, haystacks to climb on, a hay maze, slidesÂ – all physical activities which would guarranteeÂ kids’ exhaustion giving the parents some “mommy-daddy time” at the end of the evening – the problem is everything was physical for Mommy and Daddy too, and like the DJ noted, “I don’t know who is getting tired out more – the parents or the kids!”Â  But that illustrates my point about the ability to entertain every age group without spending big bucks – and thatÂ is true for bothÂ the patron *and* the establishment.Â  Actually, let me back up for a minute and go off on a tangent – the purpose of the site, right?Â  Â  Why do they call it a hayride when you’re actually sitting on straw?Â  I learned from a display at the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo that hay is green and made from grass.Â  Straw is yellow and made from wheat.Â  So the kids were climbing on *straw* stacks, they played in a *straw* maze, andÂ people were enjoyingÂ *straw* rides…Â  doesn’t have quite the same ring to it as hayrides, I guess…

But back to Leader’s – they had a DJ, who hosted Karaoke and played wedding-style audience-interactive songs like Hokey-Pokey, The Chicken Dance, YMCA, and Shout.Â  I was trying to teach Disney (my almost 2 year old) the YMCA, but she only liked the part where we clapped.Â  Maybe next time we will get down on the dance floor – this time my other girls were too shy and tired was I.Â  My insanely brave (or psychotic, depending upon who you ask) 4-year-old Sammie was intent on going into the haunted house, and my husband was actually going to take her in, but before she could even enter, she was frightened away from the experience by the scary music alone.Â  We got a cell phone call just as we were entering the corn maze, and so we retreived Sammie and let her enjoy the experience of the corn maze, which ended up being what I would describe as a twisted game of Survivor.Â  Take 4 kids, all under the age of 9, into a corn maze and wander around in the dark for over an hour.Â  No bathrooms, no snacks, and you only have enough stroller for two of them, so the other two have to walk.Â  It was fun, but also quite an experience.Â  I would love to go backÂ and exploreÂ the maze – without kids though.Â  And when I got home, I looked at an aerial photo of the thing, and now it all makes more sense.Â  Here is where I spent my Friday night:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/09/thecornmazewewentin9-26-08.jpg)

You enter at the small white building at the bottom of the picture and go left.Â  Where we really started losing it was around the back tire and the spoiler of the race car.Â  You can see how many forks and circles there are in the paths in that area.Â  And again, while in the thing, I had no idea what it looked like because I didn’t think to check a map beforeÂ going in.Â  I would also bring a flashlight next time; well, maybe not if I didn’t have kids to worry about.Â  We were using our cell phones for light, but then the other half of our group who went into the haunted house called to see where we were and when I said I didn’t know, the cell phone lost service – adding to the stranded feeling we wereÂ experiencing.Â  I must have stashedÂ my cell phoneÂ on top of the stroller really quick because my daughter had turned backwards in her seat and was falling out, so after I fixed her, I frantically searched for the cell phone with no luck – apparently it had fallen off the stroller in the corn maze.Â  So when we finally got out, I had to tell the staff that I lost my cell phone in there.Â  As they laughed at me, they asked if it was on vibrate or silence mode – “Of course it is!”Â  I said, because it would haveÂ been too easy to find it otherwise, and let’s face it – a lost cell phone in a corn maze wouldn’t be funny if you couldÂ call it and hear it ring.Â Â So a small black silent cell phone lost in a corn maze in the dark?Â  Forget it.Â  They did call me the next day though, saying that they did eventually find it, probably with the light of day.Â  Well, anyway, the corn maze with 4 little children in the dark was quite an experience.Â  Not horrible, but not recommended…Â  quite an experience – IÂ can only describe it as having felt like I came through an ordeal after we got out…Â  it was kind of like being stranded in the wilderness, not knowing whenÂ rescue would arrive.Â  Sure, there are “corn cops” and all you have to do is yell, but I don’t knowÂ how they’d hear you and I honestly didn’t want to be the group that yelled for help.Â  We did it on our own, and for that, we got the satisfaction of accomplishment.

Well, I’ve rambled about that long enough…Â  I had fun.Â  I loved the serenity of the farm at night, and it was a beautiful night weather-wise.Â  It was cool but not cold, and being in rural Ohio meant that we were navigating the maze under a canopy of thousands of stars…Â  I would love to go back and explore the maze without worrying about the kids being hungry, thirsty, having sore feet or having to go to the bathroom.Â  And someone remind me that if I have any more kids, a corn mazeÂ is NOT a good activity for a pregnant woman – too much walking and not enough bathrooms.Â  This post is so lengthy I’ll have to save our alpaca farm adventure for the next post…Â  stay tuned!

### Comments

**Full collapse with rotor with twisted canopy | Flying the paraglider**[...] a twisted episode of survivor [...]  
**derek**Pretty cool, most of those.  
**taylhis**I don't know how they do them, but they have a new design every year. Check out some past designs here: http://www.funtimefarm.com/cornmaze.html  
**derek**That maze clearly took some work creating. I wonder how they managed it? Similar to crop circles I suppose? I guess they could program a machine to do it.  
**jamiahsh**Wonder how long and how many people actually help create the different mazes year after year  
**jamiahsh**that actually is pretty cool. I can definitely see how it would take so long and be easy to get lost.

# My Kids

Everywhere we go, I get the comment, “You must have your hands full.”Â  Since I usually only have my younger two with me while the older two are in school, people have no idea how right they are!Â  Here are some recent pictures of my angels – they grow so fast and this is for relatives and people who haven’t seen them in awhile:

*Christopher is a Cubs fan, of course!*

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/09/sept-25-2008-003.jpg)

*Good thing I checked on Christopher during his “tummy time” – this is what I found and he wasn’t even making a peep!*

**

*Disney loves her Homer doll even though she calls him “SpongeBob”*

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/09/9-18-08-003.jpg)

*Here are all 4 of them together: Disney is almost 2, Sammie is 4, Taylor is 8, and Christopher is 2Â½ months*

*[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/09/cuties-sept-3-and-4-2008-009.jpg)*

*Christopher doesn’t have the hang of holding his own bottle yet*

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/09/sept-23-2008-008.jpg)

*Everyone says Sammie and Disney look like twins, years apart.Â  Sammie really wanted us to take this picture  
of them holding her Samantha sign – no one had the heart to tell her it was backwards*

**

### Comments

**derek**Samantha wanted to be able to read her name of course (last photo)!  
**jamiahsh**So sweet, but how did you get them all to "be good" to sit for all the pics :)?

# The Question Phase - Already?

My daughter Disney is not yet 2 and has already entered the question phase – a time of life when a child asks questions about anything and everything.Â  It seems a little early for this; I don’t seem to remember her two older sisters entering the question phase until about 3Â½ or 4 years old.Â  Heck, at Disney’s age Samantha was busy painting with poop!

But as we know, all kids are different (thank goodness for that because we already have a Sammie), and so we welcome Disney’s transition into the question phase.Â  Since it’s just beginning, she doesn’t yet ask questions about how things work, but rather about where her favorite people are.Â  It’s really cuteÂ since she gets this little inquisitive look on her face and because she’s not even 2 yet, her questions aren’t very well formed.Â  We know what she means though, and try to answer the best we can.Â  Some of her favorite questions are:Â  “What Daddy doin’?”Â  “Where Taywer (translation: big sister Taylor) go?”Â  “What Sammie doin’?”

I guess most of her questions do revolve around the whereabouts of her loved ones…Â  an example of her super-sweet nature.Â  Disney truly cares about other people and she is such a sweet little girl – always saying please and thank you even when it’s not expected of her.Â  So this isn’t a full example of the questions phase – that title will be reserved for the sometimes difficult-to-answer questions that revolve around “why”?Â  Like…Â  Why is the sky blue?Â  Why does Sammie get more candy than I do?Â  Why can’t we have a kitty?Â  Why do I have to go to school?Â  Why is Mommy’s hair turning gray?

Disney’s inquisitive face:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/09/sept-25-2008-005.jpg)

### Comments

**taylhis**Hopefully not - those were hypothetical questions ;)  
**jamiahsh**Really... Mommy's hair is turning gray?

# Is Lakeview Terrace Fireproof?

I saw the movie [Lakeview Terrace](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0947802/) yesterday, and I decided to merge it with the title of another movie, Fireproof, for my post title because Fireproof almost stole the show.

An action thriller starring [Samuel L. Jackson](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000168/),Â Lakeview TerraceÂ is about a tough Los Angeles cop who does not like his new neighbors, seemingly because they are an interracial couple.Â  He makes indirect threats, among other things, and the couple has trouble at first determining whether or not they’re making something of nothing.Â  As the tension escalates however, it soon becomes clear that their neighbor is in fact mentally unstable, and as he comes closer and closer to cracking, the couple has no one to call for help because of the camaraderie between police officers known as the “blue wall of silence”.Â  The movie was entertaining to watch; it wasn’t as good as I had hoped but just as good as I expected – one of those movies where they showed most of the good parts in the previews.Â  It was very predictable yet also very good at establishing mood throughout.Â  For instance, at times, the tension that was built in the movie – and the theater – was so thick you could have cut it with a knife.Â  They did a nice job of setting the mood of the neighborhood also; a nice homey-likeÂ cul-de-sac, complete with barking dog nestled in the California hills gave it both a nice family feeling and also played up the isolation factor.Â  I thought Samuel L. Jackson was really good in this movie –Â the way heÂ delivered some of his lines was effective in subtly portraying his disdain for his neighbors.Â  And the reason for his racial prejudices was surprising and an interesting addition to the plot.Â  The movie did put the spotlight on many racial issues in a thought-provoking manner.

Overall, a veryÂ entertaining movie, even though some of the events that I think were meant to surprise the audience did not because the movie was predictable.Â Â The other criticisms I have with it are that none of the characters were likable – it was difficult to root for the couple who was beingÂ picked onÂ by Jackson because theyÂ each had someÂ serious character flaws.Â  Also, it was not believable that an LA cop would have enough money to be able to afford the house where he residedÂ – nestled in the hills outside of Los Angeles, the houses featured in the movieÂ had spectactular views,Â gorgeous landscaping, and the neighbors had a beautiful in-ground pool.Â  HowÂ the neighborÂ could afford what would probably be a multi-million dollar house asÂ his “starter home” on a grocery store management position’s salary, I do not know.Â  Hey, Jamiahsh, when you get your house in the hills of LA with your in-ground pool and luxury patio furniture, can we visit?

Another thing I found strange about Lakeview Terrace was the impending wildfire that threatened the neighborhood – I didn’t see the point in it.Â  Maybe to further illustrate the isolation the couple felt as their neighbor tormented them?Â  I don’t know, but it fits in well with the title of my post because of another movie that’s coming out called [Fireproof](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1129423/).Â  As we bought our tickets, the worker at the movie theater asked if we had heard of Fireproof and gave us a flier.Â  We hadn’t heard a word about it, and she said that some church bought up all the vouchers they were selling for the movie.Â  They weren’t going to get the movie if they didn’t sell enough vouchers, but apparently they sold well over what they expected.Â  I was intrigued because I hadn’t heard of the movie before and wondered why it was getting so much underground buzz.Â  Since we got home late last night and went right to bed, before I had a chance to look it up it was talked about on the Dr. Phil show this morning.Â  Apparently it stars [Kirk Cameron](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0131647/), and it’s about a firefighter who tries to save his marriage by doing a 40-day experiment called “The Love Dare”.Â  Hmmm, I still don’t really get it, but I think it’s neat that it’s getting so much buzz without being a mainstream movie and showing previews and all that jazz.Â  It’s supposed to be a really good movie, thought provoking and well-written, and that isn’t just coming from Kirk Cameron – it’s on imdb.com.Â  Hopefully it will be at the theater for longer than its limited run so I can check it out.Â  A bit of interesting trivia I found out about it – Kirk Cameron made a promise to [Chelsea Noble](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0633564/), his wife of 17 years that he wouldn’t ever kiss another woman, on screen or off.Â  So in the part of the movie where they needed a shot of him kissing his movie wife, his real wife was a stand-in so they could get the shot of the husband and wife kissing.Â  I think it’s sweet, but some people used it as a reason to pick on [Cameron saying he doesn’t understand acting](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1129423/news" \l "ni0571471)…Â  Oh, well, you can’t please everyone!

### Comments

**movie fan**I just got back from watching Fireproof... it was great to see such a different-flavored movie on the regular, big screen  
**jamiahsh**Sure... as soon as I find the grocery store who pays such a salary.. you'll be the first guests.  
**jamiahsh**Yeah, Kirk has been doing direct to video, "Christian" movies as of late. Not mainstream in anyway. Haven't seen any of them.... Good for him He and Chelsea met on the set of the classic Growing Pains series.

# Williams County Murders

The other night some friends and I had a conversation about local murders that have taken place in our county.Â  Because we are a rural county, murders here are few and far between.Â  AÂ resident city council member who is also a local historian gives a yearly presentation, usually on Halloween, detailing the murders in Williams County, Ohio.Â  Because many people know everyone else, he doesn’t cover anything past the 1950’s, but I was able to find some information on my own.Â  For the incidents that did take place a long time ago, many of the circumstances are interesting as they reflect the moods and cultural attitudes of times past.Â  Being both a researcher of local history and a true crime buff, I’ve attended several of these presentations and decided to share the notes I’ve taken for those who are interested:

Williams County Murders

6/20/1847 – W. Unity – David Schamp murdered by Andrew F. Tyler and Daniel Heckerthorne.Â  Buried in German cemetary on Cty Rd. K.Â  Botched ransom kidnapping – family farm is 1/2 mi. W of US127.Â  4 pg article in Bryan Times on 150th anniversary.Â  In 1939, Ralph Gall wrote several articles in Inside Detective Magazine (June, July, Aug) about the crime.  
3/23/1865 – Bryan – Conrad Rutman murdered by unknown – found hung in outhouse  
12/1/1868 – West Jefferson – Unknown female infant by unknown  
12/3/1873 – Bryan – Peter Himes by Ben Evarts  
4/8/1875 – Bryan N. Main St. – unknown infant found in cigar box just N of RR trks  
5/17/1877 – Denmark – unknown male infant  
2/21/1878 – Bryan – unknown male infant  
7/25/1878 – W Unity – Infant Loveless by mother, Lucy Loveless.Â  Father of infant was mother’s brother in law.  
4/7/1880 – Edgerton – Unknown f infant  
6/3/1880 – Edgerton – James Marshall by unknown  
9/11/1880 – Bryan, dwntwn, N side of square – John Burchell, Jr. by William Everett – gut cut in fight  
5/2/1883 – Melbern – Jacob Nihart killed with ax by mentally ill wife, Saloma Nihart.Â  Both buried in Brown cemetary.  
7/21/1889 – Edgerton – Sarah Hoadley (71) and Christian Newman (72) by Hiram Hoadley, Jr. (45).Â  Murder / Suicide – in process of divorce, didn’t want to pay $2,000.Â  Divorce announcement in same issue of newspaper as the murders.  
8/26/1891 – Montpelier – Milton Hogue by Perry Yoder  
1/11/1892 – W. Unity – Infant Hayes – female, by Dr. Frank O. Hart  
2/20/1892 – Bryan, SW corner of Beech and High.Â  Tom Murphy age 63 by unknown  
5/4/1892 – Bryan.Â  Alley next to Christmas Manor went thru to High St. before Central School building was there.Â  Arthur Brown, about 22 yrs old, was at a saloon bragging about having a lot of money.Â  He was murdered by George and Michael Burchell, Walter Plummer, and William Elkins.Â  Witnessed by little girl from window of her house on W Butler.Â  Story featured in “Native Sons Gone Wrong” booklet.Â  Victim buried in Old Pulaski cemetery across from Winery.  
5/8/1898 – Florence – Unknown Male infant  
7/2/1904 – Bryan, just N of overpass.Â  Noah Schartzer shot by unknown.Â  Buried in Brown cemetery.Â  Case of mistaken identity.Â  Stopped and checked every train between S Bend and Toledo.  
6/7/1905 – Montpelier – unknown infant  
9/21/1905 – Montpelier, E of Bryan on RR trks – August Julius by unknown  
2/7/1914 – Bryan, W side of Portland St. 2nd blk. Portland and Mulberry – murder/suicide – Blanche Stauffer by Charles Stauffer.Â  12 pg suicide letter – “She was a hard person to live with.”  
11/10/1914 – Pioneer – Joe Varada by Joe Dohon.Â  argument over wheelbarrow, shovel over head, both Hungarians.  
3/14/16 – W. Unity – Mrs. Andre by Wilson Andre  
6/12/18 – Montpelier – Alex Grant by James Morgan.Â  Morgan (Afrcn/Amer.) wanted to get from Chicago to Detroit, didn’t have any $, so he hid in the btrm on a train where Grant was conductor.Â  Morgan was executed in Columbus, picture from OH Dept. of Prisons  
9/29/27 – Montpelier – James Andrews (Afrcn/Amer.) by unknown  
12/11/27 – Stryker – Celina Huber by Camiel Clark who was fined $125 for liquor violations.Â  Huber, age 39, was cut during fight, went to lay down, bled to death.  
1/4/32 – Bryan – Fred Wonser, Jr. and Margaret Wonser by Lewis Wonser  
12/28/36 – Bryan – Frank Lewis by William White  
12/1/38 – Edgerton – Vern Eck, age 42 by Nona Goeltzenluchter.Â  Murder-suicide.Â  Having an affair, though both married to other people.Â  She was accusing him of seeing yet another woman.  
6/14/45 – Pioneer – Murder/Suicide.Â  Mary Jane, Earl, Alice May, Betty Lou, Alva Stoner by their father, Alfred Stoner, age 38, just gotten back from WWII, distant cousin of Mark Kelly (murders in Wms Cty speaker).Â  Drove himself and kids into gravel pit S of Pioneer while wife was in hospital giving birth to baby 6.Â  Over 1,000 people showed up to watch the search for the bodies.  
9/19/46 – Bryan – Emily Abernathy, age 30 by James Engle, age 21.Â  Jim was drinking a coke across the street at the bowling alley when the body of his victim was found in the library – rumor has it he watched them secure the crime scene as he was sipping his coke.Â Â  She had been strangled, beaten, and cut with a pen knife, died from strangulation.Â  Jim confessed – said he wanted to see what it was like to kill someone.Â  Paroled in 1974, moved to Bryan in 1989, currently resides in local nursing home.Â  Crime was chronicled in tv show “The Big Story”, butÂ the showÂ upset Bryanites.  
5/5/1948 – Bryan – John (age 56) and Pearl (age 63) Gabriel by Ervin “Bud” Ingle, age 14, “King of 8th grade”.Â  They were his neighbors, and he wanted to borrow their car.Â  There is a rumor that Mrs. Gabriel liked young boys, and John did the killing.Â  Years later, Bud was a chauffer for the governor, and the governor thought highly of him and wrote a book.Â  There was a photo of Pearl’s body in the newspaper.  
1/2/50 – Edgerton – Helen Bigger by Vernon O. Bigger – father in law of victim, possible molestation.  
5/5/50 – Melbern – George and Evalina Fisher by their grandson, Jack Hartman.  
9/12/51 – West Unity – Celia Walters by Edwin Walters  
8/18/59 – Pioneer – James W. Elliott by unknown  
9/11/59 – Blakeslee – William Bigger by Harold H. Bostater  
12/29/61 – Blakeslee – Howard Tanner by Ned Eugene Tanner  
8/18/63 – Montpelier – Dean Allen Nichols by David W. Nichols  
6/22/64 – Pioneer – Dr. William Crall by Frank Patalon  
5/21/66 – Montpelier – John McCamis by Raymond Burgess  
8/31/68 – Stryker – Eben Henry Harney by William O. Bolster  
10/12/71 – Stryker – John F. Meisner by Thomas E. Elliott  
9/30/72 – Stryker – Judi Hagerman by Jon Garber  
4/28/76 – Edgerton – Deborah Unger by Jeffrey Ailiff  
3/15/77 – Bryan – Danny Hanisko by Lawrence E. Finn  
6/19/90 – West Unity – Genieve Willene and Orlo E. Ansley by William Ansley  
2/2/91 – Montpelier – Travis Pospeshil by Timothy Kelley.Â  Invol. mansltr. released from prisonÂ 9/11/06  
2/7/92 – Montpelier – Torilyn Contreras by Jonathon Leggett – Invol. Mansltr.  
9/30/96 – Melbern – Brenda Sue Kafai by Rocky W. Kafai – invol. mansltr. released 9/23/06  
2/15/98 – Edgerton – Beth Garber by Shane Frisbie  
12/6/98 – Edgerton – Terri D. Swearengin by William M. Swearengin  
12/7/00 – Holiday City – Mary Kosier by Jason Crawford and James Jones Jr. – they kidnapped Mary who was an employee of Econolodge near toll road for robbery, killed her near covered bridge  
6/30/01 – Bryan – Thomas G. Flint by Linda Ames (\*\*NOTE\*\* – a reader left a comment below containing additional info about this event.Â  I have not verified the source and am still in the process of research)

### Comments

**taylhis**I googled "jonathan leggett ohio" and found this article about his appeal being denied: http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=799&dat=20020604&id=AdMJAAAAIBAJ&sjid=qkkDAAAAIBAJ&pg=5131,2534852 It sounds like an interesting case as there were conflicting DNA results. I also searched the Ohio Department of Corrections and found his inmate record: http://www.drc.ohio.gov/OffenderSearch/Search.aspx  
**taylor**I was wondering if anyone has more info on the torilyn murderer. Does anyone know anything about the man that did it? I cant find him in the system is he still locked up or am I spelling his name wrong?  
**taylhis**WOW Savannah, what an interesting twist to learn in your family research. Very sad story indeed. Thank you for sharing!  
**Savannah**Noah Schartzer is my great great great great great uncle. I was shocked to learn of his murder when I ordered his obituary. Such a sad story!  
**taylhis**I'm not sure about that, Judy. The lecture about murders in Williams County only covers events that happened more than 4 or so decades ago. I didn't come to the area until the early 00's so I don't know. If you find any further info, feel free to post it! Thanks for your comment!  
**Judy**I thought there was a murder in Montpelier, Ohio back in the late 80's where a guy with the last name Kreischer was found dead uptown. I remember reading something in the paper back then about a fight this guy was in and he was left there on the street by The Bar and died?  
**taylhis**Thanks Josh for your feedback. I was wondering if you have any link to documents containing this info (newspaper articles, etc.) I just posted the info of which I was aware; most of the info on the recent murders is incomplete since this presentation only covers events taking place before the 1950's or so. The rest of the info I posted is taken from a handout given at the Murders of Williams County presentation. I have added a note to direct readers to your comment. Thanks!  
**Josh**Linda Ames did not murder Thomas Flint. Forensic experts who worked on the Kennedy assassination and the O.J. Simpson case proved it was suicide, not a murder. This should be removed and/or corrected  
**David**I have Information on the 1892 murder of Arthur Brown As it related to Walter Plummer - he escaped the Ohio State penitentiary and relocated to another State... I have a Mariage Record, Census reports for 1910, 1920, & 1930 along with tombstone photographs of he & His wife. Interested in Learning more?... Please Contact me! He got Away with murder.  
**taylhis**Hi Marcia, Thanks for taking the time to read my blog and leave a comment. I don't have any further info regarding the '32 Wonser murders. It would be nice to build up my notes, but I was not able to attend the Murders in Williams County lecture last year, and I don't know that I will be able to go in 2011 either - but I highly recommend the lecture, especially if you are looking for further info. You might also want to try doing research at the Williams County library if you don't live too far away. They have a very nice new building that's redone and accommodates local history and genealogy. The woman in charge is the wife of the man who presents this lecture, so I'm sure she would be happy to help you. Let me know if you find anything out, and thanks again for your interest!  
**Marcia Wanser**Hello: I am looking for more information regarding: 1/4/32 â€“ Bryan â€“ Fred Wonser, Jr. and Margaret Wonser by Lewis Wonser. In the article if I am making it out correctly indicates that Lewis/Louis Allen Wonser was not married. I found information from ancestry.com that he was married but divorced. Part of the problem is I can not get the article print large enough to read. I really hope I can get this cleared up. Marcia  
**taylhis**@Laura - The Williams County Library in Ohio usually sponsors the speaking event near Halloween. You can call the library for details: 419-636-6734 or email their director, Jeff Yahraus: yahrauje@oplin.org Thanks again for your interest in my blog!  
**Laura**When is the next speaking event - where & who do I contact about going to it? Thanks!  
**rob knorr**i have all the info on jack hartman, you can email me and i will give you my phone number and we can talk  
**taylhis**Hello LuAnn, and thanks for your comment. The only info I have about the incident you mentioned is this: 5/5/50 â€“ Melbern â€“ George and Evalina Fisher by their grandson, Jack Hartman. If the speaker had mentioned more about this murder in the presentation, I would probably have taken note, however I was unable to attend the presentation this year, so all of this info is about years past. If you are a local resident, perhaps you might check at your local library for newspaper headlines around that date that would have more info. Best of luck in your search; feel free to update me about anything you can find, and thanks again for reading and commenting!!  
**LuAnn**I am trying to find out information about Jack Hartman who murdered his grandparents, the Fishers. Does anyone know the story? Thanx  
**jamiahsh**Now maybe I can get the follow ups :D  
**Laura**Thank you very much that was most useful. Do you know where I could find any details of the crime - is there a local newspaper I could look through online? I am located in Oklahoma. Many thanks!  
**taylhis**@Sarah - thanks for commenting on my blog. Sorry it's taken me so long to reply to your comment; I must have missed it somehow. Unfortunately, I don't have any more info about the Bigger murder - I printed everything I know. I will probably be attending the lecture again this year, providing it doesn't coincide with taking my kids trick-or-treating, so I will update this post if I learn anything new. I have the victim down as William Bigger, am I wrong and his name is Thomas? Thanks for expressing your interest.  
**taylhis**Hello Laura, thanks for commenting on my blog. Upon further research, it seems that Mr. Ailiff is still incarcerated. Here is a link to his offender page with the DRC: http://www.drc.ohio.gov/pval/PvalDetails.aspx?id=A457478 Thanks for visiting!  
**Laura**Is there anymore information on Jeffrey Alliff? I have tried to locate him on the offender search and am unable to locate him. Do you know how long he served? I am currently working on a case involving the victim's sibling  
**Sarah**Anyone have more information on the Thomas Bigger murder that took place in 1959?  
**J. A. Clark**Please try to remember that these people who are now in prison for their crimes have famiies who wil always love them .  
**RONALD POSPESHIL**2/2/91 â€“ Montpelier â€“ Travis Pospeshil by Timothy Kelley. Invol. mansltr. released from prison 9/11/06 I BELEVE TIM SHOLD HAVE SPENT LIFE IN PRISON FOR KILING A 2 YEAR OLD DEFINLES BABBY OR GET THE SAME  
**Larry**Taylhis, Reading this brought back a lot of memories. It's funny that some things I had not thought about in 30 years suddenly seem as though they happened just yesterday. Hearing the news really affected me because I used to play with Beth and her brother and sisters. I remember some things so vividly that I could even tell you the layout of their home. Anyway, thanks for posting.  
**taylhis**Larry, Thanks so commenting! Most of this info comes from the presentation they give at the library every Halloween - it's very interesting.  
**Larry**I remember hearing of the 2/15/98 murder as well. Beth was just a little younger than me. Her family was my babysitter.  
**taylhis**Gretchen, I did a search on ODOC (OH Dept of Corrections) - found two records for him. It's hard to tell exactly what happened, but it seems as though he was released on parole in 2002 but then escaped from supervision? I don't know, but he's currently incarcerated with a parole hearing due in Feb 2009. You can get to both of his ODOC records here: http://www.drc.ohio.gov/OffenderSearch/Search.aspx And I asked a friend who lives in the town where the murder was committed if he knows anything about it - check back for any more info. Thanks for commenting!  
**gretchen stahl**I am trying to find information on Jeffrey Ailiff who killed Deborah Unger  
**taylhis**Yes, Mary, that is true. In the notes, the following refers to the case in the library: "9/19/46 - Bryan - Emily Abernathy, age 30 by James Engle, age 21. Jim was drinking a coke across the street at the bowling alley when the body of his victim was found in the library - rumor has it he watched them secure the crime scene as he was sipping his coke. She had been strangled, beaten, and cut with a pen knife, died from strangulation. Jim confessed - said he wanted to see what it was like to kill someone. Paroled in 1974, moved to Bryan in 1989, currently resides in local nursing home. Crime was chronicled in tv show â€œThe Big Storyâ€, but the show upset Bryanites." I hope that helps; thanks for your interest!  
**Mary**This was very interesting. I always had heard a librarian was murdered at the Bryan library years and years ago. Anyone know if that is true?  
**jamiahsh**I remember the 2/15/98 incident. She was a manager at the Main Stop here in town. He went into the store; they went back to the office and... she was stabbed

# Psychic or Fraud?

I don’t really believe in psychics.Â  I believe that some people may have a gift where they are psychologically in tune with others and / or nature; leading them to be able to predict happenings or events with some accuracy.Â  For instance, I used to be able to tell who was calling when our phone was ringing (in the days before caller ID).Â  It’s not that people called us at regular times or intervals, but I could just “feel” who was on the other end of the line.Â  Not that I think I’m psychic or anything; I think I just learned the behavior patterns of the people who called our house.Â  So I believe that people can have what could be called psychic abilities, especially if they practice and hone their skills, but I don’t believe anyone can see the future or anything like that.Â  And I don’t believe the self-proclaimed psychic Sylvia Browne possesses any special skills other than the abilities to defraud and manipulate people, if you want to call those things abilities.

While flipping channels and feeding the baby the other day, I came across the Montel Williams show.Â  Apparently Montel is on his way out after 17 years of being on the air.Â  During the episode the other day, he got teary-eyed as he bid his weekly guest Sylvia Browne good-bye.Â  It got me to thinking; does Montel believe that Sylvia is psychic, or did he just like his audience’s reception of her?Â  After a few internet searches on wikipedia.com and youtube.com, I was armed with evidence that Sylvia Browne is a fraud (not that I really needed any, but I found plenty anyway).Â  Here is the first example where Sylvia tries to tell a greiving woman that her missing boyfriend is in water.Â  The woman is confused becauseÂ her boyfriendÂ was a fireman killed in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, andÂ no trace of him was ever found.Â  Watch as Sylvia tries to cover her tracks, backed up by Montel, I might add, with some lame excuse about how the boyfriend might have drowned when they were extinguishing the fire at the World Trade Center.Â  What?!?Â  That doesn’t even make sense!

Â If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

Â Not only that, but she was on Larry King Live a mere 8 days before the September 11 attacks and didn’t say a word about the impending doom.Â  After the attacks, she claimed that she had dreams full of fire in the weeks before the attacks – yet she failed to mention such premonitions on her September 3, 2001 appearance on Larry King!

One more example is the case of Shawn Hornbeck, a preteen who went missing in 2002.Â  Sylvia Browne told Shawn’sÂ devastated parents that he was abducted by a dark man with dreadlocks and murdered, and she also provided details about where they could find his body.Â  Four and a half years after his abduction, Shawn was found with Michael Devlin, a white man who had abducted Shawn – a far cry from the so-called “dark man with dreadlocks” who “murdered” him.Â  In this case, it’s a very good thing she was wrong – those parents got their son back alive, but one can only imagine the pain they felt when this so-called psychic told them that their son was dead.

There are plenty more examples of this woman’s fraudulent behavior – I’m just not going to waste my time writing them nor your time reading them.Â  If you want to see more, go to youtube.com and do a search for “Sylvia Browne”.Â  For fun, you can add words like, “wrong”, “fraud”, or “lie” to your search and see what you come up with.Â  There is also an interesting site called [stopsylviabrowne.com](http://stopsylviabrowne.com/) that’s maintained by one of her biggest opponents.Â  He talks about his experience encountering Sylvia, how she hired a private detective to research him, and his experience at one of her live shows.

Well, enough of that, like I said, I consider the woman a fraud, therefore she’s not worth any more of our time to go through the hundreds of instances that proveÂ she is full ofÂ BS.Â  I don’t know how she can live with herself when she toys with the emotions of the grief-stricken.Â  I suppose she could tell herself that she is helping to give them closure, but if that’s the case, I would say to her, “Stop fooling yourself lady, you’re causing more harm than good!”

### Comments

# Burn After Reading

I’m not a huge Coen brothers fan, but I do find their movies interesting.Â  Like many of the Coen’s movies, [Burn After Reading](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0887883/) is about normal people who come across anÂ illegalÂ way to make lots of money, become obsessed with it, and consequently watch their lives unravel.Â  [Frances McDormand](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000531/), a Coen brothers movie regular (and I found out why – she’s married to one of them), was great in this movie.Â  She plays a woman named Linda Litzke, a gym employee who is obsessed with reinventing herself via plastic surgery.Â  She, along with a gym co-worker played by [Brad Pitt](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000093/), come across a CIA agent’s (played by [John Malkovich](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000518/)) disk at their gym and bumble through a scheme to use it as blackmail.Â  They are truly a couple of idiots, and Brad Pitt’s performance as the big doofus Chad is hilarious – might have been my favorite part of the movie, and this is not coming from a Brad Pitt fan or anything like that.Â  Not that this movie is a comedy, don’t get me wrong.Â  I suppose it could be classified as a dark comedy, but I would say it’s more of a suspense film with some comedic moments.Â  As with any Coen brothers movie, there are numerous twists and turns, so I’m going to cut my synopsis short for fear of revealing any spoilers.Â  Go see it, watch how the events unfold, and you’ll be entertained.Â  Besides Brad Pitt’s character, my favorite part of the movie was how they told the story – as a case file beingÂ discussed by a couple of FBI agents.Â  If you’re a Coen brothers fan already, then I’m sure you’ll love it – it is everything Coen: money, foiled scheme, setting – the Coens are famous for making the setting of their movies very integral in the plots, and this one is no exception.Â  Washington, DC and the surrounding area of Virginia is the locale of choice for this one, and it’s all very important to the relation of the events and how they unfold.Â  This movie features a few Coen movie regulars like Frances McDormand, [George Clooney](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000123/), and Richard Jenkins (who also gives a great performance as the forlorn gym manager, by the way – they really make you feel sorry for his character).Â  Better thanÂ [No Country for Old Men](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0477348/), [The Ladykillers](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0335245/), and[O Brother, Where Art Thou?,](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0190590/) Burn After Reading is second only to [Fargo](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0116282/) when comparing it to other Coen brothers movies in my opinion.Â  An entertaining 96 minutes at the movies – this one goes by fast.Â  And make sure you pay attention; if you miss something, I could see where it would be difficult to catch up – a lot happens in those 96 minutes!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Not a movie for someone with a weak bladder, eh? Sounds good. I liked Fargo, too.

# GO CUBS GO!!!

As you’ve probably heard by now, the Chicago Cubs have clinched their division.Â  They WILL be going to the playoffs in 2008!!!!Â  YAY!Â  It’s been a great year; even though with my busy schedule I only got to see less than 10 games.Â  But that’s ok – I always said I won’t plan my life around baseball.Â  Tempting, but I won’t do it, at least not until my kids are grown and I have nothing better to do.Â  A prime example of this is the fact that we’ve planned a trip to Florida during the playoffs and world series.Â  If the Cubs make it to the world series, I won’t get to see that either.Â  Luckily, we’ll be home in time for game 4 of the world series, so I’ll at least be able to see one game, possibly more if they need to play them.Â  But I’m getting ahead of myself.Â  First the Cubs have to make it to the world series.Â  Given the way the team has played all year, I think there’s a pretty good chance, but all we can do is wait and see.Â  For now, it’s comforting to know that they’ve already clinched their playoff spot and I got to watch that happen!Â  GO CUBBIES!!!!!

### Comments

**derek**Have fun in Florida!  
**jamiahsh**Right... don't get ahead of yourself there... anything can happen in the post, but GO CUBBIES!!!!

# Coolest Coaster

I got an email today called “What do you remember?” – it’s a list of tv shows that aren’t on anymore.Â  You add your name and a show you used to watch to the list and send it on.Â  It made me think of a kids’ show I used to love called, “The Roller Coaster Gang”.Â  I wasn’t totally positive that was the name of the show, however, so I did a google search – and that’s how I found what sounds like the coolest roller coaster ever!

It’s called The Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster, but unfortunately for me, it’s on the other side of the world at the Warner Bros. Movie World theme park in Australia.Â  It’s a haunted house / roller coaster combined, and here is the press release about it that so intrigued me:

*November 30, 2002  
Guests will be treated to a hair-raising journey complete with laser lighting and sound effects, animatronics and a kaleidoscope of colour, depth, height and trickery of dimension this holiday season thanks to the Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride.*

*A $13 million indoor rollercoaster ride inspired by the first feature film shot at Warner Roadshow Movie World Studios on the Gold Coast starring Sarah Michelle Gellar, Freddie Prinze Jr., Matthew Lillard, Linda Cardellini and Rowan Atkinson, the Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride is not a ride for the faint hearted.*

*Featuring carefully replicated coaster cars from Scooby-Doo the film, guests enter the creepy dimly lit courtyard and move into the heart of Spooky Castle, where ghouls, gargoyles and the odd talking suit of armour may appear!*

*Housed in a 25 metre high building, the Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride features two distinctive experience zones, thrilling guests with different aspects of laser lighting.*

*While the laser lighting embraces and creates the entire illusion, maintaining it throughout the experience and simultaneously performing for multiple audiences moving through three dimensional space at high speed, the ride continuously alters direction, velocity, elevation and trajectors.*

*Warner Village Theme Park Chief Executive John Menzies explains that Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster is a world first and is a unique combination of two different types of entertainment experiences.*

*â€œScooby-Doo Spooky Coaster is completely innovative, no other ride in the world can be compared to this combination of experiences â€“ the classic haunted house utilising the latest technological advances and lighting and sound effects and the adrenalin pumping thrills of an indoor rollercoaster,â€ said Chief Executive John Menzies.*

*The first experience zone further develops the Spooky Castle theme into a ghost train ride featuring the best in traditional movie inspired themeing and amusing animatronics.*

*Just as guests begin to think their journey is nearing conclusion, they find themselves drawn up over 17 metres into the castleâ€™s creepy tower. This unsettling experience heralds their reversed entry into the rides second zone as guests are then pushed into a darkened void.*

*Disoriented in the dark, riders are now subject to the will and influence of the ghouls and gargoyles that Scooby-Doo warned of earlier.*

*Then, itâ€™s time to be afraidâ€¦..be kind of afraid!*

*Perched precariously on an elevated turntable the car is turned 180 degrees to face the fate awaiting its anxious passengers.*

*Transfixed by an apparently infinite tunnel of emerald green laser light the riders are lurched forward into the shimmering abyss as the Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride propels riders through infinite voids, passing ghost-like through shimmering walls, floors and ceilings of light and speeding into tunnels of green swirling mist.*

*Finally, plunging over seven meters on the adrenalin-pumping journey, guests are hurtled towards a grotesque creature and the â€˜ring of lifeâ€™.*

*The Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride with its ever-changing web of penetrating green laser beams, bumps, breathtaking drops and special effects thrills and excites every rider.*

*The multi-million dollar blockbuster, Scooby-Doo, was filmed at Warner Roadshow Movie World Studios on the Gold Coast in 2000/2001 and is the highest budget production ever filmed in Queensland to date.*

*Join Scooby-Doo and the Mystery Gang for the scariest, spookiest, spine-tingling rollercoaster ever created â€“ Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride.*

*Visit Warner Bros. Movie World on Australiaâ€™s Gold Coast â€“ where movie magic happens everyday!*

I’ve never heard of Warner Bros. Movie World, but it sounds pretty neat.Â  Too bad I didn’t make it over there a few years ago – I also found out they used to have a Marvin the Martian 3-D movie, but they replaced it with Shrek 4D.Â  That stinks; I would have liked to see that; I’m a big fan of Marvin the Martian.Â  Oh well, hopefully by the time I get to Australia they’ll still have the Scooby-Doo coaster.Â  If only we could increase the budget we have forÂ the hauntedÂ attraction we’re buildingÂ by a few million so *we* could add a coaster…

And I didn’t end up using “The Roller Coaster Gang” as my show to put on the list.Â  By the time I was done being distracted with looking up Australian thrill rides, I thought of another show I put instead – one whose title I was sure about.Â  Belle and Sebastian was a Nickodeon cartoon that was about an orpaned boy named Sebastian and his big white dog, Belle.Â  Each episode would follow the pair (along with a small dog named Poochie who would fit into Sebastian’s pocket) as they ventured through the mountains looking for Sebastian’s mother.Â  People would always mistake Belle for a ferociousÂ dog or sometimes evenÂ some kind of snow monster.Â  I loved that show – wonder if Sebastian ever found his mother?Â

### Comments

**taylhis**At Universal Studios in Florida, we have the Revenge of the Mummy ride, which is kind of like a haunted house / roller coaster combo. It's very cool and one of my favorite rides, but being a life-long Scooby-Doo fan makes me want to see what that coaster is all about. I have always wanted to visit your country someday... if only I could find a better way to get there than an airplane, though, I'm petrified of flying!  
**Annie**We are lucky enough to live on Australia's Gold Coast and the Scooby Doo Coaster is my 11 year old's fave ride at Warner Bros Movie World. It is still there, seems to be doing well so hopefully will still be here when you get to Australia! Though you never know with the way they change the parks around! I can't believe there isn't something like it in USA.  
**derek**Sounds like a theme park I will never be able to visit. I would have enjoyed the Marvin the Martian 3D movie myself.  
**jamiahsh**Really... WB is too cheap to build in the U.S.? Was the Great Space Coaster on the Remember email, I forget. I can't wait for The Simpson's ride at Universal.

# Kid Rock, Really?

I just might have to start calling myself a Kid Rock fan…Â  ok, no not really, that’s going **way** too far.

It all started when I was able to catch a few minutes of country music radio – a rare treat for me because when I’m doing errands in my car every day, I’m usually forced to listen to Kidsongs, VeggieTales, or the like while the kids are watching the car dvd player.Â  But lately, I’ve been able to catch a few songs on country musicÂ radio…Â  I guess it’s because my youngest daughter has been refusing to nap at home during the day, therefore she can’t help herself from napping once we get in the car, giving me control of the car stereo, even if it is temporarily.Â  But anyway, country radio has been constantly playingÂ a song that I really like – I heard it again the other day while my husband was getting a haircut, and that’s when I decided I needed to look it up, find out what it is and who sings it so I can get it for my own enjoyment.Â  Well, I looked it up, andÂ what I found is that myÂ new favorite “country” songÂ is Kid Rock’s latest single called “All Summer Long”.Â  For those of you who don’t know, Kid Rock is not a country artist – not in my book,Â anyway…Â  Seems he’s been trying to cross over to country for a couple of years now however.Â  His duet with Sheryl Crow called “Picture” hit the top of the country charts a few years ago when it came out.Â  But Kid RockÂ is most famous for various tabloid fodder; including his relationship with Pamela Anderson and the public brawls he’s engaged in.Â  But I think Kid Rock’s normal style of music is hard-core.Â  There is a song called “Warrior” by him that is played before movies in the theater, and that song is very reminiscent of 80s heavy metal – I think that’s a taste of his usual musical style.

So why the switchover into country?Â  I have one guess – money.Â  It’s no secret that country music is the most popular music genre in the United States today.Â  Kid Rock’s new song doesn’t quite have that country sound, however, but I wouldn’t know how else to classify it.Â  It reminds me of late 70’s or early 80’s classic rock, ala Lynyrd Skynyrd – there is even a tribute to the song “Sweet Home Alabama” in “All Summer Long” – it mentions the song and evenÂ replicates its famous guitar lick.Â  But nowadays, I don’t know where a songÂ such as thisÂ should be catagorized, and apparently the music industry felt the same way, so they stuck it in the country genre.Â  It’s a really great, feel-good, care-free, summery kind of song…Â  don’t know why they didn’t rush to get it released at the beginning of the summer.Â  But it’s here now, and I’m enjoying it, even if it is sung by Kid Rock.Â  I just wish he’d make up his mind about where he wants to be musically.Â  Being a country music fan, I despise “posers”Â and “crossovers” who try to take advantage of country music fans just because they’re seen as loyal and dumb.Â  The bait and switch didn’t work with me this time – I like the song, but knowing it’s Kid Rock did take a little out of it for me.Â  I have a big problem with crossovers – I don’t like accepting them into the country music family.Â  I feel that country music is something you either love or you hate, and if these crossovers weren’t already involved in country music, chances are they’ve hated it in the past and should not be allowed to crossover when the time or price is right.Â  You are either a country artist or you’re not.Â  Which is why it is to my dismay that this new Kid Rock song is so good.

But all things aside, check out “All Summer Long”, it’s worth a listen, and let’s hope Kid Rock doesn’t steal too much thunder away from the real country acts come time for the Country Music Awards that will be airing in November.Â  Judging solelyÂ by how much air time he’s getting on the radio, I think he has a shot to win some awards for this one – he’ll at least get a live performance.Â  I just hope he can behave himself.Â  Surprisingly, given the red-neck reputation of country music’s fan base, the annual Country Music Awards is not a place where there is usually scandalous behavior such as fighting orÂ swearing, and let’s hope these fly-by-night country crossovers don’t everÂ bring it to that.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Yes... I heard both of those what do you call them... well... influences, can't think of the term. But I did enjoy the song. I would not necessarily call myself a HUGE country fan, but... I don't try to limit myself to one genre  
**justj**And it also has the intro from the song "Werewolves of London" by Warren Zevon and The Steve Miller Band's "Take the Money and Run". When this song was first aired, I was always waiting for "Werewolves of London", and then it was the Kid Rock song.

# A Whole New World

During our community theater’s run of The Nerd, they designated one of the nights “80’s Night” since the play was set in 1985.Â  I enjoyed the opportunityÂ to visit the local thrift stores with a mission –Â looking for components to completeÂ my 80’s look.Â  2 thrift stores are within walking distance so I just packed up the little ones in the double stroller and off we went.Â  I found things with ease – a gaudy Mickey Mouse sweatshirt that I cut up to make it off-the-shoulder, a black lacy Madonna-like skirt, jelly shoes, hoop earrings, leggings, ankle socks…Â  I was ready to go!

And of course, what 80’s look is complete without makeup and lots of it?Â  I read a hint on a website about dressing for 80’s parties – “In the 80’s, we didn’t accessorize – we “excessorized” and LOVED it!”Â  So I braided my wet hair in the morning, and by evening when I took out the braids, IÂ acheived the “crimped” hair look I was going for.Â  I pulled out the electric blue nail polish (though I ended up regretting that later since I forgot to buy nail polish remover and I was stuck with electric blue nail polish for a few days until I had the time to get to Walmart – OOPS), and I piled on the purple and blue eye shadow.Â  It was lots of fun to get dressed up like a goofball – I may consider being an 80’s time machine traveler for Halloween.Â  But anyway, while I was getting ready for 80’s night, I had a flock of admirers.Â  My 3 little girls aren’t used to me putting on makeup, dressing up, painting my nails, or spending lots of time on my hair (note to self – next time I dress 80’s, I need some Aquanet!) – I’m just not the kind of gal who does – or has the time to do, for that matter –Â these things regularly.Â  It was like a whole new world for them, and theyÂ gawked in awe as they watched me get ready.Â  My oldest kept running up to her room to look for jewelry to use – everyone wanted to help, which was like a whole new world for *me*.

80’s night was a few weeks ago, and the girls are still asking to have their nails painted and for us to do each other’s makeup, much to my husband’s dismay.Â  He’s never liked makeup and says he wants our girls to be at least 18 before they can wear it.Â  I’ve tried explaining to him that there is something innate in little girls that make them like dressing up and putting makeup on – it’s just how little girls are made.Â  Being a male, he doesn’t get it of course, and so I imagine we’ll have many a debate in this house once the girls get to the teenage years and want to wear makeup regularly.Â  For now, I don’t have a problem using it as a “toy” once in a while, as long as it’s supervised and I can guide my girls to having the right opinions about makeup, especially when it comes to self-esteem issuesÂ –Â makeup does not make you prettier, you do not NEED makeup, it can be harmful to your face if you use it incorrectly, etc.Â  So until they become teenagers, this is a way we can have fun together, and I also view it as an important bonding experience.Â  One of the things I remember doing with my sister the most while we were growing up is her doing my hair and makeup, and I don’t remember ever fighting while we were doing that.Â  Anyone who knows my girls realizes how much we need an activity that Taylor and Sammie can do together without fighting!Â  So if you see me walking around with a hideous makeup job someday, just remember that my face was probably painted by an 8, 4, or 2 year old!

\*\*YOU ASKED FOR IT!!!\*\*



### Comments

**derek**Look out, it's MadLisa, the material girl! J/K. :D I remember I attended a 70's night at my church several years ago. I dressed in my father's old white suit. Too bad his feet were two sizes too small for me else I would have completed the look. I didn't win the "Mr. 70's" contest though- that honor went to someone who gave himself some fake chest hair. I mean, who can compete with that? :P Oh, um, sorry, as far as I know no pictures exist, certainly none in my possession...  
**justj**I am another male who thinks women look better without makeup. I always liked seeing the real person, and not the shell that hides behind the makeup. If you do come up with something your girls will do together without fighting, go for it. Take it from someone who knows...  
**derek**Well, we're theatre people, it's only to be expected. :mrgreen: But I think you missed the other part of my post. If only I could post images in the comments I would post [this one (CLICK)](http://home.comcast.net/~qunmang/pics.gif)  
**taylhis**I know Aladdin was post 80s, saw it in the theater - wasn't going for the double entendre - sorry if you only read this looking for something about Aladdin ;)  
**derek**Pictures! :D Jamiahsh's response is exactly what I was thinking too when I saw the title, but as he said that is 90's.  
**jamiahsh**A Whole New World... unless I miss my guess and the title does not have anything to do with Aladdin... the movie was released in 1992. Saw it in Hawaii the year we went for Christmas.  
**jamiahsh**No makeup until they are AT LEAST 19... thaT IS in the teen years. But I agree 100%, makeup does not a prettier female make... especially in excess. Just don't let them dress Christopher up in dresses and make up. I do remember family get togethers when all the young females would feel the need to play dress up... UGH! So glad I was not born female.

# The Kindle

While I’m on the subject of reading…Â  I came across a cool looking device on amazon.com the other day – the Kindle.Â  Have you heard of it?Â  I hadn’t, but it sounds pretty cool.Â  Basically you can upload books, magazines, and even blogs to this portable device so you can read them anywhere.Â  It appealed to me because I like to read in bed, and it seemed like a good way to get newspapers as well as stuff off the internet into a format that’s easy for me to lie down and read.Â  But the more I looked into it, the more I realized it’s not really for me.Â  The first clue was its $350 price tag.Â  No thanks.Â  Maybe for $50 or so, I’d be interested…Â  The other thing about the Kindle is the fact that you have to *buy* books to put on it.Â  I can’t tell you the last time I bought a full price book from a book store.Â  I get my books from my existing collection, friends, or most frequently, the library – all free sources.Â  I could not picture a scenario where I’d be buying a book, even if it was to be put on this device.Â  I guess the thing that appealed to me most about it was putting my town’s daily newspaper on it so I could read it in bed.Â  My paperboy delivers at 5pm – just in time for the chaos in the house to peak asÂ kids are coming home and I’m starting dinner and all that stuff – so it’s tough for me to keep up with reading the daily paper.Â  But I’m sure the daily paper from my small town wouldn’t even be available on the Kindle anyway…

But I thought it was a cool invention and I could see there being a market for something like this for people who travel a lot and love to read.Â  I find it strange that I hadn’t heard about it sooner, but they really need to lower the price on it if they want it to catch on!

### Comments

**derek**The return of the ebook... And still too rich for my blood.  
**jamiahsh**I've seen it on amazon, too. I can't imagine spending the price for it either.  
**The Kindle**[...] Original taylhis [...]

# Skipping Christmas

As a kid, I was a very avid reader – I would always read myself to sleep.Â  Somewhere in my 20’s though, I lost sight of my reading hobby; I guess that’s when I got too busy and too tired to lie in bed awake at night and read.Â  During my last pregnancy, however, I started reading before bed again, and it’s something that I really enjoy, even though IÂ often get too tired to make it through more than a few pages per night.

When I recently began reading again, I started by reading mostly non-fiction;Â it was really fun for me to unwind at night and learn something at the same time.Â  I read a book about an Afghan girl who stepped on a land mine, lost her leg, and fled the Taliban by coming to America.Â  I read aÂ book about a family that bicycled across the country – they had kids who were 13, 11, andÂ 3 years old, and they made it from New JerseyÂ to Colorado on their bikes.Â  There was also the book about the Burnham’s; they were husband and wife missionaries who were held hostage in the Philippines for almost a year.Â  The wife wrote a book about their daily struggles as hostagesÂ – it was fascinating.Â  Then I switched to a few fiction books by Christopher Pike, an author best known for his young adult horror novels.Â  I read those as a teen, so as an adult, I decided to try his novels for adults – one I really liked and one wasn’t so good – *Falling* and *The Blind Mirror*, respectively.Â  I then started a book about the plight of Terri Shiavo, a woman who collapsed in the early 90’s and suffered brain damage.Â  Her case was in the national spotlight because her husband insisted that she would have never wanted to live hooked up to machines while her parents disagreed.Â  The governor tried to help, and even the President of the United States tried to step in, but ultimately Terri’s right to live became just another case in the courts and her husband won.Â  Her feeding tube was removed and it took her almost 14 days to slowly starve and dehydrate to death.Â  The caseÂ fascinated me at the time,Â and I found this book about it written by Mark Fuhrman of the OJ Simpson murder trial fame.Â  Except that I’m having trouble reading the book since it’s about a rather dark and depressing subject, and that’s not really how I want to unwind before bed.Â  Though I did learn something interesting from Mark Fuhrman: according to him, a coroner is an elected official who doesn’t even necessarily have to have a medical degree.Â  Hmmm…

A friend recommended the author John Grisham, and the other day I ran into the library, trying to be very quick since the family was waiting in the car.Â  His books looked so large and lengthy and intimidating, so I grabbed the smallest one I saw called *Skipping Christmas*.Â  I began to read it, and it’s about a family called the Krank’s who decide to skip Christmas one year.Â  That sounds familiar, I thought, and after a quick trip to imdb.com, I discovered that the awfully panned movie of 2004 called [Christmas With The Krank’s](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0388419/) is indeed the movie based upon John Grisham’s book, *Skipping Christmas*.Â  So far the book is ok, but nothing that keeps me looking forward to reading it or anything.Â  I have Grisham’s only work of non-fiction on hold at the library, maybe I’ll get up there today to get it because maybe I’m sick of fiction and it’s time to go back to non-fiction…Â  I hate to admit it, but I really like to read true-crime books before bed, mostly about murder.Â  True, murder is a dark and depressing subject, but not in the same way as the story of Terri Shiavo; it’s hard to explain.Â  And it sounds kind of strange, butÂ true-crime booksÂ are theÂ ones I seem to be drawn to and I can’t watch true-crime on tv in bed anymore – too many nightmares for my husband and I.Â  One of the best true-crime books that I ever read was *The Stranger Beside Me* by Ann Rule.Â  If you don’t know, Ann Rule is a famous true-crime writer, and this book was extra-fascinating because it chronicles her relationship with the famous psychopathic serial killer, Ted Bundy.Â  Ann Rule was actually friends with Ted Bundy – they met working at a suicide hotline together.Â  The book chronicles their friendship while working at the hotline, while the murders were taking place, and after Ted was caught – very interesting read, and crazy that one of the most famous crime writers had a friendship (unrelated to her ever writing a book about him)Â with one of the most prolific serial killers of all time.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I have yet to read An Innocent Man. Perhaps on a plane trip I will be taking in the not too distant future I will check it out. Most of Grisham's books look intimidating but are quick reads (provided you can get time uninterrupted :) ).

# Why I Loathe School Fundraisers

It’s that time of year again – back to school already!Â  For the most part, this means good news for me as it clears out half of the foot traffic around here during the day.Â  And since my oldest 2 are school-age and also the ones who are constantly misbehaving lately – Whoo Hoo for back to school time!

But back to schoolÂ season also means it’s time for school fundraisers, and my oldest daughter brought one home on the *second* day of school!Â  They really couldn’t wait until the second week of school at least?Â  Because of how busy we’ve been around here between the new baby, my husband being in a play and his health scare, I setÂ the fundraiserÂ order form aside until the night before it was due when I reluctantly sent out an emailÂ seeking fundraiser participants.Â  We actually did pretty well; better than I thought, actually, so I have to thank those of you who orderedÂ stuff.Â  But I have to come clean and say I did notÂ order anything from my own daughter’sÂ school fundraiser.Â  I just could not find anything I needed or even wanted for quadruple what it *should*Â cost.

My nephew sent me an email about a week later seeking participants for his first school fundraiser, so for him I was a little more motivated to order something.Â  Since the kids get credit for the number of items they get people to order versus how much is spent, I started looking for something inexpensive I could order.Â  I began by trying to think of any gifts we might need for people sometime soon.Â  No luck – we have a basement full of stuff my husband got from overstocked wholesalers that is just waiting to be gifted away.Â  Next I tried looking for a small kitchen gadget I could use, even if it was only once in a blue moon.Â  I found a can strainer – a plastic disk with holes in it you put over cans to drain the water out.Â  It was $5 – outrageously expensive, of course, but I could justify it for my nephew’s first attempts at fundraising for his school.Â  This wasn’t so hard, I thought as I clicked on the shopping cart to check out.Â  Except that all of a sudden, I was spending $11 instead of $5.Â  And there was a text box on the webpage that told me that $2.20 of my order goes directly to his school.Â  They were trying to make it sound like a good thing, but $2.20 out of $11?Â  And I’m spending $11 on a 4 inch piece of plastic with holes in it?Â  It really isÂ easy enough to just use the can lid to strain whatever is in the can – and now I couldn’t even justify buying an over-priced item “for a good cause” since theÂ school was only getting $2 of my money!Â  Ugh, back to shopping on theÂ fundraiser’s site…

Have you ever had to shop for something you didn’t want?Â  It’s actually quite difficult.Â  We had a similair experience after our new baby was born.Â  Someone got himÂ some clothes that were the wrong size, so we ended up withÂ a bunch of Kohl’s store credit.Â  My husband and I spent almost 2 hours in theÂ Kohl’s trying to figure out what we wanted; it was really difficult for us.Â  Kohl’s is not our type of store – we love bargain shopping, and even though it wasÂ “free” store credit we were spending, it was hard to justify their expensive prices on things we barely needed.Â  We ended up with 2 candle warmers and an electric razor for myÂ husband.Â  HeÂ can grow a beard in a matter of days, andÂ this razor cut his shaving time drastically.Â  The candle warmers are pretty cool too – you put candles on them and still get the scent, but without the ‘something’s burning’ smell or the danger of the open flame – a must-have if you like candles and haveÂ 4 little kids running around.Â  So anyway, where was I before the Kohl’s tangent?

Oh, yes, trying to shop for things you don’t need…Â  Like I said, I could justify the $5 for the can strainer, but when it climbed to $11 (especially because only $2 went to my nephew’s school), I had to explore other options.Â  I considered a ‘dip kit’ for $6, figuring I could use it at one ofÂ the many game nights we hostÂ – then it would double as a conversation piece as well – but shipping on every itemÂ was $6.Â  Since the dip instructions read,Â ‘just add mayonnaise and sour cream’, I couldn’t justify $12 onÂ a packet of powder, again with the school only getting a measly $2.Â  So anyway, over an hour later, I finally found a good solution – a magazine subscription.Â  Sure, I was now spending $15 instead of $12, but there were no shipping fees which meant the school got $8 of my money.Â  With 4 kids I barely everÂ have enough time to read the daily newspaper, so I don’t really know what I’m going to do with all the *US News and World Report* magazines that will soon be piling up around here.Â  But hey, my kids already have a subscription to *Highlights* and my husband’s not really into magazines, so what else was I supposed to do?Â  The subscription to *Parents* magazine was actually cheaper, but as I’ve said many times before to people who try to borrow me books about parenting – at the end of a long day full of changing diapers, cleaning spills, refereeing fights, and serving meals for people to reject, the last thing I want to do to unwind is read about kids!Â  So I figured I could maybe save time – instead of surfing the ‘net at night reading news stories, I could bring my *US News and World Report* up to bed and start my reading time a little earlier so I don’t stay up too late.

But the point of this long rambling blog is this:Â  I hate school fundraisers.Â  I hate asking people to spend their hard-earned money on them, I hate ordering from them, and I hate the way they’re set up.Â  Don’t get me wrong – I was more than happy to order from my nephew, especially because it’s his first one; I find that kind of cute.Â  Nevermind that little voice in my head that says, “but he’s only in *Kindergarten* and they’re already making him sell things!”Â  But lucky for me, my sister only has 2 kids.Â Â Can’t say the same for us -our family’s fundraiser victims will get hit up a whopping 4 times a year!Â  Not only that, but when the kids are in different clubs and activities, those are also prime targets for fundraising opportunities.Â  My daughter brought home a newsletter just today that said her Girl Scouts fundraiser will be starting in a few weeks…Â  ugh, here we go again.Â  So even if we don’t have any more kids and say each of our kids is in only 1 club or activity that does a fundraiser (girl scouts does 2 if you include selling cookies) – that’s now a minimum of 8 times per year I have to hit up my family and friends.Â  And that 8 times a year will probably all be overlapping in the autumn months!Â  It is my hope to someday be able to put aside enough time to attend the PTO meetings and urge the implementation of a new fundraising system – one where not so much money is wasted on the company that is hired to actually do the fundraiser.Â  Until then, maybe I will just buy stock in one of these fundraising companies that are preying on our children’s schools…Â  in a struggling economy, something tells me that is one type of business that isn’t hurting!

### Comments

**Why I Loathe Fundraisers – 2009 Edition | My Food Chain Gang**[...] than this – a blog post I wrote about the same subject almost 13 months ago, the original Why I Loathe Fundraisers.Â  Consider this part two of an ongoing, once-a-year series, I guess.Â  And the inspiration for [...]  
**peggy**"Hmmmâ€¦..I know exactly how you feel, even though I have just two kids of my own, I feel the pain of fundraisers every year, especially if they are in other activities, my son's sports team does a fundraising for new equipment and school uniforms, this apart from the usual ones. I have begun to hate auctions!! But this year, they had a fundraising from Picateers (http://www.picateers.com), I think this was one fundraiser where I had a lot of fun and actually dint mind spending money for my son's photographs. 50% of the proceeds went to school. We did check. We'll try them again for the yearly fundraiser.  
**http://pennystocksinfo.info/pennysto/stock-recommendations.html   
http://pennystocksinfo.info/pennysto/stock-recommendations.html...** stocks to purchase...  
**justj**Oh yes, I remember it well. They do start early don't they? My one suggestion, if you ever see anyone selling Indian (India?) River Citrus, buy it quick. Some of the local band used to sell that. Best oranges, grapefruits and Tangerines I've had in a long time. And there used to be a good return for the fund raising too. I haven't seen those in a long time though.. :(  
**Fundraising » Why I Loathe School Fundraisers**[...] XL wrote an interesting post today onHere’s a quick excerptNot only that, but when the kids are in different clubs and activities, those are also prime targets for fundraising opportunities. My daughter brought home a newsletter just today that said her Girl Scouts fundraiser will be starting … Read the rest of this great post here [...]

# Getting To Know Me - Some More

Got another ‘getting to know you’ quiz via email the other day.Â  Since I still fill these out for some reason (don’t really know why I do this – haven’t my friends already learned all these things about me?), I figured I might as well post it on the blog.Â  And this one prompted me to add a new category to my blogging also – fun forwards.Â  Of course now I have a bunch of posts that should go into this category, but I’m not about to go back and re-classify all my posts.

44 ODD Things about you! If you opened this, FILL IT OUT! LearnÂ   
44 things about your friends, and let them learn 44 things about you!Â   
Send back to me and to several more friends!Â   
Â   
1. Do you like blue cheese? yes  
2. Have you ever smoked? yes  
3. Do you own a gun? no  
4. What flavor Kool Aid was your favorite?Â  mountain berry  
5. Do you get nervous before a doctor appointment? depends what it’s for  
6. What do you think of hot dogs? like em – especially Nathan’s  
7. Favorite Christmas movie? Elf, Christmas Vacation  
8. What do you prefer to drink in the morning? water or iced tea if I’m tired  
9. Can you do push ups? dunno  
10. What’s your favorite piece of jewelry?Â Â wedding ring  
11. Favorite hobby? reading  
12. Do you have A.D.D.? I just might  
13. What’s one trait you hate about yourself? impatience  
14. Middle name? Marie  
15. Name 3 thoughts at this exact moment? OUCH (my almost 2-year-old is doing my hair), is it too hot to cook pizzas at the party?,Â  what will we do with 3 pizzas if we don’t cook them?  
16. Name 3 drinks you regularly drink? iced tea, water, beer  
17. Current worry? husband’s health  
18. Current hate right now?Â  my kids’ inability to appreciate things  
19. Favorite place to be? anywhere alone with Chris  
20. How did you bring in the New Year? pregnant  
21. Where would you like to go? Madagascar  
22. Name three people who will complete this? Jamy (already did), Vickie, Megan  
23. Do you own slippers? no  
24. What color shirt are you wearing right now? red  
25. Do you like sleeping on satin sheets? yes  
26. Can you whistle? yes  
28. Would you be a pirate?Â  what does that mean?Â  I’ve got a parrot…Â   
29. What songs do you sing in the shower? whatever is on the radio  
30. Favorite Girl’s Names? Taylor, Samantha, Disney  
31. Favorite boy’s names? Christopher, Jonathan, Michael  
32. What’s in your pocket right now? don’t have pockets  
33. Last thing that made you laugh? The Nerd  
34. Best bed sheets as a child? Snoopy  
35. Worst injury you’ve ever had? getting cut open at the last minute to have a baby  
36. Do you love where you live? YES  
37. How many TVs do you have in your house? 5 + a few that don’t work  
38. Who is your loudest friend? Lisa H.  
39. How many dogs do you have? 2  
40. Does someone have a crush on you? yes  
41. What is your favorite book? Monkeys on the Interstate by Jack Hanna  
42. What is your favorite candy? chocolate  
43. Favorite Sports Team? Chicago Cubs, Chicago Bears  
44. What song or songs do you want played at your funeral?Â  Canon in D – more appropriate for a wedding, I guess, but it’s my favorite classical piece…Â  it’s not like I’ve thought about this!  
TAKE LIFE ONE DAY AT A TIME. HAVE A GREAT ONE

### Comments

**justj**Ok, this looked like fun.. 1. Do you like blue cheese? Never had it 2. Have you ever smoked? A pipe for about 5 years 3. Do you own a gun? Yes, three. 4. What flavor Kool Aid was your favorite? Lemonaid 5. Do you get nervous before a doctor appointment? Not Usually 6. What do you think of hot dogs? great at the ballpark or smothered in chili 7. Favorite Christmas movie? A Christmas Carol (any of them) 8. What do you prefer to drink in the morning? Coffee 9. Can you do push ups? Yes, I just did 5 to prove it and I'm still kicking. 10. Whatâ€™s your favorite piece of jewelry? None 11. Favorite hobby? Astronomy 12. Do you have A.D.D.? No 13. Whatâ€™s one trait you hate about yourself? I procrastinate.. 14. Middle name? Yes I have one. 15. Name 3 thoughts at this exact moment? I wish I could swallow, Some tea would be nice, Can I convince someone to make some? 16. Name 3 drinks you regularly drink? tea, coffee, juice of all sorts 17. Current worry? Getting my work done 18. Current hate right now? I'm generally not a hater 19. Favorite place to be? Hocking County Ohio 20. How did you bring in the New Year? I think home watching movies. 21. Where would you like to go? Ireland 22. Name three people who will complete this? who knows, I don't know, and I don't care? 23. Do you own slippers? Yes, somewhere around here 24. What color shirt are you wearing right now? grey 25. Do you like sleeping on satin sheets? I don't know 26. Can you whistle? yes 28. Would you be a pirate? Arrrr!! 29. What songs do you sing in the shower? I don't sing in the shower 30. Favorite Girlâ€™s Names? Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca 31. Favorite boyâ€™s names? Paul, James, Douglas 32. Whatâ€™s in your pocket right now? empty pockets, so some lint? 33. Last thing that made you laugh? My youngest 34. Best bed sheets as a child? Warm out of the dryer 35. Worst injury youâ€™ve ever had? A few stitches in my head 36. Do you love where you live? It's ok. 37. How many TVs do you have in your house? 2 38. Who is your loudest friend? Hard to say 39. How many dogs do you have? 1 40. Does someone have a crush on you? ??? I'm never sure about this ??? I really don't pay much attention. 41. What is your favorite book? The Lord of the Rings Trilogy 42. What is your favorite candy? Godiva open Oysters 43. Favorite Sports Team? Detroit Tigers 44. What song or songs do you want played at your funeral? Vivalidi's Four Seasons. What better way to indicate a lifetime.  
**Sports News » Blog Archive » Getting To Know Me - Some More**[...] My Food Chain Gang placed an observative post today on Getting To Know Me - Some MoreHere’s a quick excerptMonkeys on the Interstate by Jack Hanna 42. What is your favorite candy? chocolate 43. Favorite Sports Team? Chicago Cubs, Chicago Bears 44…. [...]

# The REAL Bambi and Thumper

I’ll admit I got these super-cute animal pictures from an email foward…Â  they are just too cute…Â  The skeptic in me says, are they real?Â  I looked on snopes.com and didn’t see anything, but in this age of photoshop, you never know.Â  If they are photoshopped, the creator did an excellent job…Â  Let’s pretend they’re real and that these animalÂ buddies have such a wonderful friendship that it spanned at least 2 seasons as the pictures suggest – they’re too cute not to believe it!



Â



### Comments

**derek**A few weeks ago the local rag had a pic with a cat and squirrel happily coexisting on one table. Of course we don't know for how long... :twisted:  
**jamiahsh**AWWWW... I thought you were referring to the female characters Bambi and Thumper from Diamonds are Forever... guess not. Very cute nonetheless.

# Optical Illusion Personality Test

This is pretty cool.Â  Watch the video and figure out which way the lady is spinning.Â  According to the video, if you see the lady spinning to the right, your right brain dominates and your thinking is black and white and fact-based.Â  If you see her spinning to the left, you are more creative and open to seeing “gray” areas.Â  Even if the personality assessment part is a bit off, the illusion is still cool to see.Â  Check it out:

Â If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

Sounds simple, but for some people she keeps changing direction.Â  I saw her spinning counter-clockwise; I guess that would be considered left, but I could force myself to see her spinning in the other direction if I tried – weird!Â  Once you’ve established which direction you see her spinning, try to get your brain and eyes to switch it on you if you can!

### Comments

**derek**Time to quit acting and get a job in accounting. In other words, clockwise for me. Though I seriously doubt this has anything at all to do with what side of your brain you use.  
**jamiahsh**left  
**Ã¸ Personality Test | i love and hate you all - On understanding people. Or at least trying to Ã¸**[...] Optical Illusion Personality Test [...]

# Mystery Alaska

Â With Alaskan Sarah Palin’s eye on the White House and all the northern exposure in the media lately, we decided to pull out one of our old favorites the other night and watched the 1999 movie [Mystery Alaska](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0134618/).Â  It’s a pretty good movie and obviously has lots of replay value, at least for us, because we’ve seen it lots of times.Â  It was interesting watching it this time since I think this is the first time we’ve seen it since we’ve moved into a small town, and the movie is all about small town living.Â  The main difference between Mystery Alaska and my small town is the climate, of course.

In Mystery,Â residents’ lives seem to revolve around hockey (and sleeping around, but don’t let that give you the wrong idea about the movie.Â  Every small town has its sordid secrets).Â  Boys inÂ Mystery grow up with the “goal” (pun intended) of getting to play in the famed Saturday Game.Â  [Hank Azaria](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000279/) plays a former Mysterian who left town because he was never good enough to play in the game.Â  He becomes a writer for Sports Illustrated instead, although his success in the real world does not make him feel any more acceptance in Mystery, even if he does arrive in a helicopter.Â  He gets the brilliant idea to bring the New York Rangers to Mystery to play the Saturday Game, and well, you’ll have to watch the movie to see what happens.Â  As in any small town, there is a bit of drama, and the movie is successful with itsÂ character development as it follows the lives of the most popular residents of Mystery.Â  [Russell Crowe](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000128/), who is not normally one of my favorite actors, is pretty good in this movie as the family man / townÂ sheriff who is growing too old to play in the Saturday Game and must face some tough decisions about what is best for his family versus what is best for Mystery and the integrity of the Saturday Game.Â  [Burt Reynolds](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000608/) is excellent as the no-nonsense judge who also strugglesÂ as he raises hisÂ teenagers.Â  In fact, perhaps the funniest line of the movie is said to his character by his wife.Â  She is consoling their teenage daughter, and he wants to know what’s wrong.Â  “Walter,”Â  his wife says, “if you don’t leave, I swear I’ll tell you!”Â  If you have kids, especially teenagers, you can appreciate the truth and the humor in that line, more so if you see the movie and knowÂ the daughter’s issue to whichÂ she is referring.

Even if you don’t like hockey, this is an entertaining film with dramatic momentsÂ interspersed with comedy.Â  Its one shortcoming is the fact that there is too much adult content for it to be considered as a family film.Â  However, adults will enjoy the fine performances by the large ensemble cast which make Mystery Alaska a well-rounded, heart-tuggingÂ and entertaining film – definitely recommended by this blogger!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**YEA... great movie. I will have to look at that one again.

# Armed Robbery - With a Twist

I’m a sucker for interesting news stories, and the following caught my eye.Â  An armed robber attempted to knock off a store but was chased down the street by some flying bullets and the gun-toting store owner.Â  The owner of the store ended up facing more serious charges than the robber for shooting a gun on a busy street, and he skipped bail and hasn’t been seen since.Â  Because he didn’t show up to testify against the robber, there was no choice but to let the robber go free…Â  except for the fact that he is an illegal alien, so he’s facing consequences for that.Â  And did I mention that the store owner is also an illegal alien as reported in a previous news story about the incident?Â  Crazy story, read it for yourself here:

**Crystal Lake, Illinois –** *Efrain S. Castanon got lucky earlier this year when he managed to escape his foiled attempt to rob a Crystal Lake business without getting shot by its gun-toting owner.*

*The South suburban man got lucky again Monday when that owner, fleeing from his own set of criminal charges, failed to appear in court to testify against him.*

*This time instead of bullets from owner Rafael Diaz, luck allowed Castanon, 39, of Worth, to evade a possible prison sentence as part of a deal with McHenry County prosecutors.*

*Under the deal, Castanon was sentenced to one year of non-reporting probation after admitting guilt to unlawful restraint and attempted theft stemming from the failed Jan. 28 holdup of Novedes Veracruz in Crystal Lake.*

*He also received a six-month jail term, but that is time served since his arrest in January.*

*Diaz’s absence Monday left prosecutors with little choice by the deal they cut with Castanon, Assistant McHenry County State’s Attorney Mary Baccam said in court Monday.*

*“Rafael Diaz has fled the jurisdiction and is unavailable to testify for the state,” she said.*

*Castanon initially faced up to 15 years in prison after authorities charged him with attempted armed robbery, attempted aggravated robbery and attempted robbery in connection with the holdup.*

*Police said Castanon was one of three men who entered the store about 3 p.m. that day armed with a gun and attempted to tie up owner Rafael Diaz and his wife while robbing them.*

*Diaz, authorities said, broke free, retrieved a handgun he kept in the store and chased the would-be robbers out, firing numerous shots in their direction as they fled along a heavily traveled section of Route 14.*

*Two of the men escaped in a car and have not been found since, but Castanon was left behind and arrested by police.*

*Because he fired at the men as they ran away down a busy street, authorities charged Diaz, 54, of Crystal Lake, with aggravated battery with a firearm, a felony more serious than those faced by Castanon.*

*Diaz posted a $10,000 bond after his arrest and hasn’t been seen by law enforcement since. A $125,000 warrant for his arrest was issued in April.*

*Although Castanon is a free man as a result of his plea deal, he could remain locked up in the McHenry County jail on a hold by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.*

### Comments

**nick**I am a little familar with this story. This person has since been released and is back out on the street. Be aware and keep yourself protected. I hope that he has at least an immigration hearing still coming and will be deported. But I don't know how to find out. What a great country we live in. Illegal criminals walk our streets. What should we do.  
**Armed Robbery Menace in Ghana**[...] Armed Robbery - With a Twist [...]  
**jamiahsh**HNMMM.... interesting... is this the same Crystal Lake that was one to a certain goalie masked wearing evil doer name Jason.

# Spinach and Strawberry Salad

My friend Shirley is compiling a recipe book for our community theater group and says she’s short on salads.Â  Since I have to type this recipe into my computer to email it to her, thought I’d share it with you on my blog…Â  just in time for strawberries to go out of season.Â  Oh well, enjoy anyway!

**Spinach and Strawberry Salad***makes 4 servings*

1 – 5 or 7 oz. package of baby spinach or baby romaine  
2 cups sliced strawberries  
Â½ cup crumbled goat or feta cheese  
Â¼ cup pine nuts, toasted

Combine greens and strawberries, add balsamic vinaigrette dressing and tossÂ gently to evenly coat.Â  Sprinkle each serving with cheese and nuts.Â  Here is a recipe to make your own balsamic vinaigrette dressing from scratch:

**Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing**

1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
3 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh basil leaves or 1 teaspoon dried basil, crushed  
salt and black pepper

Whisk vinegar and olive oil in small bowl.Â  Add basil and season with salt and pepper.

Â

### Comments

# I Am SpongeBob, Married To A SpongeBob

Yet another email forward struck my fancy…Â  this one’s a personality test to determine which cartoon character you’re most like.Â  With 29 points, I am SpongeBob SquarePants, and my husband got 31 points, so he is also SpongeBob.Â  Not sure how truthful this is, but fun to take the little quiz.Â  I know, I should get a life…Â  but what about the person who sat and mapped out this whole personality test?  
This is fun.  
Â   
Everyone has a personality of a cartoon character. Have you ever asked yourself what cartoon character you most resemble?  
A group of investigators got together and analyze the personalities of well known and modern cartoon characters. The information that was gathered was made into this test.  
Answer all the questions (only 10) with what describes you best, add up all your points (which are next to the answer that you choose) at the end and look for your results.  
Do not cheat by looking at the end of the e-mail before you are done .  
Then forward this to all your friends (including the person who sent it to you) and change the subject of this message to what character is you.  
1. Which one of the following describes the perfect date?  
a) Candlelight dinner (4 pts.)  
b) Fun/Theme Park (2 pts.)  
c) Painting in the park (5 pts)  
d) Rock concert (1 pt.)  
e) Going to the movies (3 pts.)  
Â   
2. What is your favorite type of music?  
a) Rock and Roll (2 pts.)  
b) Alternative (1 pt.)  
c) Soft Rock (4 pts.)  
d) Country (5 pts )  
e)Pop (3 pts.)  
Â   
3. What type of movies do you prefer?  
a) Comedy (2 pts.)  
b) Horror (1 pt.)  
c) Musical (3 pts.)  
d) Romance (4 pts.)  
e) Documentary (5 pts.)  
Â   
4. Which of these occupations would you choose if you only could pick one?  
a) Waiter (4 pts.)  
b) Professional Sports Player (5 pts.)  
c) Teacher (3 pts.)  
d) Police (2 pts.)  
e) Cashier (1 pt.)  
Â   
5. What do you do with your spare time?  
a) Exercise (5 pts.)  
b) Read (4 pts.)  
c) Watch television (2 pts.)  
d) Listen to music (1 pt.)  
e) Sleep (3 pts.)  
Â   
6. Which one of the following colors do you like best?  
a) Yellow (1 pt.)  
b) White (5 pts.)  
c) Sky Blue (3 pts)  
d) Dark Blue(2 pts.)  
e) Red (4 pts.)  
Â   
7. What do you prefer to eat?  
a) Snow (3 pts.)  
b) Pizza (2 pts.)  
c) Sushi (1 pt.)  
d) Pasta (4 pts.)  
e) Salad (5 pts.)  
Â   
8. What is your favorite holiday ?  
a) Halloween (1 pt.)  
b) Christmas (3 pts.)  
c) New Year’s (2 pts.)  
d) Valentine’s Day(4 pts.)  
e) Thanksgiving (5 pts.)  
Â   
9. If you could go to one of these places, which would it be?  
a) Paris (4 pts.)  
b) Spain (5 pts.)  
c) Las Vegas (1 pt.)  
d) Hawaii (4 pts.)  
e) Hollywood (3 pts)  
Â   
10. Which of the following people would you prefer to spend time with?  
a) Someone smart (5 pts.)  
b) Someone attractive (2 pts.)  
c) Someone who likes to Party (1 pt.)  
d) Someone who always has fun (3 pts.)  
e) Someone very sentimental (4 pts.)  
Â   
Â   
Now add up your points and find the answer you have been waiting for! Put your cartoon character’s name in the subject line and forward it to your friends and back to the person that sent this to you.  
Â   
Â   
Â   
(10-16 points) You are Garfield:  
You are very comfortable, easy going , and you definitely know how to have fun but sometimes you take it to an extreme. You always know what you are doing and you are always in control of your life. Others may not see things as you do, but that doesn’t mean that you always have to do what is right. Try to remember, your happy spirit may hurt you or others.  
(17-23 points) You are Snoopy:  
You are fun; you are very cool and popular. You always know what’s in and you’re never out of style, you are good at knowing how to satisfy everyone else. You have probably disappeared for a few days more than once, but you always come home with the family values that you learned. Being married and having children are important to you, but only after you have had your share of fun times.  
(24-28 points) You are Elmo:  
You have lots of friends and are popular, always willing to give advice and help out a person in need. You are very optimistic and always see the bright side of things. Some good advice: try not to be too much of a dreamer. Dreaming too big could cause many conflicts in your life.  
(29-35 points) You are Sponge Bob Square Pants. You are the classic person everyone loves. You are the best friend that anyone could ever have and never wants to lose. You never cause harm to anyone and they would never not understand your feelings. Life is a journey, it’s funny and calm for the most part. Stay away from traitors and jealous people and you will be stress free.  
(36-43 points) You are Charlie Brown:  
You are tender, you fall in love quickly but you are also very serious about all relationships. You are a family person. You call your Mom every Sunday. You have many friends and may occasionally forget a few birthdays. Don’t let your passion confuse you with reality.  
(44-50 points ) You are Dexter:  
You are smart and definitely a thinker. Every situation is fronted with a plan. You have a brilliant mind. You demonstrate very strong family principles.You maintain a stable routine but never ignore a bad situation when it comes. Try to do less over thinking every once in a while to spice things up a bit with spontaneity.  
Â   
Now don’t spoil it! Have some fun! Change the subject of the e-mail to the name of your cartoon character and send it on.

### Comments

**derek**Looks like Elmo for me, unless I answer (a) for #10 in which case I am at the low end of SBSP. I really don't know the answer to who I would rather spend my time with. Probably not the party animal, but other than that...? By the way, are the points for #9 correct? It seems odd there are two answers worth 4 points and none worth 2 on that one.  
**jamiahsh**I am Elmo... and I definitely KNOW that I possess at least one of those qualities for better or for worse that has gotten me into trouble.

# Unforseen Side Effect Of Hurricanes

With all the storm activity in the Atlantic OceanÂ lately, I’ve been especially interested in hurricanes.Â  I’ve lived a lot of places, but since I’ve only resided in the midwest, I’ve never witnessed a hurricane firsthand.Â  Well, that’s not entirely true.Â  There was a hurricane a couple of years ago (I forgot its name unfortunately) that ventured up to our corner of Ohio.Â  By the time it got here, it had been over land for quite some time which had reduced it to nothing but rain, lots of rain.Â  It was really no different than any other rain we’ve gotten, except that I had been watching the radar, and I knew that it had been a hurricane in a past life – that made it special to me; I really enjoyed it.

Anyway, last night, the baby decided to wake up right as we were going to bed, so I was stuck watching tv while I fed him.Â  And it’s strange, because I really used to enjoy tv, but that’s changed for me recently.Â  Maybe it’s because we are so busy all the time so I got used to not watching tv…Â  I don’t know what it is.Â  All I know is that I used to be the kind of person who could be happy watching anything on tv –Â  I could find something that would entertain me at any time of the day or night.Â  Not so much anymore.Â  I still like tv, and I love watching my favorite shows (like The Office – almost time for new episodes!!!), but “junk tv” as I call it (reality shows, documentaries, etc.)Â isn’t so appealing anymore.Â  My point in detailing all of this is to explain how interesting I found some random documentary I caught last night on the History Channel while I was feeding my son.

The documentary was about giant snakes, specifically pythons, and how they are starting to become a threat to people in Florida.Â  What I found most fascinating about this is the fact that these snakes are not indigenous to the United States, but in 1992, when Hurricane Andrew hit Florida, many pet stores and homes that had kept these animals as pets were destroyed.Â Â Baby pythonsÂ were released into the wild andÂ because ofÂ Florida’sÂ tropical climate, especially in the Everglades, these animalsÂ now have aÂ wild population that isÂ thriving.Â  On the show, they had pictures of one snake that had swallowed an adult human whole.Â  They weren’t sure if the pictures were real orÂ a hoax, and unfortunatley I never found out because my son let me go to bed before the show was over.Â  They also had pictures of a snake that had swallowed a 6-foot-long alligator whole, but it had ruptured the snake, causing his death.Â  In the words of a snake expert on the show, “snakes can digest anything” – it’s just that the alligator probably clawed the snake open.Â  But you could see the outline of the alligator in the snake – it looked like an alligator colored like a snake – it was bizarre.

I may have to find this documentary again so I can watch it when I’m not half asleep.Â  But it’s really interestingÂ to me that because of a hurricane, Florida now has another fearsome reptile lurking in the Everglades.Â  I’m sure that was the last thing on people’s minds after Hurricane Andrew wreaked its havoc 16 years ago – I betÂ this scenarioÂ didn’t cross anyone’s mind.Â  Who knows what unforseen sideÂ effects we’ll see from Hurricane Katrina in a couple ofÂ decades?Â  One can only imagine…Â

### Comments

# RELIEF

For anyone out there who has been following our plight through my husband’s medical issues,Â we have good news!Â  Here is aÂ copy of the email I sent to our friends and family:

Hi everyone,  
Chris had his medical tests today and they went well.Â  They didn’t find anything horrible – just some inflammation in the stomach and esophagus.Â  The dr prescribed some medication that will hopefully take his pain away soon.Â  They did take a sample to send for biopsy looking for any cell abnormality, but we won’t find anything out from that for about 2 weeks; they don’t expect that they will find anything abnormal.Â  Thank you so much for all your thoughts and prayers and support while we were going through this – we really appreciate it and love all of you.Â  We can’t ask for better friends or family!Â  Thank you so much!  
Love,  
Lisa

### Comments

# What's All This About Hugh Downs?

I felt too restless to write blogs, but I’m too tired to take the kids anywhere, so it’s either write in my blog or sit here on my computer looking up scary ailments that could be afflicting my husband.Â  So blogging it is…

As you may have read on other tangents.org blogs, our community theater is about to open its production of The Nerd – an (I still hate putting the word “an” in front of hilarious, but oh well)Â hilarious comedy written by Larry Shue.Â  My husband is portraying the Nerd, a character named Rick Steadman, who is without any social ettiquette whatsoever, to put it mildly.Â Â He does an excellent job at the part, if I do say so myself, and that’s a compliment, really it is – he’s not a nerd in real life!Â  In the play, RickÂ has an autographed picture of Hugh Downs, and all this time during rehearsal, I’ve been wondering, who is Hugh Downs?Â  The name sounds familiar, but I didn’t know anything about him, so I looked him up.Â  Turns out he is a fellow Ohioan, born in Akron, went to high school in Lima, and he’s still alive.Â  He anchored the newsmagazine show 20/20, hosted the Today show, was the announcer for The Tonight Show with Jack Paar, and he also hosted the game show Concentration.

So having an autographed picture of Hugh Downs *is* quite nerdy.Â  But then again, I looked him up on wikipedia, so what does that make me?

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I know Hugh Downs from 20/20... that's about it. Did not know he was from Ohio. Funny how that works. But, yes your husband is TOTALLY AWESOME, FER SURE... LIKE WOW. I just wish I could sit in the audience and see it instead of hearing it only.

# Do You Know The #1 Song The Day You Were Born?

I have a few drafts of blog postsÂ started, but I haven’t really felt like writing lately – too much effort when my mindÂ is so preoccupied.Â  Then I got this fun forward in my email and thought it would make a good blog post.Â  Little effort on my part, which is great because I’m so tired from not being able to sleep.Â  And it is actually a pretty fun forward; I looked it up for each of my kids and put them at the bottom of the listÂ – enjoy:

THIS IS REALLY FUN!

Â Do you know the #1 song the day you were born?

Â Go here [Http://www.joshhosler.biz/NumberOneInHistory/SelectMonth.htm](http://www.joshhosler.biz/NumberOneInHistory/SelectMonth.htm" \t "_blank)

Â Put the name of the song below and keep it going!

Â 1. Justine – ‘You Send Me’ by: Sam CookeÂ

> 2. Denise – ‘My Love’ by Petula Clark WHO???????????

> 3. Angela – ‘I Honestly Love You’ by Olivia Newton JohnÂ

> 4. Michelle-‘Hello Goodbye’ by The BeatlesÂ

> 5. Gayle – ‘I Can’t Get Next To You!’ by: The Temptations

> 6- Claire- ‘(There Ought to Be a) Moonlight Saving Time’ by Guy Lombardo

> 7- Dianne- ‘Moon Love’ by Glenn Miller

> 8- Rose – ‘Rum and Coca-cola’ by Andrews Sisters

> 9 – NANCY – ‘My Dreams Are Getting Better All The Time’ by Les BrownÂ

> 10. Denise- The Song from Moulin Rouge (Where Is Your Heart) Percy Faith

> 11. Debbie – I’m Sorry – Brenda Lee

> 12.. Renee – It’s Now or Never – Elvis PresleyÂ

???13. Kathy – “Don’t/I Beg

> of You” – Elvis PresleyÂ

> 14. Judy – At The Hop by Danny & The JuniorsÂ

> 15. Chas – Boogie Oogie Oogie – A Taste of HoneyÂ

> 16. Lisa–Someday We’ll Be Together–by Diana Ross & the SupremesÂ

> 17. Janet — Mona Lisa By: Nat King ColeÂ

> 18. Wheel of Fortune– by Kay Starr

> 19. Some Enchanted Evening’ by Perry ComoÂ

> 20. Tammy: ‘Looks Like We Made It’ by Barry ManilowÂ

> 21. Robin Pony Time by Chubby CheckerÂ

> 22. melissa hooked on a feelingÂ

> 23. Amber: ‘Tonight’s the Night’ by Rod StewartÂ

> 24. Ramona: ‘I Wish’ by Stevie WonderÂ

> 25. Debbie: ‘Mama Told Me (Not to Come)’ by Three Dog NightÂ

> 26. Ann: Goodnight Irene by Gordon Jenkins & the WeaversÂ

> 27. Jill: That Lucky Old Sun by Frankie LaineÂ

> 28. Ron: Twelfth Street Rag by Pee Wee Hunt

> 29. Christina: He’s So Fine by The ChiffonsÂ

> 30. Kimberly: ‘Rock With You’ by Michael Jackson

> 31. Kate: ‘Night Fever’ by The Bee Gees! (WOW)!

> 32. Lynn: BESAME MUCHO by Jimmy DorseyÂ

> 33. Ginny: Sentimental Journey by Les BrownÂ

> 34. Betsy: Rum and Coka-Cola by The Andrews Sisters. (IT FIGURES).lolÂ

> 35. Judy: Till the End of Time by Perry ComoÂ

> 36. Kitty: Heartaches by the Number by Guy MitchellÂ

> 37. Jim: Your a sweetheart by Dolly DawnÂ

> 38. Denise: Ode to Billy Joe by Bobbie GentryÂ

> 39. Lana: Soldier Boy by the ShirellesÂ

> 40. Denise S.: To Know Him is to Love Him by the Teddy Bears

> 41. Helene B: Manana by Peggy Lee

> 42. Kathy : Purple People Eater – Sheb WooleyÂ

> 43. Nancy JS: A Little Bird Told Me – Evelyn KnightÂ

> 44. Cindy: That Lucky Old Sun – Frankie Lane

> 45. Dave: Don’t Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes – Perry Como

> 46. Barb: Singing the Blues – Guy MitchellÂ

> 47. Janet: Autumn Leaves- Roger WilliamsÂ

> 48. Amy: Straight Up – Paula AbdulÂ

> 49. Wendy: All Shook Up – Elvis PresleyÂ

> 50. Sherry: Sincerely – The McGuire SistersÂ

> 51. Mona Auf Wiederseh’n Sweetheart” by Vera LynnÂ

> 52. Paula The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face – Roberta Flack

> 53. Heather “Fame” by David BowieÂ

> 54. Sara – “Brand New Key” by MelanieÂ

> 55.. Faith – “Purple People Eater” by Sheb WooleyÂ

> 56. Laura- “Walk Right In” by The Rooftop SingersÂ

> 57. Kathy -“The Yellow Rose Of Texas” by Mitch Miller

> 58. Julie – “Honey” by Bobby Goldsboro

> 59. Shelley-“Joy to the World” by Three Dog Night

> 60. Lisa “Jack and Diane” by John Cougar”

> 61. Jennifer – “rock n Me” Steve Miller BandÂ

?? 62. Heidi – Le freak- Chic

> 63. ?Joan~ Sugar Shack!! 

> 64. Kaley: “Let’s Hear it for the Boy” ~Denice Williams (I love that song! ðŸ˜‰

?? 65. Caleb: “Let’s Go Crazy!” ~Prince (Br. Nelson)

> 66.?Leslie: “ABC” Jackson 5??Â

?? 67.? Brady: “Macarena” Los Del Rio

?? 68. Jerry:?”Disco Duck” Rick Dees

?? 69. Debbie “Come On A My House” Rose Mary Clooney

?? 70. Kandie:? “Do ya think I’m Sexy” Rod Stewart

> 71. Cheryl: “Stay” Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs

> 72. Debbie:”Mr.Sandman” The Chordettes

?? 73. Kelley.? “You Make Me Feel Like Dancing” by Leo Sayer

?? 74. Michelle. “You Can’t Mend a Broken Heart” by the Bee Gees.

Â Â  75. Jan: “It’s My Party” by Lesley Gore.

76.Â  Joanna:”I just want to be your everything.” Andy Gibb

77. Jaimie:Â [“You Make Me Feel Like Dancing”](http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?playlistId=64754413&s=143441&i=64754376" \t "_blank) by Leo Sayer

78: Jason:Â [“Alone Again (Naturally)”](http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?playlistId=164725391&s=143441&i=164726102" \t "_blank) by Gilbert O’Sullivan

79. CarolÂ  Â Paper Doll- Mills Brothers

80.Â Karen – Wanted – Perry Como

81. Leigh AnneÂ Â  Heartbreak Hotel” by Elvis Presley

82. Dawn –Â  ‘Til I Waltz Again With You” by Teresa Brewer (Who??)

83. Mary Beth – Blue Tango by Leroy Anderson Â  I at least had heard of Teresa Brewer!

84.Â  Lisa – Shadow Dancing” by Andy Gibb – never heard it, maybe I’ll have to

85.Â  Chris –Â  [“Love Will Keep Us Together”](http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?playlistId=3453175&s=143441&i=3453080" \t "_blank) by The Captain & Tennille

86.Â  Taylor –Â  [“Smooth”](http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?playlistId=107631792&s=143441&i=107631563" \t "_blank) by Santana featuring Rob Thomas

87.Â  Sammie – [“Burn”](http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?playlistId=25285568&s=143441&i=25285562" \t "_blank) by Usher

88.Â  Disney – [“SexyBack”](http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?playlistId=167192911&s=143441&i=167192936" \t "_blank) by Justin Timberlake

89.Â  Christopher – [“I Kissed a Girl”](http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?i=278945614&id=278945586&s=143441" \t "_blank) by Katy Perry

### Comments

**jamiahsh**jamiahsh: "Will It Go Round in Circles" by Billy Preston. At least your song SOME people have actually heard of.

# Pedal To The Metal

Yes, a fun day indeed, if you read [Jamiahsh’s blog](http://jamiahsh.tangents.org/2008/09/01/bee-in-your-bonnet/), then you know what I’m talking about.Â  To get our minds off of certain medical dramas (not like House or Grey’s Anatomy or anything like that –Â our real-life medical dramas taking place right nowÂ are much worse than some crappy tv), we decided to have a day of fun.Â  It began with go-carting, which is always fun but even more so if you can fill up the track and drive with people you know – which we were able to do.Â  I like the place we went to because they don’t charge any extra if you take a kid along with you, and seeing as how we had a few nice adults who didn’t mind chauffering some little kids, all 3 ofÂ our daughtersÂ got to go around the track a bunch of times.Â  But I’m the dummy who forgot my camera, so I didn’t get a picture of my little almost 2-year-old in a go-cart like I wanted.Â  It’s funny because I had the camera with me, just forgot to use it, which should signal how scatter-brained I’ve been lately because of the worry and lack of sleep resulting from my husband’s as-yet-unidentified medical condition.Â  And while we’re on that subject, we won’t know anything until next week now, because they’ve ordered further tests for Thursday, and they won’t get the results back until next week.Â  But they’ve eliminated gallstones, so at least we know that much.Â  He blogged a little update [here](http://whatever.tangents.org/2008/09/02/chris-health-good-news-bad-news/).

But anyway, enough *tangents*, back to the fun day.Â  After go-carting, we decided to practice in the batting cages for our upcoming annual theater softball game.Â  The batting cagesÂ reminded me how hilariousÂ last year’s gameÂ was – I mean, theater people playing softball?Â  It was a riot!

After that, we went to a nice little restaurant we like on the river.Â  If you sit outside, you get to enjoy the beautiful weather, the view, and a game of cornhole while you wait for your food.Â  I like cornhole; if anyone has a set, we should bring it to the theater family fun day and play that along with softball…Â  Why is it called cornhole?Â  Is that a NW Ohio term for it?Â  They have that where I come from in Illinois too, but I don’t think they call it cornhole.Â  In case you aren’t from NW Ohio and you don’t know what I’m talking about, I’m referring to the game with the wooden ramps with holes in them…Â  you have 2 of these and station them about 15-20 feet apart with half of the team at each end; then you throw bean bags into the holes – hopefully.

After dinner, the kids fell apart (what else is new?Â  They’ve been acting HORRIBLY lately!),Â so we had to leave, but I hear the rest of the group went mini-golfing.Â  I was actually tempted to mini-golf earlier in the day but I knew the kids would drive me nuts because they get bored of it after about 6 holes.Â  So we left, thinking maybe the kids would fall asleep in the car, giving me and hubby a much-deserved and needed night alone together to watch a movie.Â  Didn’t happen.Â  And starting with the kids spazzing out at the restaurant about bees (and there weren’t that many – our almost 9-year-old is a wimp about certain things and her craziness got her sisters going – don’t you love how they chain-react to one another?Â  Hence the name of my blog), things went from bad to worse.

I’m going to blame Carol and Megan for this one, since they brought it up earlier in the day, but what a coincidence – we got pulled over on the way home.Â  So thanks Carol and Megan for jinxing us!!Â  Just kidding, of course it’s not your fault…Â  I guess poor Chris really got used to putting the pedal to the metal on those darn go-carts.Â  The state highway patrol officer who pulled us over had the personality of a housefly, and she wasn’t going to act like a human being and be thankful we weren’t drunk driving or even think about giving us a break on labor day, so our fun day ended up being pretty expensive when you include the $100 speeding ticket.Â  Our luck SUCKS lately, but if we can get the all-clear on my husband’s health, then I will stop complaining.

Oh yeah, so anyway, when we got home, our almost-2-year-old was the last one awake, and since she had only napped for about 10 minutes during the day, we thought we were almost home-free for a nice evening together – WRONG!Â  About 30 minutes into the movie, our oldest came down, asking for a snack.Â  No biggie, but “Did you wake your sister?”Â we asked her, panicked beyond belief because our 4-year-old has been a little hellian again lately.Â  She said she didn’t think she woke her up, but 5 minutes later, guess what happens?Â  Sammie comes down the stairs, and now we’re in the middle of an R rated movie with all 3 kids awake and downstairs.Â  So much for our peaceful early night, sigh.Â  We sent the oldest 2 upstairs, and that’s actually the last we heard from Sammie, believe it or not.Â  Disney, the youngest besides the baby (and he’s not old enough to cause any trouble yet, thank goodness!), got so OVER-tired that she started crying for aboutÂ 45 minutes straight until she finally fell asleep.Â  But then Taylor, the oldest, must have come down the stairs at least 3 more times because she was worried about various bugs that were in her room and in the house, according to her anyway.Â  If this were still the age of the VCR, our movie would have been eaten by the VCRÂ by now because of all the pausing and unpausing we were doing…Â  but ultimately, we just gave up anyway because I was falling asleep during the first part of the movie, and we could tell Taylor was going to be “bugging” us all night…Â  So we missed the end of [No Escape](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110678/) – some crappy [Ray Liotta](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000501/) action film from the 90’s.Â  I think it was crappy anyway, I really didn’t see much of it – let me know if it’s any good and maybe we’ll go back to it.

But for what it was worth, the day provided a nice destraction from the worries that have been plaguing us lately, so thanks to all who participated.Â  Now we just have to wait *another* week to find out more medical test results…Â  ugh, I hate the waiting!

### Comments

**Putting The Fun Into Labor… | My Food Chain Gang**[...] back from my tangents.Â  We had a really nice and safe Labor Day weekend free from any of the speed traps we encountered in previous years.Â  Hope yours was safe and fun also!Â  God Bless! Share and [...]  
**jamiahsh**The waiting is definitely the worst part for the bystanders (while the pain he is feeling is prolly worse). I can't comment on No Escape, never was a huge Ray Liotta fan). Speed demon, eh?

# PRAYERS PLEASE

My husband and I are worried sick.Â  It started about a week ago, when he began experiencing a terrible stomach ache.Â  In the past week, we’ve been to the ER and several doctors, and they’ve run various tests, but we haven’t gotten any results back yet, in part because it’s a darn holiday weekend.Â  So meanwhile, we are both worried SICK, which is an understatement.Â  The internet is acting as both a blessing and a curse, with us obsessing over his symptoms and making ourselves crazy with thoughts of one horrible diagnosis (mainly involvingÂ colon cancer)Â after another.Â  So I’m writing this quick post as a way of hopefully using the internet as a blessing rather than a curse and putting out this call for prayer.Â  Please, please pray for our family thatÂ my husband’s illness is nothing serious, and that we will be able to find the causeÂ and the cure in a timely fashion.Â  We have 4 little children, and it’s been really difficult to function as a family with one ofÂ us sick and both of us so worried and terrified.Â  It’s probably nothing, but IÂ thank you so much for your thoughts and prayers.Â

### Comments

**taylhis**Derek's IM prayer was a good one, so I'm posting it for him and for me: God, I just pray right now for Chris. I ask that You lay Your healing hand on him, and guide the doctor and medical staff involved to the right decisions leading to his healing. And I pray that you are a comfort to Lisa, their friends, and any of their kids who realize something is wrong right now, I ask that You hold them close to You right now. In Jesus' name, Amen.  
**jamiahsh**And don't forget... if you need ANYTHING more, I am a click or ring away. It will help me, too.  
**jamiahsh**I already have been. I KNOW HE is watching over you all and everything will be fine. Peace... Love... Prayer. But what a week ;)  
**justj**You've got it. Hoping for the best.

# Tropic Thunder

As I’m sure you’ve heard, the movie [Tropic Thunder](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0942385/) received much hype in the media because of several controversies.Â  Part of this hype isÂ a normal side effect of a movie’s release – spin doctors go to work; sometimes even people whoÂ are associated with the movie spread their own rumors because there’s a saying that goes, “There’s no such thing as bad publicity”.Â  Tropic Thunder is under scrutiny for two reasons:Â  [Robert Downey Jr](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000375/)., a white actor, plays a white man in the movie who undergoes pigment infusion in order to portray an African-American man in the movie within a movie.Â  I guess I should go back and give a summary of the plot so that my explanation of the controversies of Tropic Thunder make more sense.

A group of quirky actors are filming a big budget war movie in Vietnam, and they get stuck there – that’s basically the plot and explains why we have a movie within a movie.Â  Before seeing the movie, I was under the impression that the actorsÂ didn’t know they were on their own in Vietnam and that’s when the hilarity would ensue.Â  But I was wrong on both accounts.Â  The actors knew they were no longer filming the movie pretty much right off the bat,Â and Tropic Thunder is not funny.Â  It is violent and crude; two things I could handle if the movie had other appealing qualities, but this one does not.Â  I do not recommend Tropic Thunder to anyone.Â  I can’t see who would like this film since it’s notÂ funny nor is it really an action film – it just seems likeÂ a poor excuse for total crudeness and senseless violence.Â  I’m surprised about this because of its major star power:Â it was directed by [BenÂ Stiller](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001774/) who also stars in the movie, along with [Jack Black](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0085312/), Robert Downey Jr.,Â [Matthew McConaughey](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000190/) (who has a difficult name to spell, by the way!), [Nick Nolte](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000560/), and [Tom Cruise](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000129/), who makes a “special” appearance.Â  Turns out what is so special about Cruise’s appearance is the audience getting to see an A-list actor spewing outÂ apallingly crude lines.Â  I have to admit though, theyÂ do a good job of disguising Mr. Cruise, and since I hadn’t heard he’d be in the film, I only recognized him because his voice wasÂ familiar and my husband leaned over and asked me, “Isn’t that Tom Cruise?”Â  Seeing Tom Cruise as a middle-aged bald jerk barking out insults and orders was probably the only entertaining thing in the whole movie but still not nearly enough toÂ make itÂ worth seeing.Â  Not quite so bad as to be put on [my famousÂ movie stinkers list](http://taylhis.tangents.org/2008/08/14/the-fun-park), but it *was* a close call!

And that was going to be the end of my post until I realized that I forgot to go back andÂ write moreÂ about the controversies surrounding this movie.Â  There was the one about Robert Downey Jr. portraying an African-American; I guess the feeling was why couldn’t they hire someone who was really African-American to play the role.Â  And then there was the controversy about the use of the word (and please forgive me if I offend you, I’m just repeating what I heard in the media) “retard”.Â  I can see how people would be offended by both circumstances; mostly I’m all for people lightening up about being politically correct and those kind of things, but perhaps these complaints have merit, especially the latter.Â  The movie’s portrayal of a “special” person and use of the word “retard” was quite condescending and like the rest of the movie, not the least bit funny.Â  But what I would say to the people who were offended is don’t waste your time because this movie’s not worth it, especially if the “no such thing as bad publicity” theory pans out – why give this bad movie any more press than it’s already gotten?Â  Waste of money.Â  Period.Â  Not a waste of time, however, but onlyÂ because I saw it in good company 

### Comments

**Media » The Persistence of Hope**[...] Tropic ThunderA group of quirky actors are filming a big budget war movie in Vietnam, and they get stuck there - thatâ€™s basically the plot and explains why we have a movie within a movie. Before seeing the movie, I was under the impression that the … [...]  
**Media » Tropic Thunder**[...] Tropic ThunderA group of quirky actors are filming a big budget war movie in Vietnam, and they get stuck there - thatâ€™s basically the plot and explains why we have a movie within a movie. Before seeing the movie, I was under the impression that the … [...]  
**jamiahsh**Once again... a movie I just knew was doomed from the previews.

# Train, Train, Go Away

There are some really busy railroad tracks that run along the north border of the town where I live.Â  There are basically 3 roads that go out of town to the north; only one of which has an overpass for the tracks so cars don’t have to stop for every train that passes by.Â  This morning on our way back into town, we got stuck by a train.Â  Taking the route with the overpass is not an option right now because the other road we would need for that route is currently under construction and closed.Â  So we were stuck by the train, and it was a lengthy freighter (aren’t they all when you live in the country?), and it decided to stop – it was at a standstill on the tracks.Â  Not knowing how longÂ the trainÂ was going to be stopped and because we were running low on gas, our only option was to turn around and try theÂ third route.Â  Thank goodness it wasn’t being blocked by the stopped train also, which could have very well happenedÂ given the way these roads are laid out.Â  And talk about timing – right as we were going over the tracks, the bells and whistles on the gates sounded because yet another train was coming!Â  So if we had waited just a few more seconds to turn around, we would have gotten stuck by *another* train and probably run out of gas.Â  I didn’t realize we were so low on gas – I think there’s something wrong with our gas gauge because it fluctuates a lot.Â  But anyway, the point of this story is not to keep a full tank of gas – at today’s gas prices, who could afford that?Â  But I really hope they finish the construction soon so we can go back to taking the route where you don’t have to bother with the train crossings – I’m so not used to sitting in traffic, even if it is just waiting for a train to pass!

\*UPDATE\* – This afternoon as I traveled toward the north edge of town, the construction seemed to have been completed, thus opening the route that goes under the railroad tracks!Â  Maybe ODOT read my blog…

### Comments

**jamiahsh**STARLIGHT EXPRESS!!! Living just two blocks away from a major track, I know quite well the frequent delays in slow moving or halted engines.  
**derek**You're that far removed from Suburban Chicago traffic? :P Anyway, I thought you were going to write about the ongoing railway merger fiasco around here... Comes as no surprise towns that will get more freight train traffic are opposed, towns that will get less are all for it. No surprise, but the media feels it is only right to bombard us with it five days a week. :o

# That Darn Cat

I love animals…Â  all animals, even ones I’m afraid of like frogs.Â  I can honestly say I would not want to see harm come to a frog even though I don’t like them.Â  I really love cats, even though I’m allergic to them.Â  When I was growing up, I always wanted a cat, so as soon as I moved out of my parents’ house I got one.Â  I had her for overÂ 10 years, her name was Mally, and she was a sweetheart.Â  She passed away last January, and I miss her very much.Â  While she was alive, I couldn’t pet her as much as I wanted to because of my allergies, and that’s the only reason why I haven’t gotten another cat – I really like them.Â  Except for my neighbor’s cat.

When we moved in 2 years ago, we saw Phoebe the neighbor’s cat roaming around and we thought it was kind of cool to have a neighborhood cat.Â  That was before we saw how mischievous she can be.Â  Phoebe likes to sit on our window sill because she knowsÂ it makes the dogs crazy.Â  She also sits on the kids’ slide in the backyard which is just out of the dogs reach, further aggravating them.Â  One day, our dog Charity got loose and treed the cat.Â  I felt a little badlyÂ although part of me enjoyed the surprised (and pissed) look onÂ that cat’s faceÂ when she was in the tree because she wasn’t expecting the dog to get loose and chase her.Â  One time, I noticed the front door was open and she was peeking in our house!Â  Don’t know how she managed that one; maybe one of the kids left the door open or something.Â  I used to have a bird house and a bird feeder in the tree in our side yard.Â  I would go out there and sprinkle seed, and we had a nice menagerie of creatures that would visit, giving our parrot some friends to look at out his window.Â  But then I saw Phoebe out there stalking the squirrels and birds that frequented the tree, and I stopped putting seed out because I no longer wanted toÂ lure animals into her lair.Â  One day, I saw her playing with a baby bunny.Â  The bunny was alive, but not moving, so we scooped it up and took it to this lady who rehabs wildlife nearby.Â  Her place is really neat; she has raccoons, bandicoots, squirrels, rabbits, geese, ducks, and even a few bears!Â  Anyway, she said the bunny looked to be in bad shape and she didn’t expect it to survive.Â  Hopefully it defied the odds…

Being an animal lover, I was really sad when Phoebe hurt the baby bunny.Â  I was even more sad when I saw what she did the other day.Â  I was outside with my daughter, and Phoebe started to climb the tree in the front of our house.Â  I thought it was really cute, so I pointed to her and showed my daughter the cat.Â  But then I saw what she was doing – there were 2 doves sitting silently in the tree, and she was stalking them.Â  Suddenly one of the doves flew off the branch or at least tried to.Â  He flapped to the ground; I don’t know if he hit his wing on a branch or if he was hurt before he tried to fly away, but he landed on the ground, and Phoebe chased him.Â  He got lift a few more times, but he couldn’t fly.Â  Phoebe was chasing him until they both disappeared around the side of the neighbor’s house.Â  I grabbed my daughter and followed them, but I didn’t see anything.Â  When I got back to the front of the house, I saw the other dove in the tree, just sitting there waiting for her mate to come back.Â  She was there all day, just waiting, and it was the saddest thing because I didn’t think he’d be coming back.Â  The next day, she was gone, so I don’t know if she just gave up or what.Â  Maybe he survived the cat attack and they found each other again…Â  doubtful, but I am hopeful that’sÂ the caseÂ because I don’t know what happened.Â  What I do know is that I don’t like Phoebe the cat.Â  She’s not even friendly; she never lets my kids pet her.Â  I’ve considered leaving a note on the neighbor’s door asking them to please corral their cat a little better…Â  but I don’t want to be one of *those* people.Â  For now, I just hold onto the hope the neighbors will move and take Phoebe with them, and when that day comes,Â I will promptly set up my wildlife area once again.

### Comments

**derek**The predator instinct hasn't been bred out of [i]that[/i] cat apparently. One day I would like to have a cat or two again. Just another thing that makes me a weird male I guess, preferring cats over dogs.  
**jamiahsh**WOW... Phoebe the demon cat.

# Kids Write the Darndest Email Forwards

I haven’t put any of the email forwards I’ve been getting on my blog lately, and this one seemed worthy.Â  It’s a list of cute responses kids gave when asked certain questions.Â  They’re really adorable, that is of course, if it’s really kids saying these things.Â  Sometimes I’m skeptical of things like this; it could just be a bored adult with nothing better to do than circulate a made-up email.Â  Most of these responses seem like something kids would say, although I’m wondering a little about the first one – would a kid really say “keep the chips and dip coming”?Â  I don’t know if kids talk like that…Â  but even so, the responses areÂ cute if you imagine that kids said them, which they probably did for the most part.Â  I do wonder why they worded one of the questions so strangely: What would you do on a first date that’s turning sour?Â  Turning sour?Â  Would a kid know that “turning sour” can mean something besides talking about candy?Â  Anyway, here they are…Â  oh yeah, and some forwarder was nice enough to add their commentary for our enjoyment.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHO TO MARRY?  
You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like  
sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the  
chips and dip coming.  
— Alan, age 10

No person really decides before they grow up who they’re going to marry.  
God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you’re  
stuck with.  
— Kristen, age 10

Â

WHAT IS THE RIGHT AGE TO GET MARRIED?

Twenty-three is the best age because you know the person FOREVER by  
then.  
— Camille, age 10

Â

HOW CAN A STRANGER TELL IF TWO PEOPLE ARE MARRIED?

Â You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the  
same kids.  
— Derrick, age 8

Â

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR MOM AND DAD HAVE IN COMMON?

Â Both don’t want any more kids.  
— Lori, age 8

Â

WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE DO ON A DATE?

Â Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each  
other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough.  
— Lynnette, age 8 (isn’t she a treasure)

Â On the first date, they just tell each other lies and that Usually gets  
them interested enough to go for a second date.  
— Martin, age 10

Â

WHAT WOULD YOU DO ON A FIRST DATE THAT WAS TURNING SOUR?

Â I’d run home and play dead. The next day I would call all the newspapers  
and make sure they wrote about me in all the dead columns.  
— Craig, age 9

Â

WHEN IS IT OKAY TO KISS SOMEONE?

Â When they’re rich.  
— Pam, age 7

Â The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn’t want to mess with  
that.  
– – Curt, age 7

Â The rule goes like this: If you kiss someone, then you should marry them  
and have kids with them. It’s the right thing to do.  
— Howard, age 8

Â

IS IT BETTER TO BE SINGLE OR MARRIED?

Â It’s better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone  
to clean up after them.  
— Anita, age 9 (bless you child)

Â

Â HOW WOULD THE WORLD BE DIFFERENT IF PEOPLE DIDN’T GET MARRIED?  
There sure would be a lot of kids to explain, wouldn’t there?  
— Kelvin, age 8

Â And the #1 Favorite is……..

Â

HOW WOULD YOU MAKE A MARRIAGE WORK?  
Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a dump  
truck.  
— Ricky, age 10

### Comments

**ezineaerticles » Blog Archive » Kids Write the Darndest Email Forwards**[...] Original post by taylhis [...]

# DOA Disposal

Sunday I had some dishes full of dip to clean that had been left sitting out from our game night Saturday night.Â  I began to rinse them out in the sink, flipped the switch for the garbage disposal, and – nothing.Â  Not a peep.Â  My husband looked at it and found there’s a little switch underneath the sink that turns it on, so he flipped that, and it now makes a little bit of noise at least, but it still doesn’t work.Â  A call to the plumber found that they charge $300 to put inÂ a new disposal.Â  That’s not really an option right now since we’re trying to save moneyÂ to be able to take the kids to Disney World before baby Christopher is old enough to add to theÂ trouble in our already crowded car.Â  So if anyone reading this knows anything about disposals or how to fix them, please, please tell me how and hurry – the dishes of dip are starting to smell!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Oh, yes... the old foreign object dropped into the disposal. I know that scenario quite well :)  
**justj**Just had to do that before, I think it comes with having kids... Something always dropped in that wasn't supposed to.  
**taylhis**JustJ is a garbage disposal genius - problem solved! THANKS!

# I Know One Business That Isn't Suffering In This Economy

We had to go to the ER yesterday, and it was bustling!Â  Since this is our second visit in a month, I can tell you that unfortunately, yesterday’s busynessÂ was not any different from the norm.Â  Seeing as how we’re talking aboutÂ a hospital as a business that’s doing well in this awful economy, that is not a good thing.

Here’s what happened, and it’s not a matter of life or death (at least for us), so don’t be alarmed about the ER visit.Â  My husband had been having severe stomach pain since Sunday afternoon that was getting worse, so that’s why we went to the ER.Â  Turns out to be a virus, so that’s great of course!Â  We were thinking kidney stone or something worse, so we’re very thankful.Â  While we were in the ER, some interesting events unfolded regarding some of the other patients.Â  First, there was the girl who left her contacts in for 2 weeks out of “laziness”.Â  She finally took them out, and the next morning, her eyes hurt, they were all swollen, and she couldn’t see.Â  The doctor speculated that the contacts had become fused to her eyeball and actually tore the top layer off when she removed them.Â  They sent her to an eye specialist.

Next was the couple who came in with the woman (girl actually – they were probably in their late teens orÂ early twenties) complaining of burning during urination.Â  My husband overheard theÂ doctor ask the girl how many sexual partners she’s had in the last 60 days.Â  She answered, “just my boyfriend.”Â  Then they asked the boyfriend the same question, but they did it while the girlfriend was in the bathroom, and he said he didn’t know – yikes.Â  More than 10, they asked, and he said, “yeah.”Â  I wonder if they waited to ask the boyfriend until the girlfriend was out of the room on purpose.Â  I wonder if they’re going to tell the girlfriend.Â  Makes an interesting moral argument…Â  there’s something someone should know, yet there’s doctor-patient confidentiality…Â  but then again, the boyfriend wasn’t a patient, his girlfriend was the patient.Â  Maybe the doctor’sÂ job dictates whether or not he would have to tell the girlfriend.Â  What if her symptoms are indicitive of an STD, then the doctor would have to tell her that of course…Â  wonder if he’d mention her boyfriend’s infidelity as well.Â  Well, that’s enough time on that story – onto the third ER story, which is sad…

The doctors and nurses started rushing around even more than they were before, and they all kept talking about how they were about to get much busier.Â  “Something’s coming in…” they were saying.Â  I started overhearing snippets of conversation including something about calling the state fire marshall and an autopsy…Â  Turns out someone had been found dead in their basement after their house was on fire.Â  That is not a usual occurance around here; this was a big deal at the ER.Â  There was a sheriff walking around, and a body bag was wheeled down the hall.Â  A sad event, no doubt, but something that would seem like just another day at work to doctors and nurses working at an urban hospital.Â  I wonder what the circumstances of the fire are; I read in the newspaper that when firefighters arrived, there was only a little smoke showing on the roof.Â  The man was found dead in the basement, so that seems a little suspicious.Â  The state fire marshall is conducting a joint investigation with the sheriff’s office, so maybe when they’re doneÂ the story will be back in the newspaper.Â  Well, anyway, I’m justÂ relieved that all is well withÂ my husband.Â  I hope not to have to see if the ER remains busy any time soon!Â

### Comments

**Megan**Wow, I don't know why they still call it "patient confidentiality" when everybody can hear, but I guess it is easy to hear..idk, it has been awhile (knock on wood) since I had to go to the ER. Anyway, the Dr more than likely waited for the girl to leave before asking the bf because there was more of a chance that the bf would tell the truth if his gf wasn't around. More than 10? Gross! Being in the health profession, it does suck being put in those positions of morals Vs."confidentiality". I dread the day I find out a friend of mine's bf is on some sort of STD medication. So future reference if I say get out of a relationship, do it, don't ask questions because I CANNOT give you the answers. By the way feel better C and L.  
**justj**I'm always surprised at what you hear waiting in the emergency room. I hope C feels better soon. He wasn't looking so good.  
**ezineaerticles » Blog Archive » I Know One Business That Isnâ€™t Suffering In This Economy**[...] Original post by taylhis [...]  
**jamiahsh**Hopefully you will NOT have the misfortune to find out. Very interesting stories though. Maybe the next time, the girl with the contacts won't be so lazy if given the option. And we will let the B/GF tale speak for itself.

# The Orphanage

Wow.Â  What a good movie.Â Â [TheÂ Orphanage](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0464141/) isÂ an eerily spooky ghost story, and I don’t really know what else to say about it because I want to make sure not to spoil anything.Â  They must have felt the same way when they wrote the summary on the back of the dvd’s box because it was very general and even incorrect in some aspects.Â  The movie is in Spanish, and I’ll admit that scared usÂ away fromÂ watching itÂ for awhile.Â  We got to go out to see a movie together while we were in Florida last January, and we went to buy tickets for TheÂ Orphanage, but the worker told us it had subtitles.Â  So we saw [One Missed Call](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0479968/) instead, and that wasn’t nearly as good, not even the same kind of movie.Â  Our movieÂ rental place has a satisfaction guarrantee, so when we told them how unhappy we were with The Fun Park, we got a free rental.Â  My husband was trying to be quick again – that’s what got us into trouble withÂ The Fun Park in the first place though – so he just grabbed The Orphanage, remembering that we had wanted to see it after reading the glowing reviews from critics.Â  Pretty soon, it was Sunday already and we hadn’t watched the movie and it was due by 11 pm that evening, so we quickly watched it while the kids were all napping from our big weekend.Â  It didn’t take long to forgetÂ we were reading subtitles rather than watchingÂ people talk in the movie; it was that good.Â  The critics were actually right for once.Â  Like I said, I really don’t want to give any of the plot because it’d be difficult to explain anything without giving away spoilers.Â  So I’ll just say, if you like spooky movies, this one is a must-see.Â  It’s not even really a horror movie; it’s supernaturally suspenseful.Â  The story draws you in and doesn’t letÂ go…Â Â you may not speak the same language as the characters, but you idenify with them, feel their pain, and genuinely care about what happens to them as the story unfolds.Â  SEE IT!Â  It’s a totally different movie experience between the subtitles and just the kind of movie it is – I HIGHLY recommend it!Â

### Comments

**A Hobbit In the Orphanage | Morat's Blog**[...] Hobbit In the Orphanage Last night (after C and taylhis‘ recommendation), I watched The Orphanage, a brilliant, suspense filled movie that just held [...]  
**jamiahsh**WOW... sounds great. I love supernatural suspense more than the blood and guts. I actually have read a bit about it (not enough to know a sgreat deal). I was not aware that it was in Spanish; but...  
**tobuyautoinsurance » Blog Archive » The Orphanage**[...] Original post by taylhis [...]

# 18 Kids - Are They Crazy?

They don’t seem to be, they just like kids, I guess.Â  You might have heard of the Duggar family from Arkansas.Â  They are kind of like celebrites.Â  Their claim to fame?Â  Having 18 natural children.Â  No adoptees or fosters.Â  The 18 includes 2 sets of twins and one on the way; there are 7 girls andÂ 11 boys – they don’t know the gender of theÂ new baby yet.Â  Their story interests me because with 4 kids myself, I thought I had a lot of kids.Â  It’s interesting to me to see how they go about their daily lives with 20 people living in their house.Â  Their house is custom built, they actually built it themselves as a family project.Â  They have lots of things in their house that help organize their lives and make everything run more smoothly, for instance, they have 4 washers and 4 dryers in their laundry room and one communal family clothes closet where the clothes are sorted by size.Â  Their kitchen has 2 convection ovens, 2 microwaves, 2 warming drawers, 2 dishwashers, 2 sinks, and a fridge/freezer.Â  And that’s the small kitchen.Â  The industrial kitchen is outfitted with 4 ovens, 2 griddles, 4 freezers, 2 refrigerators, 2 sinks, a pizza oven, a deep fryer, and a popcorn machine.Â  They even have their own buffet line; that’s how they serve their food.Â  Each kid goes through the line and gets their own food, well, the ones who are old enough, anyway.Â Â  They also have a drink counter in their dining room with a fountain pop machine.

Even though they have all these things in their house that helpÂ to accomodate such a large family, it’s amazing to me that they can still function with all those kids.Â  The kids are home schooled and also take piano, violin, and harp lessons.Â Â I think the key here is scheduling.Â  TheÂ family has a daily scheduleÂ that they follow which is supplemented with reward charts and checklists for each family member.Â  Each person has a jurisdiction within the house that they are responsible for cleaning during family cleaning time.Â  It sounds like a well-oiled machine, but I’m sure they run into their share of snags.Â  I just have so many questions about their situation, though, like how can a woman want to go through the birthing process 16 times (remember, 2 sets of twins)?Â  How is her body even able to carry and give birth to 18 children?Â  Is she addicted to pregnancy?Â  Do they have a money tree in their yard?Â  What is their grocery bill?Â  When do they have time for grocery shopping and who does it?Â  Do they have a vehicle that fits them all, or do they have to travel everywhere in a caravan?Â  Does Jim-Bob (the dad) work outside the home?Â  It’s kind of funny, isn’t it, that his name is Jim-Bob, he’s from the south, and he has 18 kids.Â  Talk about illustrating stereotypes.Â

But seriously, they must be rich, or at least *were* rich before they had all those kids.Â  Not only would their grocery bill be outrageous, but they built their own large home and they need furniture to accomodate 20 people – that’s 19 beds alone!Â  Oh, and I almost forgot to mention that all the children’s names start with the letter j.Â  Well, anyway, I just thought I’d write a little about the lives of this interesting family.Â  If you want more information about them or want to look at pictures of them or their cool house, they have a pretty nice [website](http://www.duggarfamily.com/index.html).Â  They also make appearances on news shows frequently and had a reality show on the Discovery Channel that followed them as they built their house.Â  I wonder if they plan on sending all 18 kids to college?Â  And if all 18 share their parents’ views of contraception, they are going to have *hundreds* of grandchildren!

### Comments

**justj**That's just another day in my oldest's in-law's family. My son-in-law is one of 17. I met a few more of them today. I may have met them before but I can't remember with so many.  
**jamiahsh**A live-in soda machine... I wonder if the parents have a key to it or I can see 18 darlings having caffeine highs... wouldn't that be lovely?  
**18 Kids - Are They Crazy? : Dtv 2009**[...] Original post by taylhis [...]

# Moving The Choo-Choo

If you’ve grown up in Chicagoland as I have, then you’ll know what I’m talking about when I describe a few staples of a typical suburban 1980’s Chicago childhood.Â  #1 – You’ve attended a taping of the Bozo show.Â  As I’ve stated before, the girl I went to the show with was put on the waiting list for tickets when she was a fetus.Â  We went to the show taping when we were 9 – that’s how long it took for her name to come up, thus illustrating how popular the experience was.Â  #2 – If you had perfect attendance in school, you won tickets toÂ a White Sox baseball game.Â  Even I, a true-blue Chicago Cubs fan, ventured over to the south side as a youth to cheer on the men in black as a reward for not missing any days in a school year.Â  Don’t tell anyone though; it’s not something I’m proud of.Â  #3 – You got your grilled cheese served to you by a miniature train at the Choo-ChooÂ restaurant in Des Plaines.

Now that it’s 2008, I doubt they give away major league baseball tickets for perfect attendance in school anymore.Â  I know for a fact that the Bozo show is no longer around,Â but I also know that the Choo-Choo restaurant is alive and well – for now anyway.Â  The Choo-Choo is a small diner that serves typical american fare – hot dogs, grilled cheese, burgers, and the like.Â  If you sit at the counter, your food is delivered by a miniature train that circles the dining room and disappears into the kitchen.Â  It seems they are thinking of movingÂ the Choo-ChooÂ to build a new police department.Â  Not putting it out of business, thank goodness, but they are considering moving it.Â  I hope this does not happen because I’m not one to favor change, and I can’t help but feel that ifÂ the restaurant isÂ moved, it will suffer loss of business which will eventually lead to its demise.Â  I don’t understand why the proposal involves moving the entire building; from what I remember it is a veryÂ small crowded space, and the magic is in the train serving your food, not in the building itself.Â  Since 1951, this little diner has been there, and many generations have enjoyed it.Â  I think it would be a shame to move it as it would loseÂ at least a little bitÂ of its nostalgia for some people if it wereÂ in a different location.Â  Leave it there in its tiny building.Â  Let people stand in lines that often run out the door in order to get aÂ counter seat where the train runs as they’ve done for decades.Â  People are more likely to return with their children and later on, their grandchildren if it’s left exactly the way they remember it.Â Â

My husband and I had very different upbringings; his was a life of “privilege”, getting every material item he could ever want, although his parents were never home.Â  Mine was the opposite, a loving family always togetherÂ although weÂ had to stretchÂ the already tight budget just to be able to afford such luxuries as an occasional happy meal from McDonalds.Â  But we are both products of Chicagoland, therefore we share the memories of the Sox tickets perfect attendance prize (not that my husband ever won any; this is no surprise if you know anything about his school years), being at the Bozo show tapings, and our visits to the Choo-Choo restaurant.Â  My kids have been to the restaurant also, and I hope it’s still there for them to visit with my grandchildren someday.

### Comments

**justj**There is a small diner in Toledo with a train delivery system. The food is your basic Hamburger, Hot Dog, Fries, but the train delivery makes it fun to go at least once.  
**derek**I don't believe in rewarding perfect attendance. Near perfect maybe, but not absolutely perfect. Kids who miss school due to illness lose out on this award and that's just not fair. There is typically no means of making up missed days as in my father's Kiwanis club. If you had to miss a night, you could attend a meeting in another town to make up for it. Kids in school have no such recourse, so I challenge the validity of perfect attendance unless they have some other mechanism in place to account for illness.  
**jamiahsh**I find it HARD to believe that your husband never had perfect attendance. I had P.A. one year out of all of them. I hated the fourth grade.

# Catching Up

A while ago, my husband suggested that I blog everything I do.Â  While that seemed a little outrageous and time consuming to me, I am going to share this email I just typed to a long lost friend from high school.Â  I got an email from her the other day out of the blue saying that she had just gotten married, so I sent her back congratulations and a brief summary about my life for the last 12 years.Â  I got a reply from her andÂ found out she’s still in school (poor thing – we’re 30!).Â  I typed back such a long response that I thought it might as well be a post on my blog as well – 2 birds with one stone, so they say…Â  Now you don’t have to hack into my email to read my personal stuff!Â  That’s a thinly veiled reference to my last post about the dueling newscasters, one who was hacking into the other’s email.Â  Here’s the email I sent to my friend – in case you’re wondering why it gets random in places, those are answers to questions she asked me.

Great to hear back from you!Â  So are you going to be a lawyer when you’re done with school?Â  Where are you guys living?Â  We are living in a little townÂ in Ohio – I think it just might be the most perfect place to live, for us anyway, we hated Illinois and city living.Â  It’s very rural out here.Â  Everyone knows each other; they’re all very friendly.Â  It’s small, not even 9,000 people, and it’s surrounded by farms.Â  But we love it; we still have Walmart, restaurants, a movie theater –Â all theÂ modern conveniences.Â  It’s so nice to send the kids to school and not worry about them like I would at schools in the Chicago area.

So you are planning to have kids then?Â  I wouldn’t say I’m ahead of you – maybe in the insanity department, it gets pretty loud and crazy around here!Â  But seriously, being pregnant is actually kinda fun, especially when you can feel the baby moving.Â  I had pretty good pregnancies; though I had gestational diabetes with 2 of them, and I had to take shots of insulin.Â  Of course that wasn’t fun, but it’s pretty easy to do things when you know it’s for the good of the baby.Â  I can’t say much about the deliveries.Â  My first one was really long, my second one was awful, my third one was very easy, and my fourth one was horrible.Â  If I have any more, I’ll probably have to have another c-section, but at least then I don’t have to go through labor.Â  It’s different for everyone.Â  I have a friend who has 5 kids and she never needed any drugs with any of her deliveries.Â  Her longest delivery was 2 hours from start to finish,Â shortest was 20 minutes.Â  Not only that, but all her kids starting sleeping through the night before they were a month old!Â  She makes me jealous!Â  But anyway, it’s all worth it in the end.Â  My last delivery was so horrible, yet I’m already back to wanting more kids…Â  if only they’d let us sleep…Â  And it’s so neat to see how different the kids’ personalities are.Â  My second oldest, Sammie, was so crazy in the womb it felt like she was kicking my organs around.Â  She is still crazy and is our most challenging kid.Â  Disney was a really easy delivery, and she’s our sweetest kid – so happy, friendly, and cuddly.

Our marriage is going great!Â  My only regret is not marrying him sooner – we had a long engagement, otherwise we would have celebrated our tenth anniversary last year or the year before!Â  He is still perfect – he helps around the house (understatement) and takes care of the kids…Â  we definitely have a 50-50 household.Â  Lots of husbands don’t do anything but work, so I consider myself very lucky.Â  He works from home, has his own business, which can be challenging because I have to keep the kids away from him while he’s working.Â  He is very good with computers and has lots of great ideas, so he supports us while my work is taking care of the kids.Â  And I’m never bored – there is always plenty to do with 4 kids to take care of.Â  I think about going back to work sometimes, but only when I get sick of watching Barney and talking to a 2-year old all day.Â  I don’t think I’d like to go out and work outside the home though, unless it was at a zoo, and the zoo is an hour away.Â  Who knows what I’ll do when all the kids grow up and go to school all day.Â  The blog I’m doing that I sent you the link to makes a little bit of money, and I’m happy doing that in my spare time when I can get it.Â  We also do lots of volunteer work in the community.Â  We hold a fewÂ board positions for various community organizations, and we do lots for the local community theater group – Chris likes to be in plays.Â  He’s a great actor and singer, and he’s also written several plays.Â  I like to do behind-the-scenes stuff; we’ve directed shows together, and I like to produce and stage manage also.Â  I’m too shy to get on stage myself, and I’m starting to realize that my feelings on that will probably never change.

So what’s your new last name, did you change it?Â  Did you go to our 10 year high school reunion?Â  I didn’t because I was pregnant with Disney – she was born 10 days after the reunion!Â  I don’t have many fond memories of high school anyway; I didn’t really know a lot of people, compared to how big our class was.Â  Aside from you, Kristen, Kelly, and Sarah, the people I hung out with most of the time went to Glenbard West.

Did you have a big wedding?Â  Where was it, in IL?Â  Where are you going to school?Â  Do you still talk to Kristen or anyone else from high school?

It’s been fun catching up with you – send me some pictures of your wedding!Â  I will send you some more pictures of my family.Â  Our last family picture was taken probably over a year ago, but we will be due for another one soon so Christopher can be in it.Â  I’ll probably want one for Christmas cards.Â  When I get one, I will send it.Â  Take care!

### Comments

# Stage Fodder

There’s a story that’s been in the news lately that I think would make an awesome play…Â  now I just have to get my husband, an accomplished playwright, to pen it…

Have you heard the one about the dueling newscasters?Â  For 4 years, Larry Mendte and Alycia Lane co-anchored the evening news together at KYW-TV, the CBS affiliate in Philadelphia.Â  Last December, Lane was fired because she allegedly got into a scuffle with an NYPD officer.Â  Somehow, details of her arrest were leaked to a Philadelphia Daily News reporter, along with other details of her personal life which has included 2 divorces.Â  She complained to the tv station that someone was reading her emails, but they treated her as if she was paranoid.

It turns out that her co-anchor, Mr. Mendte, had bought a keystroke-logging device to get her passwords in August 2006 andÂ was intercepting e-mails from Lane’s two personalÂ accountsÂ and one work account.Â  He was fired also – a shame because the duo was making gains on their competitor, longtime leader news leader WPVI-TV, the ABC affiliate in the area.Â  Mendte is now facing criminal charges and has pleaded guilty to one count of illegally accessing a computer.Â  His motivation?Â  Jealousy over his co-anchor’s $780,000 yearly salary because his was only a measly $700,000.Â  I had no idea news anchors make that much!Â  But anyway, there’s an extra little tidbit to this story that wouldn’t even need to be embelished when writing it into a play: Mendte’s wife Dawn StenslandÂ is also a newsÂ anchor; she works at the Fox affiliate in Philadelphia.Â  Coming to a stage near you!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Great diva potential...

# Miss Kasandra Scarlet Did It In The Spa With The Dumbell

The classic board game Clue is getting a makeover.Â  Sure, there’s been lots of variations of it over the years; among them Simpsons Clue, Disney’s Haunted Mansion Clue, Dvd Clue, and Clue Jr.Â  But now they are giving the game a more modern look byÂ changing characters, weapons, and rooms.Â  Here are some of the changes:

Â – Colonel Mustard is now Jack Mustard, a former football player  
Â – Professor Plum is now Victor Plum, a billionaire video game designer  
Â – Mr. Green is now Jacob Green, an African-American  
Â – New Rooms: theater, spa and guest house  
Â – Weapons: Hasbro replaced the lead pipe, revolver and wrenchÂ with a dumbbell, trophy andÂ poison  
Â – Each of the characters has a special sleuthing power

Hmm, I’m not so sure about this.Â  I tend to like things the way they are.Â  I’ve played both versions of a few board games that have been modernized, like Pay Day andÂ Life, and I strongly prefer the original versions.Â  I guess we’ll have to see, although it will probably be a long time before I try the new Clue because I buy my games at the thrift store.Â  The only way the new Clue will get to the thrift store super quick is if it really stinks!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Of course, we have the updated Monopoly with increased property prices (still as dull as the original versions). I often wondered when Clue was going to get a makeover.

# Wanna Feel Old?

Of course you do, who doesn’t?Â  Besides,Â it’s Friday night, and you’re at home reading my blog!Â  ðŸ˜‰Â  I guess you could be reading this at a later time…Â  But anyway, if you’re around my age or older, then you remember [Molly Ringwald](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000208/), a popular actress in the 1980’s from many teen-themed movies such as [Pretty in Pink](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0091790/), [Sixteen Candles](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0088128/), and the iconic [The Breakfast Club](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0088847/).Â  If you were a fan of these movies as a teen or young adult yourself, you will probably feel old when I tell you that Molly Ringwald is playing a *grandmother* in her next role.Â  That’s right – grandma.Â  A woman whose kid has a kid.Â  Sigh.Â  While we’re on the subject of feeling old, I read an article the other day that had some interesting facts about the lives of students entering college this fall.Â  Each August for the past 11 years, Beloit College in Beloit, Wis., has released the Beloit College Mindset List.Â  It provides a look at the cultural touchstones that shape the lives of students entering college.Â  For these students, Sammy Davis Jr., Jim Henson, Ryan White, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Freddy Krueger have always been dead.Â  Here is some food for thought with the rest of the list:

1. Harry Potter could be a classmate, playing on their Quidditch team.
2. Since they were in diapers, karaoke machines have been annoying people at parties.
3. They have always been looking for Carmen Sandiego.
4. GPS satellite navigation systems have always been available.
5. Coke and Pepsi have always used recycled plastic bottles.
6. Shampoo and conditioner have always been available in the same bottle.
7. Gas stations have never fixed flats, but most serve cappuccino.
8. Their parents may have dropped them in shock when they heard George Bush announce â€œtax revenue increases.â€
9. Electronic filing of tax returns has always been an option.
10. Girls in head scarves have always been part of the school fashion scene.
11. All have had a relative–or known about a friend’s relative–who died comfortably at home with Hospice.
12. As a precursor to â€œwhatever,â€ they have recognized that some people â€œjust donâ€™t get it.â€
13. Universal Studios has always offered an alternative to Mickey in Orlando.
14. Grandma has always had wheels on her walker.
15. *Martha Stewart Living* has always been setting the style.
16. Haagen-Dazs ice cream has always come in quarts.
17. Club Med resorts have always been places to take the whole family.
18. WWW has never stood for World Wide Wrestling.
19. Films have never been X rated, only NC-17.
20. The Warsaw Pact is as hazy for them as the League of Nations was for their parents.
21. Students have always been “Rocking the Vote.â€
22. Clarence Thomas has always sat on the Supreme Court.
23. Schools have always been concerned about multiculturalism.
24. We have always known that â€œ*All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*.â€
25. There have always been gay rabbis.
26. Wayne Newton has never had a mustache.
27. College grads have always been able to Teach for America.
28. IBM has never made typewriters.
29. Roseanne Barr has never been invited to sing the National Anthem again.
30. McDonaldâ€™s and Burger King have always used vegetable oil for cooking french fries.
31. They have never been able to color a tree using a raw umber Crayola.
32. There has always been Pearl Jam.
33. The Tonight Show has always been hosted by Jay Leno and started at 11:35 EST.
34. Pee-Wee has never been in his playhouse during the day.
35. They never tasted Benefit Cereal with psyllium.
36. They may have been given a Nintendo Game Boy to play with in the crib.
37. Authorities have always been building a wall across the Mexican border.
38. Leninâ€™s name has never been on a major city in Russia.
39. Employers have always been able to do credit checks on employees.
40. Balsamic vinegar has always been available in the U.S.
41. Macaulay Culkin has always been *Home Alone.*
42. Their parents may have watched *The American Gladiators* on TV the day they were born.
43. Personal privacy has always been threatened.
44. Caller ID has always been available on phones.
45. Living wills have always been asked for at hospital check-ins.
46. The Green Bay Packers (almost) always had the same starting quarterback.
47. They never heard an attendant ask â€œWant me to check under the hood?â€
48. Iced tea has always come in cans and bottles.
49. Soft drink refills have always been free.
50. They have never known life without Seinfeld references from a show about â€œnothing.â€
51. Windows 3.0 operating system made IBM PCs user-friendly the year they were born.
52. Muscovites have always been able to buy Big Macs.
53. The Royal New Zealand Navy has never been permitted a daily ration of rum.
54. The Hubble Space Telescope has always been eavesdropping on the heavens.
55. 98.6 F or otherwise has always been confirmed in the ear.
56. Michael Milken has always been a philanthropist promoting prostate cancer research.
57. Off-shore oil drilling in the United States has always been prohibited.
58. Radio stations have never been required to present both sides of public issues.
59. There have always been charter schools.
60. Students always had *Goosebumps.*

I hope I didn’t depress you, but remember, it’s not my list, so blame Beloit College and Molly Ringwald if you feel like an old geezer.Â  Why don’t we just forget about the list and toast our recycled bottles of Coke to life experience.

### Comments

# Poor "Little" Colin

When I saw the news story the other day about an orphaned baby humpback whale, I was tempted to put it in my blog, but I didn’t because I had a feeling it wouldn’t end well.Â  I’m sorry to say that I was right, and I’m only writing about it now because the saga is over.

There was a baby humpback whale off the coast of Australia who was trying to suckle from yachts; they estimated him to be about 1 or 2 months old.Â  For some reason, he had been abandoned by his mother, even though he was obviously still nursing.Â  They tried to help him; they tried leading him out to sea, integrating him into another pod of whales, and they speculated about what to feed him.Â  But because he was still nursing, they didn’t know how to take care of a 12 foot orphaned whale.Â  Throughout his plight, Australians following the story grew attached to the “little” guy, and they affectionately named him Colin.Â  They watched as Colin grew weak with hunger as the days went by until sadly, the decision was made to euthanize him.Â  Suddenly, he was no where to be found….Â  but I guess it was just the darkness cloaking him because they did find him the next day, and they pulled him ashore and administered a lethal injection.

As an animal lover, this story was very sad for me to read, but mostly, I just don’t get it.Â  Why did humans have to take it upon themselves to euthanize the whale?Â  Why couldn’t they have at least *tried* to feed him?Â  It’s not that I think any animal should suffer, but this was nature…Â  it wasn’t humans who injured the baby whale, so why not let nature continue taking its course and just leave him alone?Â  Who knows, maybe he would have found a pod of whales to nurse him back to health before it was too late.Â  But no, the humans just had to intervene – they had to drag a baby whale out of the water,Â his natural habitat, and kill him.Â  They didn’t wantÂ him to suffer starving to death in the ocean, but what about the terrorÂ he felt whenÂ he was captured and dragged out of the water?Â  And let’s not even talk about how much all this costs.Â  Seems like they could have fed a few starving people, put a roof over someone’s head for a few nights, or provided medical care to the sick if they had extra moneyÂ laying around to execute a whale.Â  After all, every little bit helps, right?Â  But what’s done is done; the saga of Colin the whale is over.Â Â MaybeÂ humans will eventually realize that their constant meddlingÂ with natureÂ sometimes brings more harm than good.Â

### Comments

**Poor â€œLittleâ€ Colin**[...] Original post by taylhis [...]

# Thank Goodness She's Off The Streets

I was sick of reading the horrible news stories on CNN, so I went to thesmokinggun.com in search of some comedic relief.Â  The following story is more amazing than funny – it’s amazing that they put this poor girl through this, and it’s amazing that they wasted tax payers’ dollars in doing so.

From thesmokinggun.com:

AUGUST 21–The next time you forget to return a couple of library books (and ignore those annoying letters about the overdue status of said volumes), think of Heidi Dalibor. The Wisconsin woman, 20, was arrested earlier this month in connection with a pair of books overdue for several months. Dalibor, who made the mistake of ignoring a court citation issued after she failed to respond to letters and phone calls from the Grafton library, was busted August 6 for failing to return copies of Janet Fitch’s best-seller “White Oleander” (a 1999 Oprah Book Club selection) and “Angels & Demons,” author Dan Brown’s precursor to “The Da Vinci Code.” According to a police report, Dalibor was apprehended at her family’s home, cuffed and stuffed in a cruiser, and booked for violating the “overdue library materials” ordinance.Â  Dalibor subsequently settled with the library by paying her overdue fines and reimbursing it for the cost of the two novels, which totaled around $180. Dalibor’s mother PattyÂ said that her daughter was “a good kid” who works two jobs. She is also now the owner of the Fitch and Brown books, which Dalibor got to keep as a result of paying off her library levies.

### Comments

**Dan Brown | Thank Goodness She’s Off The Streets**[...] (a 1999 Oprah Book Club selection) and â€œAngels & Demons,â€ author Dan Brownâ€™s precursor to â€œThe Da Vinci Code…. Source: Thank Goodness She’s Off The Streets [...]  
**Dan Brown | Thank Goodness Sheâ€™s Off The Streets**[...] … from the Grafton library, was busted August 6 for failing to return copies of Janet Fitchâ€™s best-seller â€œWhite Oleanderâ€ (a 1999 Oprah Book Club selection) and â€œAngels & Demons,â€ author Dan Brownâ€™s precursor to â€œThe Da Vinci Code. … Source: Thank Goodness Sheâ€™s Off The Streets [...]  
**jamiahsh**Wonder why she was "the example." That is awful and I hope she enjoyed the books.

# Spookybook Treats

Halloween is right around the corner…Â  ok it’s 2 months away!Â  But Halloween stuff is out all over the stores already, and while we’re planning our Haunted Tour for our community theater group, our other friends in the theater are getting ready to stage an hilarious (TANGENT ALERT: I HATE using the word “an” before words that start with h, but I guess that’s proper English, so…)Â production of the play called Kitchen Witches!Â  Someone had a great idea to sell a Halloween cookbook as a fundraiser for the theater.Â  Being a stay-at-home-mom of 4, I haveÂ a fewÂ holiday-themed recipes in my vault that are fun for the kids *and* adults (to eat), soÂ I’m goingÂ to contribute my favorite Halloween recipes.Â  Since I have to type them up to submit to the cookbook anyway, I thought I’d put them on my blog, along with a recipe for one of my favorite desserts: peanut butter bars – YUM!

**Toasted Pumpkin Seeds**large pumpkins  
salt  
seasonings (your choice)  
butter

Extract seeds from pumpkin, separate from pulp, and discard pulp.Â  Put the seeds in a colander and run water over them to getÂ rid of all the pulp.Â  Drain on paper towels.Â  Melt 1 Tablespoon of butter and toss pumpkin seeds in a bowl with the butter and salt and / or seasonings.Â  Spread seeds out onto a cookie sheet.Â  Toast seeds in an oven preheated to 350Â° for about 30 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes and adding salt occasionally.Â  Check the seeds to see if they’re done by taking a sample out, letting it cool, and tasting it.Â  If the insides are dry, they’re done.Â  Be careful not to burn – you want a nice golden brown color.  
NOTES:Â  I use a clean, thin dishcloth instead of paper towels since I’ve had problems in the past with the seeds sticking to the paper towels.Â  Be creative with the seasonings; you can use popcorn seasoning, taco seasoning, garlic salt, onion powder, cayenne pepper, cajun seasoning, etc.Â  Pumpkin seeds are high in iron, vitamin A, and zinc; if you want to make them even healthier use olive oil instead of butter.

**Rice Krispies Treats Spiders***YIELD: 3-5 spiders*3 Tablespoons margerine or butter  
1 package (10 oz. or about 40) marshmallows or 4 cups mini marshmallows  
6 cups rice krispies cereal  
food coloring  
prepared frosting  
candy corn  
string licorice  
shredded coconut

In a large microwave-safe bowl, melt margerine and marshmallows on high for 2 minutes, stirring after 1 minute.Â  Add a few drops of food coloring andÂ stir mixtureÂ until smooth.Â  Add rice krispies cereal, stirring until well coated.Â  Let cereal mixture slightly cool until it is safe to touch.Â  With buttered hands, shape cerealÂ mixture into spider shape and place on wax paper.Â  Let cool.Â  Attach decorations to theÂ spider with frosting using candy corn for eyes, licorice for the web, and coconut for the hair.Â  You can color the coconut by soaking in warm water with a few drops of foodÂ coloring for about 30 minutes.Â  Dry coconut on a paper towel before using.

**Peanut Butter Bars**1 lb. powdered sugar  
2 cups graham cracker crumbs  
2 sticks melted butter  
12 oz. peanut butter

Mix all ingredients together in a 9×13 non-greased pan.Â  Melt large bag of chocolate chips and spread on top.Â  Cut into squares in pan and refrigerate until cold.

### Comments

**taylhis**I dunno... but I'm pretty sure it's correct to say, "an hilarious" - and I hate that!  
**jamiahsh**what a dis about "an" preceding "h" words. It is not correct to say "a haunted house"?  
**jamiahsh**MMMMM.... sounds frightfully delicious... I have an awesome pumpkin cookie recipe that I need to find... autumn tradition

# Now I REALLY Hate Walmart

And my husband is on the bandwagon too.Â  My husband is a clearance maniac – he loves finding good deals on stuff that’s been marked down from its original price.Â  He found he especially loved the clearance deals at the Defiance Ohio Walmart, which is not too far from us.Â  But yesterday, that changed…

It turns out that the Defiance Walmart, which is only a few months old, by the way, changed their clearance prices overnight!Â  They used to have some really good discounts, and it was fun to go there and try to find them.Â  But now, theyÂ haven’t just changed the way they mark stuff down; they’ve taken actual clearance items that were already marked down and marked them back up!  
Case in point:Â  My husband hadÂ a Plantronics Headset that he bought last week for $5.Â  It broke, so he was going to return it, but he forgot it at home.Â  No problem, he thought, I’ll just buy a new one for $5 and return the old one another time.Â  WRONG – unless he wanted to spend $21 on the new one!Â  That’s right, they took a $5 clearance item and marked it up to $21 – more than ***quadruple*** the price!!!Â  So he asked the lady in electronics if they raised their clearance prices, and she said, “I’m not going to lie to you.Â  We did raise the prices.Â  They took away our clearance budget.”Â  Whatever that means.Â  Not something I, the consumer, should be concerned with…Â  except that they took all the fun out of clearance shopping at Walmart!Â  And of course the people at customer service couldn’t help us return our headset since we didn’t have the broken one with us…Â  their suggestion?Â  Buy a new one for $21, then return the brokenÂ one later for $5Â – thanks but no thanks!Â  Here are some other examples of clearance items that they re-inflated: ATI Video Card from $50 to $115, Panasonic Cordless Phone from $30 to $69, and a US Robotics SkypePhone from $5 to $16.Â  Each of these items had at least a 100% increase in price.Â  I understand that the economy sucks and inflation and blah, blah, but I think Walmart should have kept these items on the clearance where they had them; then started their new clearance policy with new clearance items.Â  I mean, come on, is Walmart really that worried about going broke?

The bottom line is, Walmart keeps finding ways to take away whatever fun is left in shopping.Â  First it was by playing their little pricing games that get us to spend more and close down their competition, and now they’ve taken away their good clearance deals.Â  Well, maybe their policies will bite them in the you-know-what come Christimas time when they don’t have any room on their shelves for the new Christmas products because no one wants to touch their crappy clearance items at their not-so-clearance prices!

### Comments

**Nolen**Former and current employees at one Pennsylvania Walmart have filed a lawsuit against the company after they discovered a secret surveillance camera in the bathroom. http://abcnews.go.com/Business/walmart-sued-secret-bathroom-surveillance/story?id=9418710  
**derek**Strange. Guess that means more online shopping instead...  
**jamiahsh**I don't understand at all. To me, something that goes on clearance is something that is either discontinued (no longer able to carry and getting rid of the remainder) or just not a good seller. I dunno when they would have time to mark clearance items overnight when the bulk of their stocking is done then (unless that has changed in the past 10 months).

# MiRRors

Hmm, I couldn’t figure out how to make one of the R’s in [Mirrors](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0790686/) backward like they do for the movie title, but anyway, we saw the movie Mirrors with [Keifer Sutherland](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000662/) yesterday.Â  It was between Mirrors, [Tropic Thunder](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0942385/), and [The Rocker](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1031969/).Â  We eliminated The Rocker from the selection because it didn’t look or sound very good, and the only reason we were interested in seeing it is because it stars [Rainn Wilson](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0933988/), none other than the hilarious character Dwight Shrute on our favorite show, The Office.Â  We ended up going with Mirrors over Tropic Thunder because we were at the nice theater, and we figured a horror movie would give us more bang for our buck so to speak – take advantage of the larger screen and the nicer sound.

Mirrors is kind of lengthy for a horror film; it runs about 2 hours.Â  It didn’t drag for me at all, well, maybe a little, but only because baby Christopher decided to poopie during the movie and he needed his diaper changed.Â  So I was like, when is this going to be over so I can change him because I don’t want to miss the movie.Â  It was a cool premise: Keifer Sutherland plays an NYPD cop who accidently shot and killed another cop, so he still has some psychological bruises and can no longer be a cop.Â  He gets a job as a security guard at an abandonedÂ department store that hadÂ had a fire and burned – right up myÂ alley; I really like abandonedÂ buildings, defunct amusement parks, etc.Â  The department store was cool looking, and throughout the movie, there were lots of shots of the outside as well as the inside.Â  I kept wondering if it was an actual building they used for filming or rather a specially built facade…Â  But anyway, the department store is haunted and the haunting ghoul uses mirrors to do its haunting and murdering.Â  There is actually more to the plot, but I don’t want to risk spilling any spoilers because it was a decent horror movie and worth seeing.Â  We were alone in the theater, and when my husband left to go to the bathroom, I was pretty creeped out, so I’d say it was spookily successful.Â  Before we saw the movie, I had read that the director, [Alexandre Aja](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0014960/),Â is one of a group of directors a horror movie magazine called, “The Splat Pack” for their affinity for blood and gore.Â  The movie was not without blood and gore, but it was not over-used; something that gets on my nerves with many modern horror films – see #’s 1,2, and 5 on [my movie stinker list](http://taylhis.tangents.org/2008/08/14/the-fun-park/) –Â (The Devil’s Rejects, Doomsday, and The Fun Park) – all terrible moviesÂ showcasing the over-usage of gore.

If you like horror movies, Mirrors is worth a try.Â  We liked it and were entertained, despite it having a few obvious plot holes…Â  but then again, what horror movie doesn’t have plot holes?

### Comments

**Recent Faves Tagged With "mirrors" : MyNetFaves**[...] public links >> mirrors MiRRors First saved by munishgandhi | 2 days ago Letâ€™s Put (the) Mirrors Away Forever.. First saved [...]  
**Two Words One Phobia (Basically) | Morat's Blog**[...] I have dubbed Asleep) look into Mirrors.Â  Although we were both interested in seeing the movie, taylhis did provide enough of a recommendation to make us want to see it even [...]

# A 9 Foot WHAT?!?

A 9 foot ***tapeworm***.Â  Eww and ouch – enough said!  
Here’s the story:

A man who contends he got a 9-foot tapeworm after eating undercooked fish is suing a Chicago restaurant.

In a lawsuit filed Monday, Anthony Franz says he ordered salmon salad for lunch from Shaw’s Crab House in 2006 and fell violently ill. He later passed the giant parasite, which a pathologist determined came from undercooked fish, such as salmon.

Franz’s lawsuit seeks $100,000 from Shaw’s and its parent company, Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises.

Franz claims the restaurant’s staff was negligent in serving him improperly cooked fish.

But Carrol Symank, vice president of food safety for Lettuce Entertain You, says the tapeworm didn’t come from Shaw’s Crab House.

### Comments

**derek**Oh good- just as I was given a Lettuce Entertain You $25 gift certificate! :o Well, Shaw's Crab House is only one of several restaurants I could use it at fortunately.  
**taylhis**Funny you should ask, that's what the commenters on the story were talking about... but it turns out that he had eaten there in 2006, which would give it time to grow, I guess...  
**justj**9 foot tapeworm?!! Just how fast do they grow?  
**jamiahsh**Catch name: Lettuce Entertain You. Sondheim fan no doubt

# Sleepwalkers

With the exception of [Thinner](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0117894/), I’ve liked most of the [Stephen King](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000175/) movies I’ve seen.Â  My favorite is [Storm of the Century](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0135659/), a Prime-Time Emmy Award winningÂ made-for-tv mini-series that aired in 1999.Â  Every winter when a big blizzard is predicted in our corner of Ohio, we plan on being snowed in watching ourÂ Storm of the Century dvd.Â  It never happens though; I think it has to do with trying to watch a 240 minute movie that’s not for kids when we have 4 of them.Â  But anyway, if we ever get time to watch Storm of the Century in the near future, I’ll definitely blog more about it – it’s awesome!

One of Stephen King’s lesser known films, [Sleepwalkers](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0105428/),Â is a movie I saw as a teenager.Â  I liked it back then, so when I happened to see the dvd on the library’s shelf the other day, that’s what I quickly picked up since I was in a hurry.Â  My husband and I watched it the other night, and we both had the same opinion.Â  AÂ fun little horror film, nothing great but still entertaining.Â  It is Stephen King-creepy, as only he can do, andÂ much ofÂ the movie’s creepinessÂ has to do with the mother-son relationship; I won’t go into detail except to say that it’s extremely disturbing.Â  [Brian Krause](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0470182/) and [Alice Krige](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000481/)Â play the mother and son monsters who need to feed on a human virgin in order to survive.Â  They morph into strange cat-like creatures, which is even more strange because cats are drawn to their house, yet deadly to the monsters at the same time.Â  The special effects are extremely cheesy by today’s standards and even laughable, but sometimes I’m a sucker for that kind of thing and really enjoy bad special effectsÂ – my favorite example of this is [Jaws 3-D](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0085750/).

While we’re on the subject of Stephen King, as I mentioned, I like most of his movies that I’ve seen.Â  I tried to read the book *Carrie* a really long time ago, but I found it hard to follow, either because I was a teen or because of the religious ramblings inserted throughout the book which were done in such a way that it’s hard to follow because it’s depicting Carrie’s mother’s craziness.Â  But anyway, Stephen King is very talented, of course.Â  He has a gift of making movies extremely creepy without stooping as low as many of today’s horror movies do with the constant blood and gore.

An interesting eventÂ took place in his life that almost reads like one of his novels, well, actually it does since he wrote about it.Â  On June 19, 1999, his life was changed forever when he was hit by a car while walking down a Maine road.Â  There are two creepy coincidences about this incident.Â  First, earlier that year, King had finished most of *From a Buick 8*, a novel in which a character dies after getting struck by a car.Â  Second, the driver of the car, Bryan Smith, who was only 43, was found dead in his trailer just over a year later of an accidental overdose.Â  He was found dead on Stephen King’s birthday, September 21.Â  The accident was inspiration for the *Dark Tower* series of books, and King is in talks with Lost co-creator J.J. Abrams to do an adaption of the series.Â  Since I’m a fan of Lost *and* Stephen King, that might be something I’ll have to check out.Â  Until then, I’ll probably be planning another snowy viewing of Storm of the Century this winter that won’t come to fruition.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**AHHHH.... Alice Krige, the Borg Queen from Star Trek: First Contact. I've always wanted to read King's novels. I like the movies Carrie, Cujo, Firestarter, Christine, and of course, the Shining. Redrum, Redrum

# Back To School And Redirection

Today is the first day back to school (already?!?), and it’s really quiet around here.Â  I guess my oldest two are my loudest two, and we have reduced the traffic in the house by 50% since half the kids are now at school during the day.Â  Thank goodness for school; I’m enjoying myself already.Â  So far, I’ve gotten two loads of laundry done – folded, put away and everything, and I have somehow also found the time today to put away most of the clutter that’s been haunting our diningÂ room table for the last week and a half.Â  IÂ even got to work on my e-book a little bit, and it’s not even 1 o’clock!Â  And, the kids at school are learning stuff, getting exercise, and socailizing with their friends; they’re not vegged out in front of the tv or outside fightingÂ in the wading pool.Â  Everyone wins!

While the oldest 2 kids are in school,Â I also haveÂ time to focus on my toddler, Disney,Â while her baby brother is napping.Â Â Today, I got to sit on the floor and play puzzles with her; something we haven’t done together in months, almost a yearÂ because of my pregnancy and c-section.Â  And she was downÂ for her nap by 12:30, which not only means some quality time together for me and baby Christopher, but also that my toddlerÂ should be toÂ bed at a decent hour tonight.Â  Win-win!Â  While I was on the floor playing with my daughter, I was getting up to tend to the laundry and whatnot.Â  My daughter was following me around the house, and this is where my day becomes challenging – trying to keep our clingy almost 2-year-old out of my husband’s home office so he can work.Â  The homeÂ office isn’tÂ  a roomÂ where he could close the door andÂ utilize the out-of-sight-out-of-mind tactic.Â  The office is on the landing on our second floor, so if my toddler begins to head up the stairs or even *looks* up the stairs, she sees her best friend, Daddy, and it’s over.Â  She tantrums until he holds her, and he can’t get any work done.Â  Today she got upstairs and in the clutches of Daddy, so when I chased her down, of course she was upset.Â  But I used one of my favorite child-rearing techniques: redirection.Â  I taught her how to clean the toothpaste off the kids’ bathroom counter, which she happily did.Â  We went downstairs for a popsicle, puzzles, and Barney, and all was forgotten.Â  Wow.Â  I had totally forgotten about the magic of the redirection technique because the last 2-year-old I had in the house was our “spirited” child, Samantha.Â  Sammie was **never** re-directable.Â  She has always been so strong-willed that it’s literally impossible to re-direct the kid, let alone being able to trick her into helping around the house.Â  To this day, she will fight for her cause, whatever it may be,Â until she gets what she wants or she passes out.Â  And now that she’s older (she’s 4), the crying doesn’t last as long, but she will remember what it is she wanted and bring it up throughout the day (or week or month) until she gets it.Â  So I am actually *enjoying* Disney’s terrible twos a little bit – it’s so refreshing to have a kid who listens.Â  I know, she’s not yet 2 and things could get worse – so much worse.Â  But I’ve been there, done that, and after what Sammie put us through, no wonder Disney seems like a breeze.Â Â And even if she does get completely crazy,Â soonÂ she’ll be old enough to go toÂ school, and we’ll start the terrible twos all over again with Christopher.Â  After 3 tantruming girls in their terrible twos, I’m curious to see what a boy will be like.Â  Probably no big deal, at least compared to Sammie 

### Comments

**User links about "redirection" on iLinkShare**[...] 24 days ago5 votesDRAC console redirection over a SSH tunnel>> saved by doct 26 days ago5 votesBack To School And Redirection>> saved by Phillychesse 29 days ago4 votesTLD Turned Into At loose ends Down to bedrock URL [...]  
**Recent Links Tagged With "redirection" - JabberTags**[...] public links >> redirection Back To School And Redirection Saved by eternalsailorbunny on Mon 23-3-2009 Comment on 9 backreferences, 1 Perl script, and 301 [...]  
**justj**After seeing Sammie not getting her sister's attention last Saturday morning, I guess re-direction still doesn't work well...  
**jamiahsh**EVERYONE WINS, eh? :)  
**derek**My local district doesn't start until September 2. Apparently the parents liked it so much last year when it was delayed due to school construction-work that they decided to do it again this year. 'Course this means the kids won't get out until mid-June again...

# Terrorizing Tangents

After the drive-through animal safari (see [my previous post](http://taylhis.tangents.org/2008/08/17/saturday-slober/)).Â  We wereÂ **SO** ready for dinner, but instead, we headed to [Ghostly Manor](http://www.ghostlymanor.com/) in Sandusky, Ohio, hoping to beat the Saturday night crowds.Â  It’s weird because it’s a haunted house that’s open year-round, and it’s in the middle of a roller skating rink / arcade.Â  You pay your admission, and then you wait in line for your doom (insert evil laugh here).Â  Someone raps at the door to signal your turn in the haunted house, and let’s be honest – it’s ***so*** much better than we could ever do at the haunted house (or haunted tour, as we are calling it)Â that is plannedÂ for October’s weekendsÂ in Williams County Ohio.Â  But, we haveÂ a teeny-weenyÂ budget, so how can we possibly compare?Â  Also, we cannot have narrow corridors (nor the “birth canal hallway”; something they had that I was not thrilled with, but would be a very scary tool if we could work with it.Â  But I wouldn’t want to really try because it totally seemed like a lawsuit waiting to happen…), so that makes it a different type of haunted house to begin with.Â  But anyway…Â  they say it’s the 4th scariest in the nation and I believe them.Â  Although I have to admit to being curious about the top 3 haunted houses on that list…Â  what is so scary?Â  Let me know which haunted houses are rated the scariest; as soon as you find out.Â  I do know that while traipsing through Ghostly Manor, I grabbed my husband’s shirt (he was in front of me), and I didn’t let go…Â  I let him lead me through the birth canal, past the skeletons and falling maggots, and I actually *pushed* him (hard!)Â past the vibrating floor boards (another something we can’t do because of low budget).Â  He ventured through the lairÂ several times after that without me, and I don’t know what his experience in the Ghostly Manor was like without my pushing, shoving, and screaming, but he *said* it was better with me along…

Either way, it was a really fun day, and we came home with lots of ideas for our haunted tour.Â Â Ours will be touring in October, so check it out on October 10-11, 17-18, 24-25, and 31-Nov. 1 in Bryan Ohio.Â  See ya then!!!!!

### Comments

**derek**I'm not one for haunted houses, but I hope your group takes in some decent money from this venture.

# Saturday Slobber

Well, school starts on Tuesday, so for one last summery hurrah, we ventured over to the coastal cities inÂ OhioÂ on Lake Erie for some fun.Â  First stop was the African Safari Park in Port Clinton, which is really more of a drive-thru zoo than anything having to do with Africa.Â  They do have zebras, giraffes, and camels, but most of their animals hail from North America.Â  It’s always an extremely fun experience, and we try to go every year.Â  Since this summer wasÂ very busy with the new baby and all, it didn’t occur to me that we hadn’t gone yet until I struck up a conversation with a really nice elderly couple at a restaurant the other day.Â  When I asked where they were from, they replied, “west of Cleveland”, so that got me thinking about the Safari Park in Port Clinton.Â  On the way home from the restaurant that night, I said to my husband, you know, we haven’t been to the safari park this year…Â  An idea was hatched, and there we were on Saturday with 6 of our closest friends.

Saturday morning was almost like a one-act play with all of us standing there on our front porch, trying to figure out who was going to ride with whom; we were trying to find the best way to do things to be as economically (and environmentally) friendly as possible…Â  We ended up taking just 2 cars for the 12 of us, and then once we got to Port Clinton, it was like musical chairs (cars) once again while we tried to figure out how to position everyone to get the most bang for our buck, so to speak, since the safari place charges by carload *and* by individual…

So anyway, after a stop at Cheese Haven In Port ClintonÂ – and now I have to go off on yet another tangent because Cheese Haven is SOOO good and totally worth a stop if you’re in the area.Â  And what I mean by “in the area” is anywhere up to 100 or even 1000Â miles, depending on how much you like cheese.Â  They have so many varieties, along with fresh jerkies and beef sticks and other yummy treats.Â  We stopped there to get our lunch of corned beef sandwiches – and they have the **best** corned beef sandwiches, yum.Â  Unfortunatlely, I was not wlling to take 4 kids into the cheese store to run around, so I was stuck in the car with the kids, but my oh-so-thoughtful hubby talked the worker into making me a sample bag (which they’re not supposed to do, you only get the free samples if you go into the store,Â but hey, I was stuck in the car), AND he made my sandwich for me – how sweet 

Ok, tangent aside…Â  now we’ve arrived at the Safari Park, and it is SO crowded…Â  Makes me think twice about going there again next summer unless it’s near their last weekend of operation like it was when we went last year…Â  I mean, I just can’t stand waiting in line to go to the bathroom, of all things…Â  Waiting in line is not much fun at all, but when you’re waiting in line to do something as necessary and as unrewarding as going to the bathroom, it’s really annoying.Â  So, because it was so crowded,Â it took us forever to get through the drive-through zoo part; although not as long as it took the other vehicle in our caravan because they were stuck behind an obscenely slow white van the whole time…Â  So while we got out of the drive-through section, they had barely just begun…Â  ButÂ the whole park isÂ a really cool place; even more so if you don’t care about the vanity nor cleanliness of your car since there are some rather huge creatures (including deer, elk, elands, buffalo, zebras, giraffe and longhorns)Â who drool, head-butt, lick, slobber, and basically invade your car as your drive through *their* habitat.Â  I think you must truly be an animal lover to appreciate the place since you come out filthy…Â  This was the first time we had been there in our new car, but I’m happy to report no major damage, that I know about, at least; but what’s this about driving our car through a pond, jamiahsh?!?

We’ll get to the bottom of that later…Â  when you come out of the drive-through part, it’s time for the walk-through zoo section, and there they have monkeys, macaws (military, not green-winged as the sign said), ocelots, warthogs, alpacas, and tortoises; not to mention rides for the kiddees: ponies and camels.Â  I noticed that they had 2 camels for riding; one was resting while the other gave the rides.Â  But interestingly, one was a Dromedary andÂ the other aÂ Bactrian camel, the difference between the two species being mainly in how many humps they had…Â  My daughters rode the Dromedary (1 hump), and they really seemed to enjoy themselves – I wonder if riding the Bactrian (2 humps)Â would have been any different?Â  I was envious because I’m no where near the 125 lb. weight limit, so I’ll probably never get to ride a camel…Â  After that, we got to check out an animal show, ironically titled “Laugh With the Animals”.Â  It was ironic because our host for the show was so dry – she had the audience doing everything *but* laughing…Â  It was a fun show, though, and something that we hadn’t yet done at the park in our previous visits.Â  Overall, an interesting day…Â  as it is anytime you have 12 people on an outing together!

If you liked reading my synopsis of the day, check out my fellow tangents.org blogger and getÂ [Jamiahsh’s take](http://jamiahsh.tangents.org/2008/08/17/wild-kingdom/) on the whole thing.Â  I’m going to take a lesson from him and blog this in 2 installments…Â  got to leave the readers craving more, so they say!Â  Check out my next post for a full summary of our visit toÂ a year-round haunted house – Ghostly Manor in Sandusky, Ohio!Â  Until then…

### Comments

**derek**A trackback from your own blog? 8O Perhaps that Cheese Haven will be "in the area" next time I visit then (whenever that will be)... :D  
**I have to clean my truck too. | Random Thoughts**[...] Yep, I was also at the wild animal park with a couple of other bloggers on Tangent’s. Check out their stories here and here. [...]  
**| My Food Chain Gang**[...] My Food Chain Gang MY LIFE AS A WIFE & MOM: Parents, Kids, and Pets… Oh My! « Saturday Slobber [...]  
**taylhis**From my point of view: I go into such detail about things, that if I didn't divide the day up into multiple posts, my post about Saturday would be miles long!!!  
**jamiahsh**Yes, dividing posts increases the number and keeps your readers wanting more. As I said, I was NOT the person driving. HEHE

# A Can Of Formula And A Pack Of Marlboros, Please

Yesterday we made a trip to our second-closest Walmart, and that location keeps their baby formula behind the counter, with the cigarettes.Â  I guess formula theft is rampant, at least at that Walmart location.Â  The cashier said something about it being used to make drugs, but I don’t know if that’s just her own hypothesis or if it’s true, but it doesn’t really make sense to me.Â  Whatever the reason, it’s so much more inconvenient for us regular shoppers.Â  Not only do I have to remember to get the formula on the way out, but we have to stand in a special line since only the one checkout lane has the formula.Â  Then you have to be clear on which kind you want, and you have to make sure the cashier knows what you’re talking about because there are at least 10 varieties.Â  It would stink to come home and find that you were given the wrong kind or had forgotten the formula altogether, which did happen to me last time I shopped at that Walmart location.Â  Anyone who has or has had little kids can understand how crazy kids can get in the checkout line.Â  Not only is it boring (especially at Walmart, where it often takes forever and a day also), but they’re nice enough to stock both sides ofÂ the aisle with plenty of tempting goodies for kids, conveniently all at eye level.Â  So the kids often are going crazy in the checkout line, and now the weary parent is expected to remember they still need their formula (and probably cigarettes, the way the shopping trip is going!) and to make sure they get the right kind of formula.Â  It’s a stupid set-up, and I really hope they don’t implement this change at my local Walmart where I do most of my shopping.Â  I have a suggestion that would make things a wee bit easier if they insist on keeping the formula behind the counter.Â  In the baby section of the store, have papers with bar codes on them corresponding to the different types of formulas.Â  That way, we can just grab the slip we need and put it in our cart, eliminating the need for remembering to get the formula later or confusion with the cashier.Â  This system works well when you buy large items, like swingsets, so why not try it with formula?

And while we got on the subject of drugs with the cashier, she told us an interesting tidbit about Walmart’s cash registers.Â  It seems they are trained to recognize the combination of supplies one needs to create a meth lab.Â  If someone buys this combination of items, the register will alert the employee.Â  Now I’m as opposed to meth labs as the next person, and I certainly don’t want them in my neighborhood, but when the Walmart cash register is programmed to tell you what *not* to buy…Â  I think that’s a little too much.Â  Big brother, here we come…

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Sorry to say taylhis, but your friendly neighborhood Wal-Mart does indeed keep their formula at the cigarette lane. It totally slipped my mind or I would have warned you. It is for that reason entirely... used in the manufacturing of narcotics. I can't believe that I forgot b/c I had to walk over to that lane everytime someone needed either smokes or formula. But I like your idea of the slip saying which type of formula you need. How about other stores? As far as medicines, there are quantity restrictions on certain types of OTCs. That's all I remember. Did not know the registers were that smart. There were also LOTS of age restricted items that seemed ridiculous. White out, spray paint (hope your school is not doing any projects requiring those or better have an adult with you).  
**justj**I'm wondering if this is just a Wal\*mart initiative or the Federal Government has something to do with it. It wasn't too long ago that they put Sudafed behind the Pharmacy counter in most stores, since it is a major ingredient in Meth. I'm not sure what the cash register will really tell them, because from what I've heard you need a large quantity of stuff to make a little meth. Dangerous chemicals too... I didn't know you could buy them all at Wal\*Mart. Maybe Sam's Club, but at Wal\*Mart?

# Lookit The Cute Meeses

Two baby moose are called what?Â  Twin baby mooses, I guess…Â  But anyway, check out this really cute video I received via email – a baby moose finds someone’s backyard sprinkler, then he goes over and “tells” his mommy and twin brother about it, and they all enjoy themselves tremendously.Â  The mommy moose grooms her babies in it, and the babies play together – it’s SO cute!

Sure beats the other baby moose video I saw this week – we won’t go into that (you fellow CNN junkies know what I’m talking about), just nature taking its course, I guess…Â  But let’s focus on the cute mooses (?) playing in the sprinkler instead:

[Click here for some extremely cute baby animal action.](http://www.maniacworld.com/twin-baby-moose-in-sprinkler.html)

### Comments

**justj**Now that was something. I wonder if I could get deer to the house if I put up a sprinkler.

# You Get What You Paid For At The Fun Park

Not so fun.Â  Every once in a while our local movie rental place calls us up and tells us we’ve won a free rental.Â  It happened just this week, so we made a stop there yesterday, and since we had all the kids with us, my husband just ran in and tried to be quick.Â  He came out with a direct-to-video horror movie called [The Fun Park](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0986231/).Â  It actually sounded pretty intriguing since it’s about some teens who were murdered by the ghost of a clown at an abandoned amusement park.Â  We know of an abandoned amusement park that we’ve visited, so we thought the movie would be extra scary.Â  But we were wrong.Â  It was awful – the 3.5 rating it got on imdb.com was no lie.Â  Free movie = boring clown.Â  For the first, I don’t know, about 30 minutes of the movie, they’re not even in the fun park.Â  The movie wastes time setting up the characters’ back stories – and who cares about that?Â  So finally they get to the fun park, and it’s not even scary.Â  The movie has no suspense.Â  There aren’t any chase scenes, basically the movie is the clown cutting off people’s faces.Â  I think.Â  The movie was so slow, I was dozing constantly.Â  But I don’t think I missed anything…Â  It was awful.Â  I would put it on my movie stinker list, but maybe it’s not fair because I wasn’t fully awake…Â  never mind, who cares, it *was* that bad.Â  At least it was a free rental.Â  And as far as my worries about being scared of clowns the next time we go to that abandoned amusement park, no problem – that movie was not scary at all.Â  The only thing scary about it was the idea that all the people involved in making it thought it was a good idea!

So here’s my updated stinker list of the worst movies I’ve ever seen:

The Devil’s Rejects  
Doomsday  
The Night Listener  
The Love Guru  
The Fun Park

### Comments

**Tropic Thunder | My Food Chain Gang**[...] movie but still not nearly enough toÂ make itÂ worth seeing.Â  Not quite so bad as to be put on my famousÂ movie stinkers list, but it was a close [...]  
**MiRRors | My Food Chain Gang**[...] something that gets on my nerves with many modern horror films - see #’s 1,2, and 5 on my movie stinker list -Â (The Devil’s Rejects, Doomsday, and The Fun Park) - all terrible moviesÂ showcasing the [...]  
**Megan**How interesting...and to add about The Devil's Rejects being the top of your movie stinkers list...I just saw that movie tonight with a friend (we had to get our horror movie fix) and I thought it was pretty terrible myself and I can't think of that many movies that I don't like.  
**taylhis**Check it out for hints on how NOT to be a scary clown is more like it.  
**jamiahsh**HAHAHAHA... maybe someone should check it out for inspiration on how to be a scary clown.

# Butts On The Floor - In The Grocery Store?

I don’t know how this memory came about, but recently I was thinking about how acceptable smoking used to be in our society.Â  You were allowed to smoke anywhere and everywhere – airplanes, restaurants, bowling alleys, and grocery stores, to name a few places.Â  Yes, I said grocery stores.Â  I have distinct memories of being a kid and playing with the floor at the grocery store.Â  I was playing with the floor because it had colored tiles on it that resembled a maze, and grocery shopping is *so boring* for a kid that there really isn’t anything else to do but look at the floor and play with it.Â  While navigating my maze on the floor, I distinctly remember seeing – and stepping around – cigarette butts.Â  People used to smoke cigarettes while shopping for food –Â ew.Â  SoÂ does that mean that all the food that was brought home had packaging that reeked of cigarette smoke?Â  It’s hard to imagine, especially givenÂ society’s view on smoking today.Â  But I remember it, and I’m really thankful that we’ve come such a long way.Â  I can no longer stand the smell of cigarette smoke, and if I had to smell it while shopping at Walmart, it would make the place that much more unbearable.

And while we’re on the topic of inappropriate places to smoke, that reminds me of something I forgot to mention in my Mummy movie review post.Â  While watching the movie, we kept smelling cigarette smoke; 2 or 3 times.Â  Someone was definitely smoking in the theater, but my question is, who would do something like that?Â  Was their addiction so out of control that they honestly couldn’t make it through an entire movie?Â  And we’re not talking about The Dark Knight, a movie that runs 2 Â½ hours.Â  The new Mummy movie was not even over 2 hours, and someone couldn’t make it that long without a cigarette (or two or three)?Â  That sounds like a problem they should get help for.Â  At the very least, they should have stayed home then, where they could smoke all they wanted without bothering anyone else.Â  I was really irritated.Â  Not just because I hate the smell and wasn’t expecting to have to deal with it at a movie theater, but mostly because I had our new baby with me and I didn’t want his innocent lungs poisoned with cigarette smoke.Â  I never saw who was doing it, but I suspected maybe it was some rebellious teenagers doing it because they could get away with it.Â  But I didn’t see any teenagers leaving the theater.Â  I tried to smell everyone that walked by, but I came up with no suspects.Â  Oh, well…Â  if it happens again, I think I’ll report it; I just didn’t feel like missing the movie.Â  And I really didn’t think that after theÂ first cigarette they’d go ahead and light another…Â  How utterly rude and completely thoughtless.Â  I hope the culprit saw the baby on the way out and felt guilty…Â  but I’m sure that someone with the nerve to smoke in a movie theater wouldn’t care enough to regret it.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Where was the usher with his flashlight when you needed him/her? Reminds me of the fellow who comes into the store 2/3 times on my shifts and buys a pack of Basic Full Flavor 100s. Every time I see him, I immediately head over to the cig. rack. Rather sad... I keep saying that the price alone would make me quit.

# We've Got To Get Away... We've Got To Run Away!

This post is titled after a line from my favorite movie, [The Wizard of Oz](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0032138/).Â  In case you live in a hole or you’re Amish, the movie is about a girl named Dorothy who runs away and gets swept into a mystical land.Â  Of course, if you’re Amish, I don’t know why you’re reading my blog, but I’m glad you are.Â  But the reason I’m writing this is that it’s happened – we’ve had our first threat of running away from a kid.Â  For those of you who know our family, you get only one guess as to who it was.Â  Got your guess?Â  Ok, it was Samantha – SURPRISE!Â  It’s funny because my husband and I were just discussing this a few days ago.Â  We talked about how seemingly every little kid plans to run away at one time or another.Â  We also talked about how if any of our kids were going to run away, we both thought it would be Samantha (she’s 4, by the way, if you don’t know us, and she’s *always* been a firecracker, even as far back as her womb-dwelling days).Â  And now here we are, mere days later, and she brings it up.Â  She didn’t attempt it or say it out of anger; what happened is this:Â  She was bouncing on our bouncing zebra toy, which actually belongs to her little sister, Disney.Â  Since Disney is almost 2, seeing Samantha on the bouncing zebra made her suddenly decide that she wanted to play on it, of course.Â  So I asked Sammie to give Disney a turn, and she refused.Â  I started threatening things like making her take a nap, time-out, and taking toys away, and for each punishment, she had an answer.

“I’m going to have to make you take a nap then.” was met withÂ  “I won’t sleep.”

“Then I’ll have to take away one of your toys.” was followed by “Then I’ll run away.”

Well, the situation was resolved when Disney asked for a popsicle.Â  I was more than happy to give her one because she is being SO good today; polar opposite of the hellish day she made for me yesterday.Â  The new popsicles I bought today weren’t frozen yet, and all we had was some random soccer ball popsicle I found in the freezer.Â  I gave it to her, totally over-emphasizing what a good girl she’s been today so hopefully she’ll get the message and stay this way.Â  But I gave it to her knowing we might have a problem when I didn’t have any for the other kids, which is a golden rule of parenting that must not be broken:Â  if you have 2 kids, obtain things and give them outÂ in twos.Â  If you have 3 kids, you must always have 3 treats, toys, what have you.Â  Whatever it is, there always has to be one per kid – I call this the ‘separate but equal law of parenting’.Â  So today I broke the separate but equal law, and guess what I got in return?Â  A tantrum, of course.Â  I explained to Sammie that Disney got the popsicle because she was being good, and that Sammie was not being good.Â  She said, “But I’m being good now!”Â  And I agreed, but I also explained that I had said she would beÂ punished for not doing as I saidÂ by sharing with her sister and so this was her punishment.Â  She threw a tantrum, but got over it rather quickly.Â  I think she might have actually learned a lesson.

But back to the running away.Â  I think every kid tries it or at least thinks about it.Â  But of course, since they’re kids, the plans are never very well thought out.Â  Like everyone, I tried it to, and my plan was packing a can of spaghettios in a suitcase.Â  I was thinking ahead about being hungry, but of course I hadn’t planned where I would be going or even how I was going to open that can of spaghettios.Â  I don’t even remember what prompted my decision to run away, which says something about how insignificantÂ my parents’ wronging me really was.Â  One time when my sister wanted to run away,Â she went so far as to call our aunt to come pick her up – luckily my aunt called my mom to double-check, but at least my sister had a plan.Â  Most kids who think about running away don’t have a good solid plan, and many of them realize this before they actually leave the house.Â  Let’s hope we are lucky enough to have that happen with Samantha if she decides to follow through on her threat.

### Comments

**justj**I remember a story of some kid running away. It could have been me, it could have been 1 of my siblings. Big family, so I'm not even sure it was one of us. But anyway, the child in question is seen by various people walking around the block numerous times. When asked why the child responded they were running away. But why so many times around the block, are you lost? Nope, I'm not allowed to cross the street. ... I was told this story many times when I got older, I guess it was one of my dad's favorites. My logic as an older child wondered why if they were going to break the rules of leaving the house, couldn't they break the rule of crossing the street? Oh well, I don't ever remember trying to run away. I was the youngest boy, and spoiled rotten. Why leave a good thing?  
**jamiahsh**I think Shelby and Alex have come to grandma and grandpas once or twice.  
**jamiahsh**I ran away once. I packed a paper bag with my favorite toys and walked about three blocks to my "grandparents" house (my actual grandparents had passed... so I had to be like 7). I think I was there for 2-3 hours before we went for a ride... guess where? What it was all about... dunno.

# The Pineapple Express

I actually hadn’t heard much about this movie before I saw it, but it happened to be playing at the time we needed in order to be able to see a movie that day.Â  Having 4 kids = a hectic life.Â  Our weekly date night has become a date day (still weekly though, YAY!), partly because my husband is in a show and we have rehearsal or meetings most nights, and partly because the baby still has his days and nights mixed up, thus guaranteeing that he sleeps during the date if it’s during the day.Â  But anyway, back to the [Pineapple Express](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910936/).Â  The movie is all about marijuana.Â  I did read the plot synopsis before I went, but I didn’t realize exactly how much drug content there would be – the characters smoke pot constantly!Â  It tells the tale of a stoner ([Seth Rogen](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0736622/) – does he smoke pot in every movie he’s in?) who witnesses a murder committed by a cop.Â  The whole movie has him fleeing the bad guys – while smoking marijuana, of courseÂ – with his drug dealer, who he didn’t know all that well before they fled together.Â  Seth Rogen wrote the screenplay for this film, and I like his natural way of delivering lines.Â  He’s not a very diverse actor, but his characters seem like real people because of the way he delivers his dialogue.

The movie entertained me; some parts were funny; although it did get pretty violent.Â  I missed some of the violence though because I fell asleep…Â  just tired, I wouldn’t call the movie terrible or anything like that.Â  It’s not one of my favorites, though, and I’m not sure if it even has replay value.Â  But if you read my blog regularly, you’ll know that my husband and I see LOTS of movies, so this was just another theater experience, and those are always fun!

### Comments

# It's Amazing How Different They Are...

I think that “It’s amazing how different they are” isÂ something that you hear many people say when they’re talking about their kids, and I’m no exception.Â  My two oldest daughtersÂ have the most contrasting behaviorsÂ between each other; it’s probably because my youngest two don’t have fully developed personalities yet, so it’s hard to say about which siblings differ the most from each other.Â  But here is the example that made me reflect upon this:

Tonight the kids were given glow sticks to play with.Â  The glow sticks came with a plastic wheel.Â  Our eldest, Taylor, who is 8, used her wheel to make a flower out of her glowsticks.Â  Really, it was quite creative and also pretty cool-looking and beautiful.Â  Her 4-year-old sister, Sammie, put her plastic wheel on her face and used it to make funny faces.Â  Both creative, but Taylor’s idea was so much…Â  well, it was a better idea, let’s be honest.Â  And you might be saying, well, that’s the difference between 8 and 4.Â  A perfectly logical response, but if you knew my girls, this wouldn’t surprise you, and I’m not convinced that it’s their age difference more than their personalities.Â  Taylor is much more artistic while Sammie is a clown.Â  We love them both equally of course, but it’sÂ really fun to note their variety.Â  It’s amazing how different they are…

### Comments

# Let There Be Lights

Recently there was an article on cubs.com about how it’s been 20 years since Wrigley Field started night games for the Chicago Cubs, i.e. got lights in their stadium.Â  That made me feel kind of old because I remember that event, and it was 20 years ago: 8-8-88.Â  Sigh.Â  Since when can I remember 20Â years ago?Â  But anyway, I remember an elderly gentleman (turns out he was 91 in 1988Â and actually remembered the Cubs winning the World Series in 1908 – a stark reminder that there is NO ONE left today who can say the same…) flipped the switch to turn on Wrigley Field’s lights for the first time ever.Â  Funnily enough, it was a bit too early in the evening, and many fans and spectators said they couldn’t see a difference in the lighting on the field.Â  But it was symbolic, and Wrigley Field finally had its lights,Â even if it wasÂ the last major leagueÂ ball park to get them.Â  And the event was proven even more symbolic than functional that night when the game was postponed because of rain.Â  So the first FULL baseball game at Wrigley under the new lights was actually 8/**9**/88.

Apparently the lights were snuck into the field in the middle of the night, under cover, literally.Â  They were hoisted into place quickly by helicopters, for fear that protestors would shoot them in order to try to preserve the neighborhood’s charm and innocence.Â  But the plan was not foiled, and 20 years later, we still get to enjoy night games at Wrigley.Â  **GO CUBBIES!!!**

### Comments

# The Mole - FINALE!!!

***SPOILER ALERT!!!****Â  The following blog post contains a synopsis of the final episode of the ABC reality show, The Mole.Â  Do not read if you don’t want to know what happened!*

Last night’s Mole finale did not disappoint.Â  Well, maybe for those of us who got 0 points in the tangents.org mole poll…Â  But as far as dragging out the results episode like most reality shows do, the Mole was not guilty of this.Â  The episode was only an hour long, they still had one elimination to reveal,Â and they revealed the winner of the gameÂ without dramatizing things by adding a commercial break.Â  Turns out,Â  good guy Mark took home the cash, all so his wife can stay home with the kids and not work anymore (be careful what you wish for; sometimes I wish *I* could go back to work and get away from the daily chaos of the chorus of crying kids!).Â  Then, it was time to reveal the mole…Â  but first a dramatic commercial break, of course!Â  We returned from commercial, and they milked it even further with some more dramatic pausing…Â  and then we learned – CRAIG is the MOLE!

At least I don’t have to go back and count up points for our tangents.org mole poll – I believe Jamiahsh is the only one who ever guessed Craig, therefore, with 1 point, he is the winner of our tangents mole poll!

After the big reveal, which happened quite early in the hour I might add, compared to the way they’ve done things in past mole seasons, time was spent recapping episodes with the knowledge of the mole’s identity.Â  It was fun to see the different contestants’ reactions to Craig being the mole, and it was even more fun toÂ watch the clips that were recordedÂ during the playing of the game of them suspecting Craig.Â  I always like when they explain the hidden clues from every episode that (supposedly) pointed to the mole.Â  I say supposedly pointed to the mole because a few of the clues were far-fetched; for example the business about the latitude and longitude.Â  One of the clues I liked is the one where they altered the backround where Craig was giving an interview.Â  There wereÂ two “i” statues, and they altered them so there were 4 “i” statues when Craig was doing his interview.Â  Get it?Â  4 “i”‘s = four eyes – Craig is the only player to wear glasses.

Anyway, it was a great season like always.Â  Even though I lost the tangents.org mole poll, I’m actually glad I didÂ because if Nicole (she was my guess) was the mole, I would have felt it was so obvious it actually would have dampened my enthusiasm for another season.Â  But since I was SO taken by surprise, as far as another mole season goes, I say, bring it on, and soon!

### Comments

# RIP Caray

Recently Skip Caray passed away, a son of famed Chicago Cubs announcer Harry Caray.Â  Skip was actually famous for his work announcing the Atlanta Braves rather than the Cubs, but his death in the news made me think of his father and everything he brought to Cubs games.

Since I didn’t watch many Braves games, I wasn’t really familiar with Skip’s work, so I looked him up on wikipedia.com and found the following:

*Skip Caray’s broadcasts were characterized by his witty and sarcastic sense of humor, a personality trait that endeared him to most fans, but alienated him from others.Â For example, during a particularly long losing streak in the 1980s, Skip declared at the start of a game against the Pittsburgh Pirates “And, like lambs to the slaughter, the Braves take the field”.Â More recently, in a game against the Florida Marlins, the Braves had loaded the bases, to which Caray quipped, “The bases are loaded, just like (Marlins manager) Jack McKeon probably wishes he was.” During the 2004 season, Caray frequently made fun of Braves relief pitcher, Jung Bong, declaring every time the opposing team got a hit against him, “that’s another hit off of Bong”. In 2008, a player popped a fly ball so high that Skip said “That would’ve been a home run in a phone booth.”*

Sounds like a funny guy, and I’m sure he’ll be missed by legions of fans, much like his late father, Harry Caray, the voice of the Chicago Cubs.

### Comments

# Rollback, Shmollback

Now that I’m well on my way to full recovery after being unable to do normal things for so long because of the pregnancy and cesarean, I’ve resumed my big grocery shopping days at Walmart.Â  And since I haven’t been there much in the past few months, I was shocked to find how much many of the prices have raised.Â  So this inspired me to make a list of all the prices I remember from when our Super Walmart opened 26 months ago.Â  I did some math, and this is what I came up with.Â  The first price is how much the item was for the first few months the Super Walmart was open.Â  The second price is how much the item is now, and the percent is the percentage the price has increased in 26 months.

parmesan cheese – $2.94 to 4.18 = **42%**american cheese singles – 1.98 to 2.58 = 30%  
shredded cheese – 1.98 to 2.58 = 30%  
garbage bags – 1.67 to 2.98 = **78%**bananas – 19Â¢ toÂ 58Â¢ per pound =Â **almost 49%**toilet paper – 1.00 to 1.24 forÂ a sixÂ packÂ = 24%  
baby wipes – 1.44 to 2.16 for one pack = **50%**baby formula – 10.64 to 11.88 per can = 11%  
milk – 2.00 toÂ 3.80 = **90%**

I’m no math whiz, but if I did the calculations correctly, this is insane.Â  I realize there is inflation, the economy is terrible, and food comes in on trucks which use gas whose cost has also skyrocketed, but this is still ridiculous.Â  I used to love Walmart for their one-stop shopping concept, but now I hate them for ruining the little guy and for always changing their prices.Â  It makes it impossible to shop around for the best price unless you have no job or kids – and they know it.Â  **WALMART SUCKS!**Â  But I will keep shopping there, and they know it.Â  Why?Â  Because with 4 kids, I don’t have time to go to a bunchÂ of stores trying to find the best price.Â  I need to go where I can get it all under one roof.

Ok, I’m done venting…Â  at least until my next Walmart trip…

### Comments

**justj**And the cost of Gasoline 26 months ago was right around $2.90 a gallon, and the cost in Feb 2007 was just $2.10. I think that is were most of the higher prices come from. I should check the cost of diesel fuel. Last I saw it was still close to $4.50 a gallon. (Big diesel rigs get around 7 to 8 miles per gallon). That adds up quickly.  
**jamiahsh**YES... SHE'S BACK!!!! HAHAHAHA!!

# 10 DUI's in 16 Years

I feel very strongly against drunk driving.Â  It’s one thing to make the choice to drink too much; that’s up to the individual, but when they make the choice for others and expose them to the danger of an intoxicated motorist on the road, that’s extremely selfish and dangerous.Â  It’s also very preventable; if you really want to drink enough to make yourself unsafe behind the wheel, there is absolutely no reason why you can’t plan ahead, find a driver ahead of time, walk home, call a cab, call a friend, take a bus, stay home and get drunk in the first place…Â  the list of ways to prevent driving under the influence goes on and on.Â  That being said, there was a story on dailyherald.com (suburban Chicago newspaper)Â recently that caught my interest.Â  It was about a man who had been caught drunk driving 10 times in the last 16 years.Â  How does this happen?Â  I believe the guy had a serious problem, and I’m a person who believes in getting people help before throwing them in jail, however, it seemed that this guy was not going to learn until he killed someone…Â  and unfortunately, that’s just what happened – and it was himself that he killed.Â  I don’t know why he was out roaming the streets still after getting busted that many times; especially when you read the article and see that in 1996, he had drunk driving arrestsÂ on April 7, April 14, April 26, and May 1.Â  4 times in less than a month?!?Â  I don’t understand how he was released between each of these instances and not only that, butÂ after all this, he was sentenced to a total of one year in DuPage County jail.Â  He got out early, of course, had a few more busts, and then this latest one on July 2 of this year, which is when his story caught my attention.Â  A few weeks later, he died while in police custody.Â  In the article, they say he had seizures and a brain bruise, and it’s my theory that his alcohol withdrawl caused his seizures, which led to him hitting his head and causing the brain bruise.Â  Whatever happened to him, it’s a very sad story; a man with a severe problem who never got help.Â  At least his family never had to deal with the added grief of his causing injury or death to another person.Â  Here is the story and the mugshot, he’s not the healthiest looking fellow.Â  And note the oxygen tank; he had cirrhosis of the liver but still kept drinking:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/story/image/?id=84390)

Patrick J. Kolman, who was arrested for DUI at least 10 times in the past 16 years, died from chronic alcoholism Wednesday night, the Cook County medical examiner’s office said.

Besides alcoholism, the Arlington Heights resident also suffered from a brain bruise and seizures, the medical examiner said. It was unclear when the contusion occurred.

Kolman, 58, had already been convicted of DUI nine times when police spotted his car weaving between lanes a few blocks from his home around 2:30 a.m. on July 2.

Kolman had DUI convictions dating back to 1993. Though he’d been in and out of jail, he received one-year sentences for many of his drunken driving crimes. He had also been convicted of bank robbery, for which he got a much longer sentence, and faced domestic abuse charges.

Kolman’s downward spiral began in spring 1992. He was arrested for DUI in Rolling Meadows with a blood-alcohol content more than three times the legal limit at that time.

“I am an alcoholic,” he told law enforcement officials then. “I can’t drink at all.”

Kolman was once diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver, but continued to drink after treatment and against medical advice. He appeared in his July booking photo with an oxygen tank.

Details about the length of some of Kolman’s DUI sentences is sketchy. A 1995 DUI arrest resulted in a one-year jail sentence and placement in a drug and alcohol program. But in 1996, he was charged with DUI on April 7, April 14, April 26 and May 1. He was sentenced to a total of one year in DuPage County jail.

Kolman likely served only half that time because of good behavior credits. He was stopped again in mid-1997 for driving after his license had been revoked. He was sentenced to two years and served time at the Dixon Correctional Center, according to corrections department records.

Kolman, of 124 S. Vail St., appeared in bond court for his most recent DUI arrest in Rolling Meadows just last month. After he told the judge he was unable to post the $150,000 bond, he appeared to suffer from a medical problem and was rushed to Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights.

After the bond court hearing, Kolman was transferred to the Cook County Jail’s infirmary where his health likely declined, said Cmdr. Nick Pecora of the Arlington Heights Police Department.

Kolman’s car, a 1991 Lincoln, is still in police custody where it will remain until one of Kolman’s family members pays the $500 fee to get it released, Pecora said.

### Comments

**Websites tagged "dui" on Postsaver**[...] - 10 DUIâ€™s in 16 Years saved by cmigant2009-06-25 - Dothan Alabama DUI Lawyer saved by Usagi19202009-06-22 - Duuuude saved [...]

# Dueling Headlines

People inÂ our corner of OhioÂ often make fun of our local paper, and sometimes I can see their point.Â  Sometimes the articles are not well-written or seem one-sided.Â  But I think it’s normal to feel this way because I read an online version of a suburban Chicago newspaper, and people are always leaving comments about howÂ this newspaper’sÂ writing stinks.Â  ButÂ here is a case in point from our local paper:Â  a few weeks ago,Â they ran two headlines onÂ the front page that had nothing to do with each other.Â  In fact, they seemed to contradict each other.Â  I think this was an example of poor journalism.Â  They should have moved one of the stories to an inside page or saved it for another day because the front page headline was:

**College on Its Way Here**

And right there in the right column of the front page, was this headline:

**Alcohol Deadly for Collegians**

Enough said.

### Comments

# Archaeology Is A Dangerous Job

…according to the movies, anyway.Â  Not one but two well-known movie franchises have plots revolving around adventure-seeking archaeologists, Indiana Jones and The Mummy.Â  I couldn’t resist the hype of the [new Indiana Jones movie](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0367882/) and made that my firstÂ experience with Indiana Jones earlier this year.Â  It was entertaining, though I still don’t really get what all the fuss is about, although I’m told the latest (and last, supposedly) Indiana Jones movie is not the best one by far.Â  So for date nightÂ last week, we decided to give the latest Mummy movie, [Tomb of the Dragon Emperor](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0859163/)Â a try, and again, I don’t see what all the fuss is about.Â  I did like it better than [Hellboy 2](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0411477/), but I really think that has more to do with how sick I was when I sawÂ Hellboy 2Â because I just wanted to leave the theater.Â  My husband liked Hellboy 2 better.Â  I’m comparing the two because they are somewhat similiar movies; both action-fantasies involving the raising of ancient asian things.Â  But anyway, back to the latest Mummy movie…Â  Archaeology is dangerous in the movies!

[Brendan Fraser](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000409/) plays an archaeologist who is hired to guard a precious artifact as it makes its journey to become a gift.Â  There’s a guy who is trying to raise this emperor from the dead; it has something to do with a curse.Â  So the emperor is raised, and that’s what I really liked about the movie.Â  The emperor was made out of what looked like metal and fire, and I really enjoyed these special effects.Â  When they were coupled with the emperor’s voice, it made for a nice scary villian – I hope you appreciate the oxymoron of *nice scary villian*Â ðŸ˜‰Â  The one thing I didn’t understand about the movie is why they threw in the random yetis.Â  You’ll have to see it to know what I’m talking about, I guess, but let’s just say that there were some yetis all of a sudden and they didn’t seem to have much to do with the rest of the plot.Â  As far as the plot goes, it wasn’t really my kind of movie, but it was a $3 matinee, buy one get one free, so for that price, I was thoroughly entertained.Â  Three random notes I have are:Â  1.Â  I didn’t realize the Mummy movies take place in the past, in the 1940’s.Â  2.Â  Is it a requirement for sequels to have extremely cheesy references to the original movie?Â  This movie is no exception.Â  3.Â  Anyone visiting Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida should definitely try the Mummy ride.Â  It is a thrill ride with special effects; a haunted house roller coaster, and it’s unlike any other roller coasterÂ I’ve ever experienced – totally awesome!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**nice scary villain... the best kind (insert evil, melodramatic laugh)

# The Lucky Rainbow (And God) Saved Us

Ok, of course *all* the credit goes to God, but I was going for the catchy title.Â  Yesterday I had one of the biggest scares of my life – a near-death experience.Â  I’m going to startÂ at the beginning of an otherwise wonderful day…

We were looking for a fun place to take the kids, and we decided upon the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo.Â  The kids had their usual fun playing in the water hole, and the capuchin monkeys were quite active, enjoying a game of tag.Â  It was really cool to see; one would chase the other and then when he caught him, they’d switch and the chaser became the chasee – is that a word?Â  Doesn’t matter, I think you get the point.Â  Capuchin monkeys are smart.  
There was a kangaroo separated from the rest of the roos, and we thought it was a baby, until we looked a little closer and noticed she actually had a little baby sticking out of her pouch – SOO cute!Â  It must have been a different type of kangaroo or wallaby than the eastern grey kangaroos though because it was much smaller, and obviously an adult since she had a baby.Â  But anyway, they were definitely the highlight of our trip.  
Earlier in the day, when we were deciding where to go, we had brought up the possibility of go-carts, and our 4-year-old had not forgotten.Â  Since the kids were being (somewhat) good and it was still early (we were hoping for a triple kid pass-out on the hour-long drive home), we decided to stop for some quick laps around the go-cart track.Â  I stayed in the car because we had 2 kids who fell asleep, and from there, I was able to watch the storm roll in.Â  It was really neat; there was a lightning bolt that struck near the go-carting place, and everyone waiting in line said “whoa!”.Â  It was followed by a VERY LOUD crack of thunder, and that was the end of the go-carting.Â  My husband had already ridden once with our 4-year-old, and they were waiting in line so our 8-year-old could go.Â  But the poor kid has her father’s bad luck because they shut the place down for the storm before she got to go.Â  But she was a good sport about it; I actually think she was just so happy to be out of the storm and in the “safety” of the car…Â  but you will soon see why I put the “safety” in quotes while referring to the car.

As we headed away from the go-cart place, it rained heavily.Â  So heavily that the road flooded immediately and visibility was down to almost 0.Â  I told my husband he should pull over, but you couldn’t even see enough to do that.Â  But then it cleared a little, and there was a huge rainbow.Â  It was beautiful; I don’t think I’ve ever seen one in a full arc like that.Â  I tried to take a picture but we had now gotten on the interstate and were travelling fast, so we’ll have to see how it comes out.Â  I was distracted by the rainbow, and this is where everything happened so fast it’s kind of a blur.Â  But I’ll recap best I can…Â  The cars in front of us were braking, so my husband made a hard stop – not all that hard, so I didn’t really feel like we were in danger.Â  I see a car on the shoulder all smashed up and facing us.Â  The driver is getting out and looking at his car, and that’s when I realize that it had *just* happened – noÂ emergency vehicles were on the scene yet, and it’s still happening because I hear horns honking.Â  Then my husband says very calmly, “We’re going to get hit.”Â  I looked in my sideview mirror and saw a semi coming at us, and he’s not stopping.Â  Instead he’s coming right at my mirror and the next thing I know, the semi is next to us on the shoulder.Â  Thank God there was a shoulder.Â  Thank God my husband didn’t pull onto the shoulder trying to save us, or he would have steered into the path of the semi.Â  Thank God for a lot of things, but most of all, for the safety of my family.Â  Turns out the horn that was honking was the *semi* warning us of our impending doom.Â  All these news stories were flashing through my head on the rest of the way homeÂ about people whose vehicles got pancaked by semis.Â  It was a split second away from happening to us, and there was nothing that could have stopped it, except Divine Intervention.Â  I called 911 to report the accident, and that’s when I learned that my cell phone makes a little noise when you do that – to make sure you really want to call, I guess.Â  But the good news is, it didn’t seem as if anyone was hurt because like I said, the driver of the car that caused it all was out and looking at his car.Â  He was either brave or not very smart, because if that semi hadn’t of stopped next to our car where it did, he would have been plowed over.Â  Someone should tell that Subway guy from my last postÂ  that this is what 911 is really for!Â  And this whole incident makes a case for my husband to try to get me to fly to Florida next time rather than drive.Â  All I know is, in the car, we had a **very** close call.Â  Rarely are there close calls on a plane – you either crash or you don’t!

A reminder to all to be thankful every day for everything you have!

### Comments

**13 Ð»Ð¾ÑˆÐ°Ð´Ð¸Ð½Ñ‹Ñ… ÑÐ¸Ð» - Ð¡Ð¼Ð¾Ñ‚Ñ€Ð¸Ð¼ Ñ„Ð¾Ñ‚Ð¾ Ñ 3 ÑÑ‚Ð°Ð¿Ð° Ñ‡Ð°Ð¼Ð¿Ð° Ð Ð¾ÑÑÐ¸Ð¸ Ð² Ð£Ð»ÑŒÑÐ½Ð¾Ð²ÑÐºÐµ**[...] The Lucky Rainbow (And God) Saved Us [...]  
**derek**Praise God indeed. I'm glad you're all okay.  
**jamiahsh**Thank Heavens... I once saw a double rainbow... clear as day, no camera though... your incident is precisely what 911 should be for.

# Young Again

I got this video via email from my mom the other day; it’s a piece the local newspaper did about my dad’s softball league.Â  When my dad tells me about his softball games, I wasn’t really picturingÂ old men playing softball.Â  I mean, you don’t really see your parents as old people, at least I don’t…Â  but seeing some of the men in the league playing softball…Â  now those are old people playing softball!Â  My dadÂ seems to beÂ one of the younger of the bunch, and it is very admirable that they would all go out and do this at their age just for fun.Â  I just hope no one gets hurt, and they can continue having fun…Â  Thanks for sending this to me, Mom!

[Click here to see a clip of the Naperville Illinois Senior Softball League](http://video.ap.org/v/Legacy.aspx?g=cfed86e2-4547-4471-ba6e-1b8e40c485bf&mk=en-ap&f=ilchs&fg=email)

### Comments

**taylhis**They can and do!  
**no time to waste**softball is really a fun sport and old guys can tear it up out there  
**justj**Dang, next year I could play with that group.  
**jamiahsh**Sweet... we can only hope we all are that mobile when we reach that age. Perhaps if our annual (?) theatre fun day continues?

# Thanks, But I Prefer a MA'AM-wich Post Revisited

I was checking out thesmokinggun.com and I came across a news story about a man who had an unfortunate experience at his local Subway restaurant…Â  seems they couldn’t get his sandwich the way he wanted, so he called 911 for help – not once, not twice, but 3 times.Â  It reminded me of the time I ranted on my blog about how I prefer sub sandwiches made by women, but apparently this fellow would not agree.Â  Check out my original post [here](http://taylhis.tangents.org/2008/03/06/thanks-but-i-prefer-a-maam-wich/).

And here is the summary of the man’sÂ SubwayÂ mishap; scroll down for the link to the actual 911 calls he made:

## Florida man busted for calling 911 over improperly prepared sandwich

AUGUST 5–If you’re wondering what the guy who called 911 to complain about his Subway sandwiches looks like, well, meet Reginald Peterson. The 42-year-old Florida man became so upset last Thursday when a pair of subs “did not include ‘everything’ as he had requested,” he called Jacksonville cops “so that the police could have his sandwich made to his specifications,” according to a Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office report. Peterson, pictured in the below mug shot, was arrested on a misdemeanor charge of placing false 911 calls. A Subway employee told cops that an irate Peterson was “screaming at everyone in the business” because a worker could not seem to rectify the sandwich problem. As for the fate of the Subway grub, the sheriff’s report notes, “The sandwiches were placed in a trash can at the suspect’s request.”

[Click here](http://www.thesmokinggun.com/graphics/sound/subwaysandwich.mp3) to listen to Peterson’s three 911 calls (MP3)

### Comments

**derek**Didn't quite understand the meaning of "emergency." Speaking of spokespersons, remember when Quiznos used those spong-monkeys? I never did figure out how they were supposed to attract customers- drive them away was more likely. In any event, the two I knew about near me closed several months ago. Obviously nothing to do with the old campaign since it was several years ago.  
**jamiahsh**Perhaps he wanted to become the new spokesperson for Subway. His mug shot would not have won me over. I have not seen Jared for a while... maybe he has packed on a few too many pounds and was fired.  
**jamiahsh**LOL.... I wonder whose phone he used to call on. Did Subway allow him to use the phone at the restaurant? Could this be on an upcoming episode of Cops?

# Nocturnal Purple-Legged Baby

So how is life with 4 kids?Â  One word – chaotic.Â  I suppose some of that can be attributed to usÂ not taking any time offÂ from volunteering withÂ the various community groups we are involved in…Â  Most logical people would have done the smart thing and laid low for awhile.Â  But us, we did just the opposite and jumped into a few new projects head first – oops.Â  But, I do enjoy getting out and spending time with fellow adults, and besides, we’ve already committed ourselves, so it’s too late now.

But anyway, the kids are adjusting just fine to having a new little brother.Â  Our almost 2-year-old has reached the terrible twos officially, and she spends most of her time being upset or making messes.Â  Figures, doesn’t it, that she would reach this stage right as there’s a new baby in the house.Â  But it can’t be helped, and we just have to grin and bear it for awhile until it passes.Â  The upside is that her terrible twos are no where near the magnitude of the turmoil that her older sister caused in the house when she was going through them, but it’s still hard to see our once sweet little girl being so nasty.Â  I don’t know what it is about the terrible twos, but every kid goes through them (maybe the terrible twos aren’t so bad with boys?Â  I’m hopeful…), and they can totally change a child’s personality for months, even years.Â  Little Disney was the sweetest baby and toddler, and now that she is almost 2, she has begun tantruming (almost constantly), hitting, spitting, and biting.Â  Much, if not all of the behavior comes from being so frustrated – she gets frustrated when people don’t understand what she wants or when she thinks her sisters are taking things from her.Â  Even if they’re just trying to help her, if anyone is doing anything she doesn’t like, she’ll throw a tantrum.Â  But what keeps me going is knowing that it’s just the age, and she’ll magically return to normal one day; that’s how it works.Â  It usually happens suddenly, almost as suddenly as it began – it’s like a spell is broken,Â and hopefully it’s sooner rather than later; but I’m prepared for the long haul because her sister’s terrible twosÂ (and boy, were they *terrible*) lasted from about the ages of 16 monthsÂ until she wasÂ 4 years old.

And speaking of our 4-year-old,Â Sammie loves her new little brother and always wants to hold him.Â  I’m trying to get better about how nervous it makes me; especially because Disney sees her older sisters holding him and then of course she wants to do it.Â  But as time goes by, he gets stronger and less floppy, so eventually I can let them help more and be relaxed about it.

Taylor, our 8-year-old,Â loves her new little brother also, although with 2 younger sisters, she’s kinda been there and done that, as far as new babies go.Â  She is still a big help, especially with Disney, but she and Sammie fight constantly, and now Disney is starting to join in…Â  If we could get a handle on some of the fighting, things would be much better around here.Â  I feel like my kids fight, argue, and bicker *constantly*.Â  I probably feel this way because it’s true.Â  Part of it is Disney being so frustrated all the time, and then neither she nor Sammie like to share things with others; and then also Taylor can be really nasty to Sammie, probably just cuz it’s summer and they’re sick of each other.Â  Thank goodness school starts in less than 2 weeks.Â  I say that now, but I’ll also be losing my day-help when Taylor goes back to school, so we’ll have to see how things work out.

As for the little guy himself, Christopher is almost 4 weeks old, and he’s doing well.Â  He is a constant joy to have around, but aren’t they all at this age?Â  The only problem with him is that he seems to be nocturnal – wakes all night and sleeps during the day.Â  Luckily for me, my husband is a light sleeper and wakes with him before I even hear anything.Â  He is getting no sleep, but I told him weeks ago, once you let me start sleeping through the night, my body will get used to it and I won’t wake up…Â  I don’t think he listened.Â  But my sleeping-lightly days are over – during my pregnancy I awoke very easily at every little noise, but now I’m back to my I-could-sleep-through-Armageddon phase.Â  I also warned Hubby that this baby was going to be nocturnal because in the womb, he wouldn’t move much during the day, but he’s start going crazy about 9pm until after I went to bed.

And almost all new babies bring with them the fear of something being wrong – the other day, Christopher’s legs turned purple out of no where…Â  I had just gotten him out of his stroller, but his straps weren’t too tight or anything like that; I checked on them later.Â  It was horribly scary to see his little purple legs, and I’ve never experienced that with my girls.Â  But the doctor didn’t seem to be too concerned; just something to take a look at next appointment – might be a blood vessel spasm,Â which I found out is not terribly uncommon in infants after looking it up on the internet.Â  There is a condition called Raynaud’sÂ Syndrome that is characterized by purple limbs, however they’reÂ accompanied by extreme pain, and little Christopher was sleeping calmly while this happened.Â  We’ll see what the doctorÂ says on Monday.

That’s about it for now; it’s good to be sitting here blogging again – it’s been so hectic for a few weeks that I was not in front of my computer enough to even blog.Â  But then I started thinking of all my faithful readers I was disappointing, and I thought I’d better make the time to give them something to read ðŸ˜‰Â

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Oh, yeah!!!! I was beginning to feel lonely at the top of the board :O

# The Mole - Week #9

*SPOILER ALERT:Â  No one was eliminated and we didn’t find out who the mole was this week, so since there is nothing to spoil, go ahead and read my post!*

I don’t have much to say about this week’s episode…Â  probably cuz I missed most of it.Â  But no matter, it’s not like we learned anything about the mole’s identity – that big reveal will be next week.Â  Chris thought Mark getting the mole’s dossier was mole-y, so that is his guess this week now that Paul is out.Â  Mark struck meÂ from the very beginning as NOT being the mole; I don’t know why, so I am sticking with my Nicole guess…Â  any thoughts jamiahsh?

Chris – Mark  
Lisa – Nicole

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I believe it is Craig. If nothing else than to say they each have a vote.

# Meet Dow Jones And His Sister, Indiana

Maybe it’s because I have a daughter named Disney, but for whatever reason, these news stories about people with unusual names interest me.Â  Here is a follow up story to the one I posted the other day about a family with the last name of Jones who named their kids Indiana and Dow…

***(CNN)*** *— When you hear the name “Indiana Jones,” you think of an archaeologist carrying an idol and dodging a giant boulder. When you hear about “Dow Jones,” you might wonder if it’s up or down that day. However, in this case, Indiana and Dow Jones are siblings, 12 and 7 years old, respectively.*

*Dow and Indiana Jones participate in many sporting events. Indiana says, “announcers love to say our names.” *

*Indiana Elizabeth Jones shared her story with the iReport community, and we spoke with her mother, Jennifer Jones. The Port Deposit, Maryland, resident says Indiana got her name simply because her husband’s family is from that state.*

*As for Dow Joseph Jones, there was serious talk of naming him Jack Ryan Jones, to keep the Harrison Ford theme. (Jack Ryan is the character Ford played in a series of action movies.) Instead, her husband named their son Dow on a dare while Jennifer was asleep in the hospital bed after giving birth.*

*She said she cried when she found out and even thought about having Dow’s name changed.*

*CNN.com asked users to share their unusual names after a 9-year-old New Zealand girl named Talula Does the Hula from Hawaii won the right to change her name.*

*Dozens of members of iReport.com community explained the stories behind their odd names, as well as what they’ve experienced in their day-to-day lives.*

*Some names might not seem problematic until they’re actually used on a daily basis. Open Weaver Banks of Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey (speaking of odd names), says that she shared her story with iReport.com in hopes that parents would think twice before giving their children an unusual name.*

*Open is an unusual name, but it’s not necessarily a name that one might expect to cause regular difficulties. Weaver Banks, however, says that she often has problems with it.*

*“I have a hard time using my credit cards for personal items, because clerks will accuse me of using a business card. I cannot tell my name to someone without having to explain it. Some days, it is exhausting, and I can’t even disguise the annoyance in my voice.”*

*Banks’ childhood was “painful” because of her name, too. “I still give my mother a hard time about the name choice, and she tries to explain that she was young, she liked how it sounded, it was 1970 and various other reasons,” she explains. “I actually tried going by another name for a year, and I realized that as much as I truly hate my name, it is embedded in me and so much a part of my experience.”*

*Some people avoid the use of their name altogether to avoid questions, confusion or embarrassment. “At times, for the sake of avoiding an uncomfortable conversation or throwing someone off guard, I answer to the names of ‘Mary’ or ‘Kelly’,” says Bluzette Martin of West Allis, Wisconsin. At restaurants, “the thought of putting an employee through the pain of guessing how to spell and pronounce ‘Bluzette’ just isn’t worth it to me.”*

*Martin was named after “Bluzette,” an up-tempo jazz waltz written by Jean “Toots” Thielemans. Despite her daily problems with this name, it certainly has its perks, like when she met Thielemans in 1987 at a club in Los Angeles. “When I met [him], he thanked my mother,” she says.*

*She called her mother in the middle of the night and told her that she had a surprise for her. She gave the phone to Thielemans, and he started doing his famous whistling, to the tune of “Bluzette.”*

*Even celebrities aren’t immune to the use of unusual names. Take boxer George Foreman’s children, all named George. (Or actor Jason Lee’s son, Pilot Inspektor, or comedian Penn Jillette’s daughter, Moxie CrimeFighter.) These are just-plain bizarre names, like that of iReporter Holden Holden.*

*Holden, a sophomore at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania, says that having a double name has its pros and cons. He says he has a face people will remember because his name is easy to remember. Unfortunately, he says, he’s not very good about remembering names himself, so it can lead to some awkward moments.*

*Holden’s grandfather died a month before he was born but was always called by his last name as a nickname. “My last name is my mother’s maiden name, which she reverted to after she divorced,” he explains.*

*Holden also says that he plans to run for president in 2036. “Since my name is pretty easy to remember, it’ll be easier to garner votes that way.”*

*As for Dow Jones’ mother, she didn’t go through with changing his name. Now she sees it as something unique for someone with the very common last name “Jones.” And perhaps that’s the bright side to having an unusual name: It sets you apart from the crowd.*

*Dow’s sister doesn’t seem to mind.*

*“There is a new Indiana Jones movie out this year, so all my friends think it’s pretty cool,” she says.*

By Henry “Hank” Hanks  
CNN

### Comments

**taylhis**Ahh yes... the Zappas: Moon Unit, Dweezil, Ahmet, and Diva.  
**derek**Poor kids. In many cases they can only hope to go by a nickname in school to avoid the embarrassment.  
**justj**It has been going on since we've been naming children. I went to school with Holly Wood and Robin Bird. Does anyone remember the names of the Zappa children?  
**jamiahsh**Ironic that the writer had a double name. I guess there are pros and cons to the naming of children.

# Random Celebrity Death And The Sunshine State

We are very fortunate to be able to visit the Orlando area in Florida (read: Disney World!) yearly, but during our past two visits, CNN has been overrun with news of unexpected and shocking celebrity deaths.Â  In February 2007 during our visit, the breaking news was of model/actress Anna Nicole Smith’s early demise.Â  It was widely speculated that she was on drugs, but her death was still very surprising especially considering her 20-year-old son, Daniel Smith’sÂ shocking death just 3 months earlier.

During our latest outing to the Sunshine State in late January of this year, it was Heath Ledger’s accidental overdose that ruled the news.Â  At the time, I have to admit that I didn’t know exactly who he was or what movies he was in, but I did recognize what a big name he had in show business.Â  His death took everyone by surprise; so much so, that the event completely dominated the news while we were in Florida.Â  With gas prices the way they are, I don’t know if we’ll make it back to Orlando this October as planned; we might have to push it off until early next year in January or February or even wait until the kids are older altogether…Â  But if we do decide to go, I’ll put out the word toÂ watch out for a random celebrity’s unexpected passing…

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I'll be sure to have the pool all set up to shamelessly collect on someone's misfortune... OMG!!! That would be soooo mean.

# The Mole - Week #8

*DISCLAIMER – Do not read this if you don’t want to know about what happened on the ABC reality show, The Mole, yada, yada, yada…*

WOW – mole-y behavior abound last night…Â  but not too much from Paul, who was shockingly executed.Â  So, my friends who’ve been going with Paul for weeks now, it seems you have to pick a new guess…Â  But fear not, at least not yet, because if Nicole isn’t the mole, then I am right there with you with 0 points because I dont’ think I’ve ever guessed Craig or Mark.Â  But what am I saying, Nicole is SO the mole – let’s take a look at last night’s episode to find out why…

First, it seemed odd to me that Paul was making excuses about the camera in the very beginning of the camera-blockÂ game, though it’s not like it was mole-y behavior since Paul is obviously NOT the mole.Â  Then, during the same game, Nicole states that she is a lapriscopic surgeon, which caught me by surprise because during the entire run of the show, she’s been labeled (and said she was) an OB-GYN.Â  Suspicious yes, but even if she is the mole, I cannot figure out why they would change her profession.Â  And if they were going to change her profession for some reason, why would they keep her as a doctor and just change the type of practice?Â  I am convinced she is the mole, but this I do not get…Â  hopefully it will be explained.  
Next up, players used the same camera contraption (one player holds the camera and the other player wears glasses that display what the camera is recording) to play soccer, and Paul did act a little suspicious because he didn’t seem to be giving his entire effort.Â  He didn’t seem to be trying to kick the ball hard or straight enough to get it in the net…Â  but again, it doesn’t matter how he was acting since we know he is not the mole.Â  Nicole on the other hand, would not stop shaking the camera.Â  The camera was extra jiggly during the chalkboard portion of the game, and it’s not like she even needed to mess with poor Craig all that much anyway given his problem with vertigo.Â  But why would a lapriscopic surgeon (or anyone for that matter, really) feel the need to shake the camera so much?Â  Very mole-y indeed.Â  When she and Craig lost the chalkboard challenge, she broke into a big grin and then quickly bit her lip to keep from smiling!Â  Did anyone else see that?Â  Nicole hopes not, but I sure did!Â  And lastly, a few things on the cell-paintball challenge.Â  She made sure she choose her cell first – if she is the mole then the producers could have told her what cell to pick so she didn’t get the exemption to let a legitimate player win it (much to Paul’s dismay – nice little tantrum there).Â  Also, a player noted (think it was Mark) how small and fast she is, yet she still got shot with a paintball…Â  that seems mole-y also.Â  I really enjoyed this episode; I liked the camera games a lot.Â  But when it’s all said and done, Nicole is still my top guess for the mole!Â

Chris has changed his guess to Nicole.Â  I haven’t yet received an official guess from Jamiahsh yet…Â  either he’s lost since he can’t guess Paul or he doesn’t want to submit his guess yet until he’s sure we’ve seen the episode to avoid the teasing for spoiling the execution quizzes outcome   
Either way, let me know as soon as you have one!

### Comments

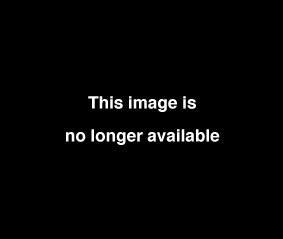
**jamiah**Yes, I did not want to spoil the outcome since, obviously my guess will need to change. I must concede :( I will now go to my second guess... Nicole as well.

# Ghost Towns

One of the coolest places we ever visited was a ghost amusement park.Â  It had been in existence for 100 years before closing down unexpectedly one year, leaving everything behind: rides, paths, old vehicles, buildings, food stands, restrooms, and even part of a ferris wheel remained poking out of the trees that had grown up and around it during the vacant years.Â  I would love to go back there and especially bring some friends, but it’s not really a place for kids to run around, so I’ll have to wait until they’re older or I have aÂ  babysitter for a few days…

But CNN ran an article onÂ  ghost towns that reminded me of the place; check it out, then follow the link to ghosttowns.com – they have a state-by-state listing of ghost towns.Â  Turns out, there are 6 in my corner of Ohio alone!

***LAKE VALLEY, New Mexico (AP)*** *— The howling wind across a remote landscape, a creaky metal gate or a run-in with a rattlesnake or gun-toting local are the things that attract ghost towners. They are history buffs who take their outdoor adventures with a dash of mystery.*

**

*Monument Peak, which some old-timers call Lizard Mountain, rises over what’s left of Lake Valley in southern New Mexico.*

*Â Just as traditional outdoors enthusiasts enjoy mountaineering or hiking, and tech-minded gadget lovers enjoy geocaching, ghost towners have their own agenda: seeking out, documenting and photographing towns that one day will cease to exist.*

*“We are a subset of the outdoors culture,” said Clint Thomsen of Stansbury Park, Utah, who writes newspaper columns about the ghost towns he visits. “If you’re willing to drive around 200 miles along dirt roads and find something that’s definitely crumbled, you’re definitely part of the breed.”*

*Ghost towns are prevalent in the West with 100 to more than 200 per state, but even states in the Midwest and several Eastern states have between 10 to 100 ghost towns apiece, said Todd Underwood of Prescott, Arizona, who hosts a Web site for ghost towners,* ***[http://www.ghosttowns.com](http://www.ghosttowns.com/" \t "new)****.*

*Underwood, a chemistry professor turned pilot who estimates he has visited about a thousand ghost towns, said the site has helped coalesce ghost towners into a group that logs millions of Web site visits a month.*

*And for those who think ghost towning is only a Western phenomenon, ghost towners are quick to say that even New York has 14 ghost towns. Pennsylvania has what one ghost towner calls a ghost highway, a 13-mile stretch of Pennsylvania Turnpike complete with overpasses and tunnels near Breezewood that was bypassed in 1968.*

*A ghost town is a place that is a shadow of its past glory. This can include everything from accessible historical towns — like Jerome, Arizona, or Calico, California — to the ruins of forgotten mining towns, abandoned farm settlements or railroad stops that disappeared when the trains stopped coming. Towns that are remote, hard to gain access to and have very little remaining are known as “true ghosts,” Underwood said.*

*Underwood said he began ghost towning in 1976 with his father.*

*“We were really fascinated as to how and why people would just up and leave towns. We were steeped in the mystery of that,” he said.*

*That mystery is palpable at the abandoned silver mining town of Lake Valley, New Mexico, which was founded in 1878. The Bureau of Land Management property has a renovated schoolhouse filled with wooden and wrought-iron children’s desks, an ornate wood stove and an old school bell. A nearby church holds wooden pews and ornate woodwork railings.*

*But along the dirt roads, the wind moans and whistles through the dilapidated wooden houses and around crumbling stone ruins. The town’s slow decline from a peak population of 4,000 people in the 1880s began with the devaluation of silver and was accelerated by a 1895 fire that destroyed its business district. Lake Valley’s last resident left in 1994 at the age of 92.*

*A typical ghost town visit usually begins with an offhand remark from an old-timer or a mention on a Web site, ghost towners say.*

*Before leaving home, they try to solve the mystery of why the town disappeared and, more importantly, how to get there by hitting the history books and topographical maps.*

*Ghost towners give only vague directions to newbies. They figure those who are willing to unravel their hints and work to find these places are more likely to respect them.*

*Then, a visit is attempted. Thomsen recalled arriving at what he thought would be the abandoned mining town of Gold Acres, Nevada, at 3 a.m., only to find from a surprised mining office worker that the old buildings had been bulldozed a few months before.*

*Other ghost towners described making a half-dozen trips before finding the town, but agreed the search is half the fun.*

*Though their motto is to “take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints,” there are gifts to be found — literally and figuratively — at ghost towns.*

*David Pike, who grew up in southern New Mexico and now lives in Washington, D.C., has rated nearly 20 New Mexico ghost towns on his Web site.*

*He says ghost towning has helped him understand how his environment affects him and taught him to live in the moment.*

*“It’s hard to ignore a metaphor when you’re standing right in the middle of it,” he said. “When you’re standing in a building that was once something and now is slowly fading into not being anything anymore, that’s a stark reminder about appreciating what you’ve got when you’ve got it.”*

*Pike said he visited a ghost town in southern New Mexico with his late father. He remembered his father had called out to him, but the howling wind blocked out the voice, which got Pike ruminating on the town’s name, High Lonesome.*

*“He’s been gone for a couple of years now and I still miss his voice,” Pike said.*

*Laura Aden, who explores old mining sites with her husband mainly in Arizona’s Tonto National Forest, says ghost towners are “the people who walk around with their heads down scratching the dirt, the crazy bunch of people who pick up nails and cans.”*

*If she finds abandoned objects in the deserted towns, she offers them to local historical societies, which don’t always want them. She’s taken home some old tools to decorate her cactus garden, she said.*

*Ghost towners also compare notes on the danger of their hobby. They have to contend with rattlesnakes and other critters, running out of water or fuel, vehicle breakdowns and the hazards of abandoned mine shafts.*

*Underwood said he once entered a ghost town and sitting on top of a dilapidated house was a man with a gun pointed right at him.*

*“I turned around and left in a hurry,” Underwood said.*

*Underwood encourages ghost towners to photograph the places they visit and post them on ghosttown.com as a way to document their historical significance and decline.*

*Often ghost towns are vandalized, they erode or are bulldozed over to make way for economic development.*

*“There is a time when this hobby will go away. You will not be able to go and appreciate these places anymore,” Pike said. They are “slowly fading into nonexistence.”*

#### *Ghost towns Worth a Mention*

* *Lake Valley in southern New Mexico is a quintessential ghost town, said David Pike, who hosts a Web site that rates New Mexico ghost towns. The old mining town sits on Bureau of Land Management property and has several standing buildings, including a school house, general store and small church. “If a town is going to aspire to be a ghost town, that’s the town that they should emulate,” he said.Â*Â
* *Carson, Colorado, is an abandoned mining camp that sits on the Continental Divide at about 12,000 feet elevation. “It’s very remote. It’s covered most of the year with snow. All of the buildings are left intact. It’s almost like somebody just upped and walked away,” said Todd Underwood, host of ghosttowns.com.*
* *Frisco, Utah, is a favorite of ghost towner Clint Thomsen. The old silver mining town in southwestern Utah has several outdoor charcoal ovens that were used to make fuel for the smelter. There’s also a cemetery and standing structures, according to ghosttowns.com Web site.*
* *Spring Canyon in central Utah is home to several small ghost towns, abandoned mining camps and a ghost known as the “White Lady of Latuda,” said Thomsen, who counted it among his favorites.*

### Comments

**taylhis**We should go sometime... REALLY want to get back to the amusement park. We did spot an abandoned school nearby and have been meaning to go and check it out...  
**justj**I love old ghost towns, abandoned schools and the like. In this area there are lots of things like that if you know where to look, or can find a good guide.... I miss my guide.  
**derek**I'm not sure how I'd feel about ghost towns or mines if I found myself in one, but that ghost amusement park sounds interesting. Hopefully it will still be there when you get a chance to see it- not torn down just three months before as the one town in the article. Well, it will be interesting as long as I don't find myself at the receiving end of a gun like another instance in the article!

# Talula Does the Hula From Hawaii

The title of this post reflects someone’s actual given name at birth.Â  Shame on everyone who ever gave flak about my cute little Disney – it could have been worse; much, much worse!

***(CNN)*** *— A New Zealand judge has made a 9-year-old girl a ward of the court so that her name can be changed from Talula Does the Hula From Hawaii, the country’s national news agency reported Thursday.*

*Family Court Judge Rob Murfitt listed a series of unusual names that New Zealand parents had given their children, and said he was concerned that such strange monikers would create hurdles for them as they grew up.*

*“It makes a fool of the child and sets her up with a social disability and handicap,” the New ZealandÂ Press Association quoted the judge as saying.*

*Among the names Murfitt cited: twins named Benson and Hedges — after a brand of cigarettes; Violence; and Number 16 Bus Shelter.*

*Some parents had named children after six-cylinder Ford cars, the news agency reported.*

*The Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages said in a statement that it had rejected names including Fish and Chips, Yeah Detroit, Stallion, Twisty Poi — a staple food in Polynesian cuisine — and Sex Fruit.*

*A lawyer for Talula Does the Hula From Hawaii said the girl is so embarrassed by her name that friends know her as “K.”*

*Last month, a judge in the U.S. state of Illinois allowed a school bus driver to legally change his first name to “In God” and his last name to “We Trust.”*

*But an appeals court in the state of New Mexico ruled against a man — named Variable — who wanted to change his name to a two-word phrase that contains a four-letter expletive and expresses opposition to censorship.*

### Comments

**taylhis**Don't worry, Jamiahsh, I wasn't referring to anyone who reads my blog regularly, just wrote that as a kind of salute to people who have given flak...  
**derek**And I thought Kal-El was a horrible name for a (real) child... I had heard of Cocaina (druggie parents of course) and some others, but the ones you mention...  
**jamiahsh**WOW!!! Let it be known that I NEVER gave flak for Disney. As you said, it could have been MUCH WORSE, much longer, and expletive-riddled (anyone who would do THAT to their child should not be having children.. I've heard stories about such babies).

# Toledo Blood

WhileÂ I’ve been recently listing my many recent medical procedures and complications, it seems I forgot to mention the blood transfusion.Â  When I found out I would need one after the surgery, my mom generously offered me some of hers, but the nurses politely refused her, saying our hospital gets its blood supply from Toledo.Â  So, there you have it – I guess you could say I’m now an official Ohioan with Toledo blood and everything!Â  Go Buckeyes!

### Comments

**taylhis**Weird... the nurses may have mentioned that if my mom gave hers would be sent to Ft. Wayne. Guess there's an east to west blood flow...  
**justj**Now that is very strange. If I remember correctly, when you donate blood in this area, it all goes to the Fort Wayne area. For years I donated blood in Toledo, but when I donated blood in college, and now in Williams or Fulton Counties, the Fort Wayne Red Cross are the ones doing the collections..

# American Psycho Hellboy... Never Mind

We managed to fit in some movie watching this week while the kids are with Grandma, and I was attempting to put them all together in a clever blog post title, but it wasn’t to be.Â  Probably my lack of sleep with the new baby and my recovery process has inhibited my creativity.Â  I hope to be back in full swing soon, but it will probably take a few months, especially because once I’m feeling better, I have lots of stuff around the house I need to catch up on and as much as I would like blog posting to come first, it doesn’t.Â  As people keep reminding me oh so helpfully, a c-section is major surgery Â  Don’t I know it.Â

So the 3 movies we saw this week are Hellboy 2, American Psycho, and Fortress.

I did not like [Hellboy 2](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0411477/).Â  I actually would have left the theater, but I never got around to asking my husband if he wanted to and that was a good thing because he liked the movie.Â  It gave me a good laugh when we were walking out of the theater and he told me he liked it because we always have the same taste in movies and I really didn’t like this one.Â  That also means I don’t have much to say about it except that the Abe fish-like character reminds me of C3PO from Star Wars, and I can’t believe the actor who plays Hellboy, [Ron Perlman](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000579/),Â was also Vincent the Beast in the old [Beauty and the Beast tv show](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0092319/) from the 80’s with [Linda Hamilton](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000157/).Â  I thought he was going to be some Andre the Giant huge guy wrestler type, but it turns out, he is just a regular actor.Â  I suppose my impatience with this movie had to do with the fact that my infection flared up and I was raging with fever yet again in the movie theater.Â  So even though I felt crappy and wanted to leave, I could not pass up a night out with hubby while the kids were away.Â  Even if it was to see Hellboy 2…Â  I’m just glad one of us enjoyed the movie.

Next up is a movie from the early 90’s called [Fortress](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0106950/).Â  It’s set in the future – and it’s always fun to see what people thought the future would be like when the movie was made over a decade ago – and revolves around a corporate owned underground prison (think Walmart does Alcatraz).Â  The main characters are sent there when they break the “one child per couple” rule.Â  They had lost their first child, and now they’ve been caught trying to have another, so they are both sent to prison, even though she is pregnant.Â  This is a funÂ action-packed movie.Â  When I looked it up on imdb.com after we watched it, I learned that it is actually a kind of cult classic movie and there are actually multiple endings.Â  Our version was the less happy of theÂ endings, but I still liked the movie.Â  It’s kind of violent for early 90’s, and if you look it up on imdb.com,Â don’t let the keywords fool you.Â  Let’s put it this way, if I had seen the keywords first, I wouldn’t have watched this movie, but in retrospect, I don’tÂ think there was really much adult stuff in it – just violence and gore, butÂ they didn’t overdo it like they do in some movies nowadays, like the Saw movies for instance.Â  [American Psycho](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0144084/) on the other hand…

I will start by saying that [Christian Bale](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000288/) was excellent in this movie.Â  I wasn’t so impressed by him when he was Batman in [The Dark Knight](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0468569/), but he definitely shows versatility and depth in this movie.Â  He plays a Wall Street executive who is just about as big a jerk as one can be.Â  Also, he has blood lust and likes to kill people in his spare time.Â  The movie is very strange for reasons I can’t quite put my finger on.Â  For one, I was confused about what the movie was trying to be.Â  I guess it’s just a story about this man, an American Psycho.Â  But at times throughout the movie, the music was strange, andÂ it just didn’t play like a normal movie.Â  And then there were the constant 80’s references.Â  I guess it was supposed to take place in the 1980’s, given the characters’ huge cordless phones andÂ constant talk of musical artists such as Phil Collins, Huey Lewis, and Whitney Houston.Â  Why they would change the time period of the movie, I don’t know, but they did a good job because ifÂ [Reese Witherspoon](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000702/) (who is about my age and would have been a kid in the ’80’s)Â wasn’t in it, I would have been convinced the movie was actually filmed in the ’80’s.Â  And I have to say the end confused me a lot.Â  I won’t say more because I don’t want to spoil anything, but if anyone who reads this has seen this movie, maybe you can answer a question I have.Â  I don’t think I’d recommend this movie since there are many disturbing scenes and it didn’t seem worth it to me to sit thru them for what you get from the rest of the movie.Â  I don’t think I’m going to put it on my list of baddies however, but then again,Â Hellboy 2 isn’t going on there either.Â  Just 2 movies I didn’t reallyÂ like and wouldn’t see again, but I don’t feel like I wasted my time watching either of them, and that’s always a good thing.Â Â Â

### Comments

**derek**Wouldn't the DVD for The Fortress have all the endings, via the special features?  
**jamiahsh**I am 0 for 3 on this post.

# The Mole - Week #7

*The following is a synopsis of the Mole episode that aired Monday, July 21, 2008.Â  It contains spoilers – do not read ahead if you don’t want to know who was executed!*

My daughter is away this week and didn’t get to see this episode, so we won’t have her guess.Â  Darn, she was really getting into the show too, and it was fun to see an 8-year-old’s perspective on it.Â  But anyway, I thought Craig and Nicole both seemed very mole-y during the challenge; there were times when it seemed that they both tried to sabotage the numbers they were collecting.Â  I didn’t notice any suspicious behaviorÂ from anyone else.Â  Then there was a game where the contestants answered questions about their loved ones, and another contestant was re-quizzed about their answers.Â  The loved ones appeared in a train, and If they got enough answers correct, the doors would open for a reunion.Â  So of course whoever the mole is didn’t have the heart to sabotage this one – which means it’s NOT Nicole.Â  Just kidding.Â  Anyway, the train doors opened for everyone, thank goodness, and the anticipation was pure agony to watch; especially Mark’s wife (in 19 years of marriage we’ve never been apart this long) and Paul’s wife and especially his little girl.Â  I knew there was absolutely no way they would disappoint a little girl like that, and I wonder what they would have done if enough questions were not answered correctly?

I’d have to say Nicole’s mom is a bad influence on her – she really wanted Nicole to quit and even justified her reasons for doing so (it’s not really quitting, it’s not like this is your job).Â  It’s clear that Nicole really cares a lot about what Mommy thinks because she lied and said she was going to throw the quiz, and she also apologized for disappointing her mom by not quitting.Â  So I’m guessing that she can just explain it away to Mommy later by saying, “I disobeyed you because I was the Mole so I couldn’t quit the game.”Â  And, if she can lie that easily about throwing the quiz, it will be no surprise that she was lying the whole game about being the Mole.

So, the guesses remain:

Taylhis – Nicole

Chris – Paul

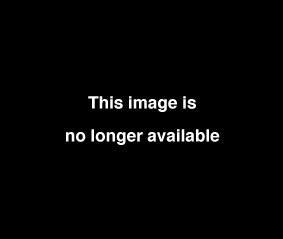
Jamiahsh – Paul

### Comments

# Bale Bails Out

I couldn’t resist re-printing the following news item about the star of The Dark Knight, Christian Bale.Â  Note the part about police not wanting to question him so they don’t interfere with the premiere of the movie.Â  Seems he took his Batman fight training a little too seriously?

**LONDON, England (AP)** — Batman star Christian Bale was arrested Tuesday over allegations of assaulting his mother and sister, police and British media said.



*“Dark Knight” star Christian Bale pictured in London Sunday ahead of the movie’s European premiere*



The 34-year-old actor spent four hours at a London police station before being released on bail.

British media had reported that Bale’s mother and sister complained he had assaulted them at the Dorchester Hotel in London on Sunday night, a day before the European premiere of his latest film, “The Dark Knight.”

The Sun newspaper said police did not question the actor Monday because they did not want to interfere with the premiere of the movie.

Asked Tuesday whether Bale had been arrested, a London police spokesman did not refer to him by name but said: “A 34-year-old man attended a central London police station this morning by appointment and was arrested in connection with an allegation of assault.”

The spokesman spoke on condition of anonymity because force policy did not authorize him to be identified. British police do not name suspects before they are formally charged.

The force later said in a statement that the man had been released on bail pending further inquiries and told to return on an unspecified date in September.

U.S.-based representatives for Bale didn’t immediately return messages seeking comment. Repeated phone calls to Bale’s London representative went unanswered.

Wales-born Bale first made a splash as the child star of Steven Spielberg’s “Empire of the Sun” in 1987. His screen credits also include “American Psycho,” “The Machinist” and “Batman Begins.”

In “The Dark Knight,” Bale reprises the role of wealthy playboy Bruce Wayne and his crime-fighting alter-ego Batman, a brooding vigilante superhero still scarred by the murder of his parents.

The Warner Bros. film, which stars the late Heath Ledger as Batman’s nemesis The Joker, took in a record $158.4 million at the box office in its opening weekend in the U.S. last week.

### Comments

**A TROUBLED BAT? | Morat's Blog**[...] the murder of his parents in the dark, back alleyways of Gotham City. Read the full article by clicking Share and Enjoy: These icons link to social bookmarking sites where readers can share and [...]  
**jamiahsh**I was beaten, but I do think it sounds rather suspicious to me. Or else Batman is in fact becoming as demented as the Joker?

# The Dark Knight

We ventured out to see the midnight showing of [The Dark Knight](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0468569/) last week, and I haven’t written about it until now because I’ve been so busy, but I figured I better make some time for it before I forget, so here it goes…

It all began when we found out our little local theater would be showing it at midnight, and since we’re usually up with the new baby at that time, we figured why not be in a movie feeding the baby instead of at home?Â  So we got together a group who wanted to see it, and that’s when we found out the movie was 2 hours and 40 minutes!Â  Oops, the baby is never up THAT long but too late to back out now!Â  Besides, after all the hype involved, I was actually looking forward to it.

Since almost a week has passed and I’m on little sleep, some of my memory of the details have faded, so this will be a very vague reveiw.Â  I’d have to say the movie was exactly what I was expecting.Â  I was hoping it would be a little better, especially after all the media hype, but it was exactly what I thought it would be – and that’s not anywhere NEAR the 9.6 people gave it on imdb.com.Â  Since I’m not a huge fan of superhero / comic book movies (yet I keep going to see them; not sure what’s up with that), I really wasn’t expecting this to be one of my favorite movies ever.Â Â  [Heath Ledger](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005132/) did have a VERY good performance as the Joker, but was it Oscar-worthy?Â  I personally don’t think so.Â  I do think he will win it though, but let’s just wait and see if he is nominated and who he is up against.Â  And it’s not like I ever agree with who wins those things anyway; for me it’s just a good excuse to throw a fun party 

But back to the movie…Â  there was a lot of violence.Â  I can’t believe what they’re allowed to call PG-13 these days.Â  Although I suppose it wasn’t really anything short of what you’d see on tv, and there was actually little to no blood and gore, so maybe that explains it.Â  The children I saw in the theater were all asleep by the time the movie was over anyway.Â  And yes, I did think the movie went on too long – it wasn’t a short 2 hours and 40 minutes, and it didn’t really fly by.Â  As my husband pointed out, way too much dialogue for a superhero movie; friends agreed and added that the Batman movies are like that.Â  I’ve only seen the Tim Burton [Batman](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0096895/) from 1989, which I’m told is just a different take on the whole thing and doesn’t really fit into the timeline anywhere, and I’ve also seen [Batman Forever](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112462/), which I really enjoy.Â  So that brings me to my 2nd favorite villian next to the Joker – Harvey “Two-Face” Dent.Â  I just love what [Tommy Lee Jones](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000169/) did with the character in Batman Forever, and I was pleased when I realized that Harvey Dent was going to turn into Two-Face in The Dark Knight, but overall I was disappointed because [Aaron Eckhart’s](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001173/) Â Two-Face was pretty lame compared to Jones’.Â  The makeup was pretty good, although I actually enjoy the more comic book look that they gave Tommy Lee Jones versus the scary look they gave Eckhart for the newest film.

[Christian Bale’s](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000288/) Batman was alright, though I couldn’t stand his gravelly Batman voice – it reminded me of the Friends episode where Joey is selling cologne at a department store…Â  If you’re a fan of the show and you know what episode I’m talking about, find it and listen to his cologne adversary say “Hombre?” – sounds just like Christian Bale’s Batman and every time he spoke in the movie I was tempted to giggle as I thought of that hillarious Friends episode.Â  [Maggie Gyllenhaal](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0350454/) was pretty good too; although in scenes with both her and Heath Ledger’s Joker, it was weird for me to think that he played her brother’s gay lover in [Brokeback Mountain](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0388795/), but that’s Hollywood for you, it’s cyclical.

And since we’re on the subject of Heath Ledger’s Joker, it was very impressive.Â  Not the kind of movie or role I’d pick for being Oscar-worthy, but that’s my personal opinion and like I said, we’ll just seeÂ happens as Oscar time draws near.Â  He was pretty scary, and I’d have to say Hollywood can mourn him as a good actor because when I was in the hospital less than a week ago, I watched [10 Things I Hate About You](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0147800/) (the hospital’s limited cable selections + baby up at night = what else do I watch but this bad movie?).Â  Ledger was in that movie, and he couldn’t even shed his Australian accent back then!Â  Seeing where he was in that movie versus the Joker did give me appreciation for his work (as the Joker, not in 10 Things…).

And another reason I was excited to see this movie was that I had heard that 80% of it was shot in my former hometown (well, sort of, I grew up in the suburbs), Chicago.Â  It was neat to see all the familiar landmarks, although they did try to anonymize the city so it could be recognized as Gotham City instead of Chicago.Â  I was especially looking forward to the special effects involved in the Gotham City Hospital scene since I read an article about it ahead of time, but I have to say I was a little disappointed in how it actually looked on screen.Â  I don’t want to spoil anything for anyone who hasn’t seen this movie yet, but I will say that the vacant Brach’s Candy Factory on Chicago’sÂ west side doubled for the Gotham City Hospital.Â  And seeing the Joker in a nurse’s dress was pretty funny in itself…

Overall, I had a lot of fun seeing this movie.Â  I think much of it had to do with the midnight showing and attending with a large group of friends.Â  The movie was exactly what I expected, although I can say I was hoping for better…Â  but again, I’m not a fan of comic books, and I’ve never read one in my life.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**yes... i thought so  
**taylhis**And I meant Joey's cologne OPPONENT'S voice...  
**taylhis**Wouldn't have recognized the Brach's factory if I hadn't read about it. I probably would have thought the city looked familiar, though I definitely would have recognized the arial shot of the Chicago River with all the traffic next to it... I'll have to ask Chris - he went down to the city much more often than I did. Overall, I'd say it was very well disguised.  
**jamiahsh**I was also curious to see reactions to the setting from two suburban Chicagoans. Was it well disguised or did you recognize anything beyond the abandoned Brach's factory?  
**jamiahsh**I had not thought about Joey's cologne voice, but yeah. Right. It is really funny that Maggie's BROTHER, Jake was up for Batman for the previous film. That would have been strange casting (not that it would have happened). I think that this and Brokeback Mountain will be the two Ledger will be most remembered for. Personally, the only other film I saw him in was The Patriot playing Mel Gibson's son. I predict a nomination, but don't I will not give my winning pick until next Feb.

# Flashback!

In the last few days, my recovery from tthe emergency c-section has not been going well.Â  I awoke from a nap Thursday night feeling awful, but luckily my medication kicked in, and I was able to enjoy the midnight showing of The Dark Knight – more on that later.Â  Friday we met Grandma in South Bend Indiana which is halfway between Chicago where she lives and Ohio where we live to transfer my kids for a week’s vacation with Grandma.Â  I felt awful all day, and I started shivering in the restaurant.Â  I knew there was something really wrong when I went outside into the 90Â° oven and actually *enjoyed* it – uh oh.

When I got back to Ohio, I had an appointment with my doctor for her to take out my staples (yes, they had to actually use *staples* to put me back together, yuck) and that actually went well.Â  Hardly hurt at all, just a little pinch, and it didn’t take long.Â  I brought up my symptoms to my doctor and she said everything was normal, and I believed her because when I had my other babies, I would heal up right away, so I figured these were all just side effects from the cesarean.Â  But I took another nap when I got home and when I woke up, I felt like I was dying – that’s really the only way to describe it.Â  We took my temperature and it was 102.7Â°, so of course I had chills, the sweats, headache, and pain.Â  A quick look on the internet gave us the diagnosis:Â  mastitis – a common infection often suffered by breast-feeding mothers.Â  We called the doctor and they wouldn’t prescribe any antibiotics over the phone, so we headed to the hospital for the 2nd time in a week…

The admissions people panicked when they saw us coming in with the baby, but we quickly explained it wasn’t him, thank goodness.Â  Anyway, after a quick look, the ER doctor confirmed our internet diagnosis and sent us home with a prescription.Â  But since all the pharmacies were closed in our town, they gave me some medicine right then and there.Â  “Name and birthdate”, they always ask at the hospital before they give you your meds, and I was like, FLASHBACK!Â  I thought I was done with this for awhile!Â  But for spending a Friday night in the ER, it wasn’t so bad; we were actually in and out in an hour.Â  If this had happened in suburban Chicago where I used to live, it would have taken 3-4 hours to wait our turn in the ER, and they would have wheeled a few body bags past us while we were waiting.Â  So today, I feel much better comparatively, and since the girls are with grandma, I slept until 11:30, so I’m sure that also helped.Â  The antibiotics seem to be working already, and it was nice to wake up and not feel like I was dying, something that hasn’t happened for a few days.Â  I also feel better that now I think my recovery from everything is headed in the right direction, whereas when I felt crappy and didn’t know why, it was discouraging because I was thinking, will I ever feel better?

My husband is peeved at my OB-GYN for not checking me more thoroughly during my visit with her yesterday.Â  I agree; Idid mention my symptoms and she was too dismissive, but being a man (especially one who won’tÂ listen to doctor’s orders – if the doctor tells him to do something or recommends some sort of exam or test and he doesn’t want to do it, he just won’t)Â I don’t think he understands how important to me it is to have a woman OB-GYN, and she is the only one in town.Â  Besides, I do like her, she is gentle and she has been through 3 c-sections herself, so she knew exactly what to tell me about what to expect.Â  If we do have any more children, there will be some debate about which doctor we will use.Â  Well, anyway…Â  off to Walmart to get my *third* prescription this week!

### Comments

**derek**I pray you're healed soon!  
**jamiahsh**Doesn't sound like much fun to me. I would have been upset with the doctor's quick dismissal as well. Hope you enjoy(?) your week minus the girls.

# Scooby Update

I would like to thank everyone who offered help to us when we recently had to face the unplanned decision to find another home for one of our beloved pets.Â  Our dog Scooby, had bitten one of our kids in the face.Â  I sent out a plea via email to everyone I knew looking for a new home for Scooby since she was not a vicious animal, just so overwhelmed by fear and tension all the time that a house with kids was not a good home for her.Â  Lots of people wrote back to me offering support and great tips to help find her a home, and I’d like to thank everyone.Â  I’d also like to let you know that there is now a very happy ending to the story.Â  Scooby was adopted by a board member of the humane society where we took her.Â  She was taken home, and the board member just fell in love with her.Â  She has a fenced in yard and some other dogs to play with, which is just perfect because Scooby LOVES to run and she also LOVES other dogs – it was just kids that nade her nervous.

My 8-year-old daughter is a little upset, only because we told her we could go visit Scooby and we never did.Â  We just didn’t want Scooby to smell us and get excited about coming with us until she had found a happy home of her own.Â  Now that she has, we don’t know who it is that adopted her, and my daughter is sad because she really wanted to see Scooby.Â  It’s gotten better for her though, and it’s tough for an 8-year-old to understand, butÂ we’ve explained how ScoobyÂ is truly better off where she is now.

So thanks again to everyone who offered their help.Â  It was a heartbreaking decision, and I am certainly not one who is in favor of “getting rid” of animals…Â  but I think anyone in my position with 4 kids would understand how a dog with a history of biting cannot be a part of our household.Â  Thanks goodness she was able to find another forever home!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Totally agree... there could have been repercussions ouside the house. But Scooby is in a MUCH better place where he can run in a large area and not feel so uneasy.  
**derek**Not to be callous, but at least it wasn't someone outside of your family that was bitten. If that was the case, there would be a much sadder ending to this story. I don't remember the incident, but I hope the girl in question is doing much better! And I'm glad Scooby is okay in her new home. No more Scooby snacks like that for her I hope...

# Congratulatory Dinner

Our small hospital does offer at least one benefit when you have a baby there: the congratulatory dinner.Â  They have a woman who caters a dinner, and the nurses give you a choice if you want baby to join in or be babysat at the nurse’s station to give mom and dad a “date”.Â  Although the setting is in the hospital, they take you down to a special room that overlooks the city, and we’re not talking about hospital food!Â  This is gourmet, delicious, and for dessert, a cake to celebrate baby’s arrival.Â  The dinner was so good when we had my 21-month-old that I told my husband we have to take pictures next time because it was hard for our friends to believe that food this good existed in our small town.Â  But it does, and here are the pictures to prove it!Â  I only wish they sold it in the hospital cafeteria on a regular basis – now that would totally redefine the term “hospital food”!Â  By the way, those are giant shrimp in the picture that tasted like lobster; complete with a vat of butter for dipping.Â  And that isn’t a bottle of wine but sparkling grape juice, in case you were wondering why they would give a breastfeeding mom a bottle of wine [](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/07/congrats-lunch-at-hospital-7-14-08-3.jpg)Â [](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/07/congrats-lunch-at-hospital-7-14-08-2.jpg)

### Comments

**jamiahsh**WOW... THEY EVEN LOOK LIKE LOBSTER

# An American Girl - The Movie?

Because I have 3 daughters, I am no stranger to the American Girl doll franchise.Â  Given their extremely high price tags, I was once a big opponent, however like any parent, once I saw how much my kids enjoy something, I’ve changed my mind.Â  Grammie bought our oldest daughter an American Girl doll a few Christmases ago, and then her little sister got one for her birthday, so at least the fighting overÂ who gets to play with the one dollÂ has ended.Â  Their other grandma has made clothes for their dolls, thus saving us money on the really expensive clothes.Â  Overall, the dolls really haven’t been that expensive for us, probably because we don’t buy them any clothes or accessories; thankfully there isn’t a place in our rural area that carries any American Girl doll stuff, so that helps also.

A few weekends ago, I took my girls and a friend to see the new American Girl doll movie, [Kitt Kittredge](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0846308/).Â  I wasn’t expecting much, but I just love [Abigail Breslin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1113550/), and I also really like to learn about the Great Depression era.Â  The movie did a great job of portraying life during this period in history, at least to the best of my knowledge.Â  It seemed historically accurate; complete with hobo secrets and terminology.Â  I really enjoyed it – it was a cute little movie, and it even had some twists and turns that I didn’t see coming and which supplemented the plot nicely.Â  Abigail Breslin was delightful as always, [Joan Cusack](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000349/) was a riot, and [Stanley Tucci](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001804/) was wonderful asÂ a mysterious magician.Â  Their roles were all well-played along with most others as the movie was very well-cast.

The only problem I had with it was that if you didn’t know any better, it didn’t seem to have much to do with American Girl, and especially not dolls.Â  But if you know anything about the franchise, it makes sense.Â  Each doll in the series has a “backstory” – she comes from a different backround and time period and there are books that explain the backstories.Â  However, on our way to the movie, I asked my girls if they knew what the movie was about, and they suggested that maybe a girl’s doll comes to life or something.Â  But like I said, the movie actually had nothing to do with dolls at all – it was the backstory of the doll named Kitt Kittredge.Â  The girls didn’t seem disappointed, and only the 8-year-olds got a little rambunctious.Â  I also had an 11-year-old with me who really liked it, and a 4-year-old who seemed to enjoy it also – especially the use of animals in the movie.Â  My 4-year-old daughter LOVED the monkey and his antics.

Overall, it was an entertaining afternoon; well-worth the matinee price for the girls to see it, and I was entertained as well.Â  My husband didn’t want any part of it, so he stayed home with our 21-month-old who can’t sit through movies anyway.Â  But it’s a good family movie; although it might add some wishes toÂ my girls’Â list when they visit the American Girl doll store in Chicago with their grandma next week – not an accident on the part of the American Girl doll franchise, I’m sure.

### Comments

**Doll Clothes Gal**Great post. My family loved the AG movie. My 10 year old daughter wrote her own review on our blog: http://www.emilycompanies.com/americandollclothes/2008/07/02/emilys-film-review-kit-kettredge-an-american-girl/  
**jamiahsh**And the approaching High School Musical 3? Coming soon to a multiplex near you? Will this be a whole family movie event or just the female contingent?  
**jamiahsh**Yes, I would have shared in your husband's enthusiasm and stayed home :D Now when the sequel comes out (which undoubtedly there will be), he at least will have a growing boy to entertain him (the youngest daughter I'm sure will be of age to enjoy the movie).

# A Teacher CANNOT...

…tape a student to a chair.Â  That’s the lesson an Illinois man is learning after being sentenced to probation following an incident in a McHenry County classroom.Â  Sorry Derek – this is really a story for your blog…Â  you have my permission to steal it.Â  Hopefully they cover not taping kids, especially special education students, to their chairs in Substitute Teaching 101?Â  Here is the full story:

**Substitute Teacher Gets Probation For Taping Unruly Student To Seat**

A substitute teacher who taped a pair of rambunctious 8-year-old special education students to their seats was spared forced confinement himself Tuesday when a judge sentenced him to probation instead of prison on a pair of felony convictions.

Matthew Konetski, 32, of South Beloit, Ill., must serve two years probation, pay a $1,500 fine and perform 80 hours public service under the sentence handed down by a McHenry County judge.

The sentence comes about six weeks after a jury found Konetski guilty of aggravated battery and unlawful restraint for a March 2006 incident in which he taped one of his students at Harvard’s Jefferson Elementary School to his seat, then put tape over the boy’s mouth when the boy would not sit still.

The taping, according to trial testimony, lasted between two and five minutes.

Authorities initially charged Konetski with doing the same to a second student, but prosecutors opted not to go to trial on those allegations.

The mother of the boy whose case did go to trial said she is satisfied with the sentence.

“I never wanted to put him in jail,” she said. “I just wanted him held accountable.”

In a letter to the court, the mother said her son, who’s been diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder, began acting out after the incident. At one point, she writes, the boy was hospitalized for more than 30 days.

“(He), 26 months later, still wakes up screaming ‘Let me go!,’ ” the letter states.

During his trial, Konetski testified that he taped the boys as a last resort when they would not stop getting up in class. Although he was a first-year substitute with no special education training, Konetski was left alone with the special education students without two aides normally assigned to the class.

He apologized Tuesday for his actions, saying he never intended to harm or scare the boys.

“I was just trying to come up with a way to deal with a situation I didn’t know how to deal with,” he said.

County prosecutors had asked for a jail sentence along with the probation term, saying a stiff sentence would send a message to the public.

“(The victim) experienced being confined in his chair that day by this defendant,” Assistant McHenry County State’s Attorney Sharyl Eisenstein said. “We feel that he, in turn, should be confined in the McHenry County jail.”

Konetski will not have to register as a sex offender because, Judge Sharon Prather ruled, there is no evidence his actions were sexually motivated.  
Â

### Comments

**derek**I did notice that the prosecution wanted a stiffer sentence than the mother did. To actually fit the crime though, his confinement would have to be measured in minutes though, same as the boys in question. I can't believe that being made a sex-offender was considered either. What is the matter with those people? They didn't want an eye-for-an-eye, they wanted his entire head! It should be sufficient for them that with this felony conviction he won't be able to teach anymore in any capacity. In any event, this wasn't entirely his fault as, "Although he was a first-year substitute with no special education training, Konetski was left alone with the special education students without two aides normally assigned to the class." The school clearly bears some responsibility in this.  
**derek**Nope, I've never taped a student to a chair before. On the other hand there was one incident where a student took a roll of tape and started taping his own desk...  
**jamiahsh**Good that you posted the whole article. It would have looked oddly suspicious and would have led to questions directed toward Derek (since I don't know where McHenry County is. :D

# He Is Here!

[[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/07/christopher-vincent-4-days-old-002.jpg)](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/07/christopher-vincent-4-days-old-002.jpg)After months of blogging about my pregnancy, it’s finally over and with the best result possible – a healthy, beautiful baby boy!Â  His name is Christopher Vincent and he was 8 lbs. 2 oz. and 20.7 inches long when he was born at 2:53 pm on July 11.Â  He is named for his father (at my insistence because my husband felt it was egotistical of him to duplicate his name – not when others do it, just him for some reason) and his middle name is after the baby’s late grandfather, my husband’s father who passed away from Lou Gehrig’s disease when our oldest child was just one year old.Â  So we’ve been waiting a long time for a namesake for Vincent, and now little Christopher Vincent is here.Â  He is a perfect baby and rarely cries, although he does seem to have his days and nights mixed up.Â  Today he slept for almost 5 hours until I woke him up to eat.Â  But that’s probably because last night he woke up *every* hour.Â  I wish I had known he was going to sleep that long because I would have taken a nap!Â  It’s been difficult for me to sleep at night due to the extreme pain I’m feeling because of the emergency cesarean they had to do to bring little Christopher into the world.

[[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/07/christopher-vincent-7-15-08.jpg)](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/07/christopher-vincent-7-15-08.jpg)Here’s a warning – I’m going to get a little bit graphic medically here because I feel the need to explain what happened to me.Â  That way, other moms searching for info about pregnancy, cesareans, etc. can happen across my site, and maybe it will help educate them and ease their fears if they know some things they can expect.Â  For the rest of you, I apologize, and I suggest just looking at the really cute pictures of the baby and moving on to my other posts.

So I went to the hospital Friday at 7 am to get induced…Â  I was really excited, but also pretty nervous.Â  It’s ironic that I didn’t allow myself to getÂ as nervous as I was with my 3 previous pregnancies because my last birth went relatively smoothly, so I figured, why get all worked up when everything will probably be fine?Â  But it wasn’t.Â  Well, in the end it was, but until I got to see Christopher,Â Friday was one of the worst days of my life.Â  It all started when the nurse couldn’t get my IV in.Â  I always bruise like crazy from the IV, but they’ve never had trouble getting it in me before.Â  In fact, I seem to remember writing a post in my blog about what good veins they always say I have.Â  Anyway, the nurse was trying to “save me a poke” and get a blood sample at the same time she hooked up my IV.Â  I ended up with two holes on my right hand that swelled up likeÂ balloons – and I still had to get the IV put into my left hand.Â  All that and she STILL had to draw blood from the vein like a regular blood sample, thus not “saving me a poke” at allÂ as she had promised.Â  But it didn’t matter because I never care too much about the blood draw since I’m used to it and my veins are so easy to find…Â  but anyway, after all this, I had to make a stupid comment – I said to the nurse, “I hope this isn’t an omen for how the rest of the day will go…”Â  Idiot.Â  Apparently I cursed myself because things were just going to get worse.Â

[[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/07/christopher-vincent-4-days-old-001-12.jpg)](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/07/christopher-vincent-4-days-old-001-12.jpg)The contractions started getting pretty painful and I called for the epidural, which if you don’t know, is a pain elimination procedure (supposedly) administered directly into the spine.Â  It’s very uncomfortable to receive one, although it’s nothing compared to the pain of the contractions it relieves,Â provided someone poking around in your spine doesn’t bother you.Â  Except that mine didn’t work, which I’m told is rare, so don’t worry, just research other options before you go…Â  But for me,Â this is whereÂ things go from bad to worse.Â  Once we’ve all determined that the epidural didn’t take, they make a call for the anesthesiologist to come back and discuss options.Â  Except that, lucky for me (sarcasm), there was a shift change, so the person who messed up my first epidural was no longer around toÂ mess upÂ a second one.Â  And, of course the newÂ anesthesiologist didn’t want to do one on a patient who had been done by someone else.Â  And I should note that every time they call the anesthesiologist, it takes forever and a day for them to come because they’re usually doing other patients in the hospital or who knows what.Â  I wonder if it’s like that at larger hospitals…Â  Our hospital is quite small, and I’ve often wondered if there are certain aspects of care that could be better as a result.Â  Anyway, so the 2ndÂ anesthesiologist is explaining my options to me, and she is talking so slowly, I swear I was close to kicking her – I could still feel my legs, after all, and that was their fault, not mine.Â  As she’s explaining my options to me (not that there were many left), the nurse decided to check me and that’s when she discovered we didn’t have time to do *anything* – the baby was coming!Â  TheÂ anesthesiologist was shooed away and the doctor was called, but of course with the way things had been going that day, she had gone home and so we had to wait for her to get back to the hospital.Â  She got there and I was finally able to start pushing, except the baby wouldn’t budge.Â  I think the pain was worse than it’s ever been, and I could tell the baby wasn’t being pushed, and then the worst news yet – the baby’s heart rate started dropping.Â  Everyone started running around, honestly, it was total chaos, but I couldn’t even think straight through all the pain.Â  They wheeled me into the surgery room where there were like 10 people wearing surgery masks all doing different things.Â  I was actually in favor of them knocking me out – the sooner, the better.Â  Of course because of the epidural not working, I felt them cut me open, but in retrospect I don’t know if it hurt more than I was freaked out about being able to feel them cut me open.Â  My arms and legs wereÂ tied down andÂ I will be honest – it was a horribleÂ experience – I couldn’t sleep my first night in the hospital because right when I’d fall asleep, I’d have a flashback of the experience and jolt awake.  
Then, I smelled something funny in my oxygen mask and the next thing I know, I’m being wheeled out of the room – it was over!Â  They had gassed me after all – lucky for everyone involved!Â  But now I’m stuck with the awful recovery process of a c-section.Â  One of the worst things about it besides the pain is the fact that I can’t lift heavy objects – including kids.Â  The second I got home, my 21-month-old reached her arms out and said “Mommy!” with a big smile, and promptly started crying when I couldn’t pick her up.Â  Between the lack of sleep, the hormone changes, and me missing her, I started crying, but luckily grandma saw me lose it and stepped in to rescue us; giving my daughter ice cream to feed me that made it all better for both of us.Â  Now, only 2 days later,Â my daughter seems used to not being picked up, and the pain seems to be getting better, finally.Â  Yesterday the pain was getting worse instead of better; when I woke up, every square inch ofÂ my bodyÂ throbbed with pain, andÂ I couldn’t move at all – it was awful and totally discouraging.Â  But,Â I had forgotten that the doctor said to also useÂ ibuprofin along with my pain meds, so ever since I’ve been trying that, it’s been working for me.Â  But believe it or not, another pain remedy is baby-smelling.Â  You just sniff the head of the newborn baby and give him kisses and it makes the pain better too!Â  The worst part of the whole thing is that I had really wanted more kids, but after Friday, I just don’t know if I have it in me to go through something like that (or worse!) again…Â  But for now, I am enjoying mommyhood immensely, and the girls LOVE their new little brother.Â  Taylor and Sammie want to hold him all the time, and Sammie especially can’t keep her hands off him.Â  She’s always petting his head or touching his hands, or softly kissing him…Â  she is so gentle; it’s very sweet.Â  And Disney, being almost 2, is getting her own ideas on how to care for Christopher as well.Â  Yesterday she tried to insist that he be put into his car seat and of course she threw a tantrum whenÂ it didn’t go her way…Â  But overall, things are going great and wil be even better once we unmix Christopher’s days and nights and get some more sleep!

Oh, and one more hint that will give you a fun momento for the baby book.Â  If you mail a birth announcement to the White House, they will send you a congrats card from the President!Â  Signed by an intern, of course, but hey, for some people in the ’90’s, that would have been Monica Lewinsky!Â  Here is the address you send it to, you can also do this for wedding invitations, though I’m not sure the address is the same.Â  I would just do a google search for “white house wedding announcement” or something like that.

Send your baby’s name, birthdateÂ and address to:

White House Greetings Office  
Room 39  
Washington, DC 20500

### Comments

**Vickie**Wow, Lisa, I didn't realize what all you had been thru! Sure glad everything turned out OK! Maybe this is a sign from God -- enough kids!! I'm just glad you enjoy being a mommy, because I know I could never do it -- kids drive me crazy!! Christopher looks great, and I can't wait to see him! May God continue to lay his healing hand on you in the next few weeks so that you will feel lots better soon!  
**derek**Well, it's great to hear that the end was fine even if the means were big trouble (you reached the end of the ordeal in spite of the means?). I'm just glad you and CJ (Chris Jr.) are doing well. I'll see all of you some time (not sure when).  
**justj**Wow, what a trial you went through. You and your new son are healthy, so all the other things will fade in time. I can't wait to see the newest member of the Food Chain Gang  
**Kim**PS How do you have the energy to write such detailed blogs? Good for you. I'm still exhausted and it's been almost three months. I feel lucky if we just get through the day!!!  
**Kim**I am so sorry to hear about all you went through. It must be the boys in our family! Although my epideral did work, it took the anesthesiologist over an hour to come in to give it to me. And I delivered at Central Dupage Hospital, which is very large. Maybe it's like that everywhere. Since my contractions became so strong, the nurse gave me some kind of drug (forgot the name) to lessen the pain while waiting for the epideral. I was able to be awake during my c-section, and my pain wasn't too bad during the first day since the epideral and spinal were still in effect. The pain did increase after that, though, and lasted for a few weeks. Alternating ibuprofin with the pain medication made it bearable, though. It's hard not being able to lift your kids, but they will get used to it. You can always have them sit in your lap while you are sitting down, or cuddle with them on the couch. Like you said the most important thing is that both you and the baby are healthy. He is beautiful and we can't wait to meet him! Love, Kim  
**taylhis**Thanks Dawn! Come see the Nerd in Sept and we'll both be there! Also planning on having another WCCT family fun day soon, will keep you posted!  
**Dawn**Thanks so much for sending these photos - and your story of the day. You are so funny in your descriptions! Anyway, Christopher is a little doll! Of course, so are his parents and sisters - why should he be any different?! You guys take care - I'm looking forward to meeting Christopher one of these days! Hugs to you all ~ Dawn  
**jamiahsh**So glad the result was much better than the procedure. He is absolutely adorable. So glad his dad and grandpa have a namesake :D

# The Mole - Week #6

*The following contains information and possible spoilers about the Mole episode that aired on July 14.Â  Do not keep reading if you haven’t seen it – consider yourself warned!*

We’re getting down to the nitty gritty – there is only one woman left for one thing, who would have thought that it would be Nicole.Â  It was a rarity, but my 8-year-old daughter was the last one standing last night, so she was invited to watch the Mole with us.Â  I know it’s rated TV-14, but it’s just for language, and she knows better than to repeat some things they say…Â  it did bring it to my attention though; I would otherwise ignore it, but why can’t they just leave it out?Â  Do they really need to say words like (fill in the blanks) a\*\* and c\*ap on tv?Â  I don’t see why they can’t just edit them out.Â  But anyway, she really liked the show, and she said that everyone acts suspicious.Â  Her final guess for the most mole-y behavior is Nicole though, so I will add her to our poll at the end of this post.

Since we have a new baby in the house, I am SO tired, and it seems like the more tired I am, the worse my short-term memory is.Â  So I don’t remember too many details about the Mole, even though it was just on last night.Â  I was not surprised to see Alex booted, and if I had had one eye on the clock, I would have known that the first person’s quiz results they showed would be red this time.Â  They do that at least once a season – eliminate the first person whose results were given.Â  I figured Alex wasn’t the Mole, so it was no surprise when he was booted.Â  It was fun to watch how scared everyone got before they dove backwards off the plank.Â  I didn’t get much out of the brainteaser game because I would normally like to play along with something like that, but my brain is so fried lately and they didn’t give us enough time to think about the answers, so I just spent the challenge answered my daughter’s questions about the show instead.Â  But I’d have to say, aside from the language, it’s a good family show since it kept my 8-year-old’s attention, and I think my 4-year-old would like it too.

Mole Guesses for this week:  
Taylor – Nicole

Chris – staying with Paul

Taylhis – staying with Nicole

Jamiahsh – staying with Paul

Hmmm…Â  interesting.Â  The two people with the strongest personalities have the most guesses.Â  I guess we think they could be exaggerating their attitudes.Â  At least that’s how I feel with Nicole.Â  I’ve begun to wonder, could anyone REALLY be that much of a total b\*tch?

### Comments

**jamiahsh**And I do agree with the language ... they should edit it out.  
**jamiahsh**Paul even admits that he is using his personality to "get to" the other players.

# The Weed Saga

We became home-owners about a year and half ago, and as fellow home-owners know, it’s a lot different than renting.Â  For one thing, we now have a yard to maintain andÂ being 2 very busy people who know absolutely nothing about landscaping, we’ve found this aspect of home ownership quite challenging.Â  As many of you know, my husband is a very hard worker, and when he is off work, we are usually out and about with the kids – no Saturdays working on the yard for us!Â  So I usually venture outside while I’m playing with the kids in the summer and make a haphazard attempt at pulling weeds and trying to make the yard presentable.Â  The good news is we have yet to receive a complaint notice on a stick from the city, like I sometimes see in other less fortunate yards.Â  The bad news is that if we were to ever get one of those notices, I fear now would be the time since I have been immobile with my pregnancy so far this summer.

So my awesome husband tried to make arrangements with a local fellow to have the weeds done for me on my birthday, but the guy showed up and was gone by the time we returned from lunch, etc.Â less than 3 hours later.Â  He did get some of the weeds, but not all that many, and lo and behold, the other day we received a bill from him – for $140!!!Â  Even if he had been here 3 hours, that would be over $46 / hour and he didn’t even do nearly everything he was supposed to do!Â  Needless to say, I’m going to dispute the bill, but first I’m going to have a baby and get out of the hospital, so he’s going to have to wait.Â  In the meantime, we’ve enlisted a friend who is a landscaper to help, and he’s going to visit and work hourly on Thursdays…Â  not the immediate weed relief I was hoping for, but I’m sure he will do a much better job for a much more reasonable rate.Â  He already visited after weed guy #1 and confirmed that there are still LOTS of weeds in our yard.Â  I just don’t know what weed guy #1 was thinking…Â  it’s tough times in the economy and he seemed nice enough, but he must be crazy if he thinks we’re going to pay him that much for what little weed relief he gave us…Â  My town is going to be offering college classes soon so maybe I should just take a horticulture class and doÂ the landscapingÂ myself from now on…

### Comments

**derek**Indeed. Get that fourth child's birthday out of the way and rest up before you do anything. If that charge is to stick, he needs to come back and finish the job.  
**jamiahsh**$46/hr for 3 hours of shoddy work... sounds like a dispute to me. But, yes get more important things taken care of first.  
**CAC**Good wishes to you - We are so excited and happy! Mother/daughter

# FINALLY!

Unless I finish some of the drafts I’ve been working on today, this will be my last post for a little while – the Dr. finally gave us the green light to have our baby tomorrow!Â  I am to report to the hospital at 7 am for an induction, and hopefully (unlessÂ this babyÂ takes after 2 of his older sisters who were actually born a day after their induction) we will have a healthy baby soon after that.Â  I would like to thank everyone who has been thinking about and praying for us, and I will ask hubby toÂ email and / orÂ call people when there is news tomorrow or Saturday.Â  We will send pictures ASAP!

Thanks again so much for your thoughts and prayers – it means a lot to us!

### Comments

**taylhis**Thanks for asking justj - my mom and uncle are in town until I get out of the hospital.  
**jamiahsh**Yes, I can't wait to meet him. Thank you both for everything and good luck tomorrow.  
**justj**Looking forward to hearing the news. My thoughts are with all of you.... Do you have someone to watch your girls tomorrow?

# Pringles â‰  Potato Chips

I caught the tail-end of a news story the other day…Â  something about a judge ruling that Pringles are not potato chips.Â  What in the world?Â  I wondered why a judge would be ruling on such a thing and also if they’re not potato chips, what are they?Â  Since I have limited time, I did limited research on the subject, and I found the answer to the first question; see below:

*LONDON – Britain’s High Court has ruled that Pringles are not a potato snack, and thus are not subject to value-added tax.*

*Friday’s ruling by Justice Nicholas Warren is expected to save millions for the manufacturer, Procter & Gamble Co.*

*Warren overruled a VAT Tribunal decision that Pringles should be subject to the 17.5-percent tax because it met the definition of “potato crisps, potato sticks, potato puffs and similar products made from the potato, or from potato flour, or from potato starch.”*

*The judge found that Pringles were only 42 percent potato, and thus exempt.*

*P&G spokeswoman Marina Barker says the company is pleased with the ruling.*

Umm…Â  so what else is in Pringles besides potato?Â  Do we really want to know?Â  And while searching for this tidbit of info, I came across another interesting article about my favorite potato chip, er, potato-ish snack food, though maybe I should have posted a link on JustJ’s recent morbid post about the discarding of human bodies…Â  Ahh, the Internet.Â  Everything you ever wanted to know and some things you didn’t – all at your fingertips!

Cincinnatti, OH – *Dr. Fredric J. Baur was so proud of having designed the container for Pringles potato crisps that he asked his family to bury him in one.*

*His children honored his request. Part of his remains was buried in a Pringles can – along with a regular urn containing the rest – in his grave at Arlington Memorial Gardens in Springfield Township.*

*Dr. Baur, a retired organic chemist and food storage technician who specialized in research and development and quality control for Procter & Gamble, died May 4 at Vitas Hospice. The College Hill resident was 89.*

### Comments

**justj**Pringles also contain rice flour and wheat starch. And of course numerous artificial colors and flavors, natural flavors and ingredients depending on the type of Pringles you buy. Let's not forget the salt!!!  
**derek**I can see it now: a bag that seems to say "Potato Chips" but as you look closer you see right under "potato" in small letters only slightly off-color from the background, the word "flavored." :D  
**derek**Hm. I've never known of such a distinction in chips. Next up: artificially flavored potato chi- er, crisps with no actual potato content...  
**jamiahsh**yes, they are indeed a potato CRISP... apparently anything less than a certain amount of potato in them are not considered a chip.

# ONE More Time, She Says...

Yeah right.Â  I’ve heard that before.Â  I went to the dr. today and we were supposed to schedule an induction date – AGAIN.Â Â But we have to wait and see how I’m doing at another appointment – AGAIN!Â  My body is very slow to react and I think that if I weren’t induced, my babies would never come out.Â  But Thursday is the new day, so we’ll see how I’m doing then, and she said *hopefully* Friday I can be induced.Â  Hopefully is the key word here because after going to the dr 4 times to get an induction date and not getting one, I’m starting to lose optimism.Â  My husband says let’s just wait until the 21st…Â  that’s funny because our first daughter was born on December 21st, our second daughter was born on May 21st, and our 3rd daughter was born on October 20th (the 21st was a Saturday and the dr. was off work and didn’t want to induce me on a Saturday).Â  So it’s only fitting we should have a July 21st or even July 20th baby, right?Â  But this whole pregnancyÂ my dr.Â said she wanted to induce me a week before my due date (which is July 14 and she is adamant that it is correct) because I have large babies.Â  My first was 7 lbs 2 oz which is normal, but myÂ youngest twoÂ were 8 lbs 12 oz each with the last one beingÂ even a half ounce more than her sister…Â  so it seems that they just keep getting bigger.Â  Except todayÂ the dr. said this baby doesn’t seem to be as large as the others, and since my body is not cooperating anyway…Â  it’s the waiting game we play.

I guess we’ve gotten spoiled with being able to set a date for having the other kids; we’ve gotten used to knowing when the babies are going to come, and it’s hard to remember and realize the fact that it’s not an exact science even in this day and age.Â  I want him here ASAP of course, not only to meet him, but also for selfish reasons; mainly involving having my body back so I can do some things other than eating and sleeping.Â  I feel so guiltyÂ about my lack of participation around the house, but physically, it’s become impossible to even push myself to do things like I was a few weeks ago…Â  I can no longer bend over to let the dogs out, and bending over to do laundry is becoming more difficult by the day since we have front-loading machines.Â  My muscles most of the time feel so tired that I worry they won’t even hold up my own (very heavy)Â body, let alone strong enough to chase kids around…Â  and my kids have been acting horribly lately – what timing.Â  Hubby has really had to pick up some extra slack around here, well more than that really, he’s doing almost everything…Â  and I feel badly but what can I do but wait.Â  My biggest wish of course is a healthy baby, and wish #2 on the list is an easy, painless labor, so if I get my wishes, all this waiting won’t be so bad in retrospect.Â  But in the meantime, I have so many people waiting on us…Â  Grandma’s been on standby from 2 states over for a week now since she is planning to come and watch the kids…Â  Hubby’s work is somewhat on hold since he must take frequent breaks to referree the kids.Â  He’s waiting until I’m in the hospital and Grandma has the kids, then he’s going to work like a maniac in the empty house to build up our finances which have also been neglected during the waiting game…Â  Not to mention all the wonderful friends and well-wishers who want to meet little Christopher!Â  Maybe on Thursday I will have some better news…Â  or I could actually start going into labor on my own before then…Â  yeah right!Â  ðŸ˜‰

### Comments

**derek**Sorry I can't be of much help with your situation. I kinda lack the, er, experience... Be prayin' for you though.  
**taylhis**I will try some things... dunno about the walking though, it's tougher than it looks! Had my false alarm the other day after swimming, hmmm... Just J - dunno if I can hold out til the 19th... if not, we can always visit the winery like we did last year, provided they let newborns visit of course :)  
**jamiahsh**I bet you are going insane. Hang in there (Hopefully) a little while longer. Take a few laps around the block and do some other old wives suggestions.  
**justj**The 19th of July was a very good day....  
**Baby S Gang » ONE More Time, She Saysâ€¦**[...] ONE More Time, She Saysâ€¦ So itâ€™s only fitting we should have a July 21st or even July 20th baby, right? But this whole pregnancy my dr. said she wanted to induce me a week before my due date (which is July 14 and she is adamant that it is correct) because I … [...]

# 88 Minutes

We finally saw the movie [88 Minutes](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0411061/) the other night.Â  I don’t know what we were so busy with when it came out in the theaters, but we somehow didn’t get around to seeing it then.Â  The reviews were so unfavorable that I forgot we had missed it; I guess I just wrote it off.Â  I’ve learned time and time again to go opposite what most reviewers say, so I don’t know why I let them get to me this time…

So anyway, the movie is about aÂ very well knownÂ forensic psychiatrist played by [Al Pacino](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000199/).Â  A serial murderer he testified against is hours away from execution when Pacino receives a phone call saying he has 88 minutes to live – tick tock tock.Â  Much action and plot twistsÂ ensue, and at the conclusion, I foundÂ myself very satisfied with this movie as a thriller – something I can’t say about the last few thrillers I’ve seen.Â  There are a whole bunch of characters, and the movie manages to make all of them interesting and VERY suspectable.Â  What surprised me was my ability to keep them all straight – that is usually something I have a problem with when watching movies – I tend to mix up characters especially when the actors playing them look the slightest bit alike, and I also have trouble remembering names.Â  Although I can’t put my finger on what was different about this movie, I was able to differentiate between all the characters; not only remembering who was who but their names and relationship to the main character – rarities for me.Â  Adding to my enjoyment of the movie was the fact that it kept you on the edge of your seat, and its many plot twists and turns kept you guessing and didn’t come out too cheesy in the end, which can sometimes ruin a good action movie.Â  Al Pacino was good and believable in his role, though believe it or not I don’t think I’ve seen him in anything else.Â  [Lee Lee Sobieski](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005447/) and [Amy Brenneman](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000312/) also rounded out the supporting cast with strong performances.Â  Overall, a very good action suspense film and I would definitely recommend it to fans of the genre.Â  Others who might enjoy it are true-crime buffs and CSI fans.Â

### Comments

# The Fourth, Fireworks, and a False Alarm

We had a wonderful Independence Day – happy birthdayÂ USA!Â  Went to the local airport where they have a fly-in breakfast every year.Â  There are lots of planes to look at; some grounded, some taking off and landing…Â  and they even have a few that give rides.Â  My middle daughter, the daredevil, was the only one who wanted to try an airplane ride, and she went up by herself!Â  My husband doesn’t like to fly, our older daughter is scared of everything including her own shadow, and I’ve developed a fear of flying over the years that left me frightened for my daughter on her airplane ride.Â  But it turned out ok, she had a blast, and the pilot and other people there were very surprised that she was so unfazed for a 4-year-old going up in an airplane for the first time by herself.Â  I’m really glad she got the opportunity to do so because I really don’t want to pass down my fears to the kids.Â  Seems our oldest somehow got the fear of flying, but its hard to tell from where since she is afraid of EVERYTHING.Â  Maybe I can convince her to go up in our friends’ plane next time he comes to visit…Â  though that won’t be any time soon because he was actually on his way here a few weeks ago and had engine trouble.Â  Had to set down in South Bend and the airplane has been out of commission ever since…Â  oops.Â  At least nothing catastrophic occurred.

At night on July 4th, we spend the evening at the country home of some friends for a barbecue and fireworks.Â  It was really nice chatting under the stars between the cracks and pops of the fireworks.Â  I’m so glad we were able to have fireworks on the 4th because one of the things I just cannot get used to about rural life is their affinity around here to celebrate Independence Day with fireworks in late June.Â  It drives me crazy because my birthday is on the 3rd of July, so my whole life it’s beenÂ birthday and fireworks together, and that’s the way I like it!Â  And speaking of birthdays, they turned the barbecue into a birthday celebration for me…Â  it was SO nice!Â  It was supposed to be a chance for us to get together, and I kind of invited ourselves over because my husband has had fireworks sitting in our garage that he’s been waiting to use for years, but we couldn’t find a place.Â  So when they mentioned last week that their son likes to blow off fireworks on the 4th at their house…Â  opportunity knocks.Â  But then they got me a birthday cake and presents (including such CUTE little boy outfits for the baby and also some things just for me), and it was all very nice.Â  So thanks so much to everyone who reads this blog who was there – it was lots of fun!

Saturday we took the kids swimming at a local hotel’s pool since my husband has a business acquaintance staying there and had a meeting.Â  I love being in a pool while pregnant – all the extra weight just melts off and I can’t describe how wonderful it feels to actually be able to move my legs again…Â  though I’m still paying for it today with soreness…Â  but oh well, I think this is what I can look forward to from here on out – and it won’t be long, at least that’s what I keep telling myself.Â  I really thought it wouldn’t be long Saturday after I went swimming because I started having contractions.Â  We were about ready to go to the hospital when I got up and walked around and they stopped.Â  I think after being in the pool all day, I was so hungry and thirsty at dinner that I ate and drank a lot and just filled myself up too much…Â  my body wasn’t ready to sit down I guess and when I did, muscles began to protest.Â  Such fun.Â  But I did learn something…Â  after I finish this blog I better go and finish packing my hospital bag…Â  just in case!

### Comments

**derek**So *that's* what the fireworks were about here on the third. Normally they are on the fourth, but this year they went off a day early- for taylhis no doubt! :)  
**Capt Tom Bunn LCSW**Please don't let fear of flying trouble you. There is video on the cause and the cure of fear of flying at http://www.fearofflying.com/video\_hs.shtml Or talk it over with me by emailing tom@fearofflying.com  
**jamiahsh**yes... better be ready just in case. :D... although the 'pital is not far away.

# The Incredible Hulk

Super hero movies are not must-sees for me, but we caught a showing of [The Incredible Hulk](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0800080/) the other day mainly because there was nothing else playing that we hadn’t seen already.Â  Since physical activity is out for me (but only for another few weeks – YAY!!), going to a movie on our weekly date night has been popular because even someone of my girth can enjoy sitting in an air-conditioned movie theater for a few hours.Â  I was also drawn to this movie because I remember really enjoying [The Incredible Hulk tv series](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0077031/) Â as a very young child.Â  So both my husband and I were entertained by the movie; it was action-packed, and the special effects weren’t terrible looking like they were in the previews.Â  [EdwardÂ Norton](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001570/) was good, and so was [Liv Tyler](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000239/), but then again, I don’t think I’ve seen her in anything where she was horrible…Â  except maybe that Aerosmith video in whichÂ she appeared in the ’90’s, butÂ then again,Â I’m not a fan of music videos anyway.Â  We did come away with a few questions regarding the believability of the film, but of course, you’re talking about a super hero movie, and our questions were answered by a helpful friend who reads Marvel comics.

Of my 2 favorite things about the movie, one wasÂ the surprise at the end, which I’m not going to spoil, but I will say this – if you’re a comic fan, you will REALLY enjoy the surprise.Â  The other thing I really liked was an inside joke I actually got, even though I don’t read comic books.Â  Liv Tyler’s character buys Bruce Banner some pants, and wouldn’t you know it, she picks out a pair of bright purpleÂ ones – a nod to the old tv series where the Hulk wore purple.Â  I thought that joke was especially funny and clever, and I’m glad they included it.Â  Also enjoyable is the [Lou Ferrigno](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0002073/) cameo; he’s the original Hulk from tv who appears in this movie as a security guard and also voices the computer generated Hulk.Â  If you like the comics, you’ve probably seen this already, but I’d also recommend it for anyone who likes fantasy/action movies or if you were a fan of the Hulk tv show from decades ago.Â  It’s not going to make me start reading comic books, but it was well worth seeing just for the nostalgia factor alone.

### Comments

**derek**It will wait until video for me I'm afraid, Dark Knight as well I think. I *do* want to see Indy IV before it leaves the big screens though. Probably Wall-E too.  
**jamiahsh**I really need to catch up. I'm falling behind yet again for some unknown reason. I WILL see The Dark Night.... that IS A MUST. Maybe Sunday before our lovely hour of fun I will venture to our local bijoux to see something. Hopefully, in the next week or two I will be busy again.... I'm antsy already.

# Crazy Busy

In the past few days, I’ve been able to catch up a little, but I haven’t written muchÂ beforeÂ today and yesterdayÂ because we have been too busy having fun!

It started last Friday when we took the kids out to the [Fun Spot](http://www.funspotpark.com/) in Angola Indiana.Â  We had a great time, but I think I learned a lesson about taking 3 kids out for a full day of fun in the sun while I’m trying to nurse a full-term pregnancy.Â  It was over 80Âº, and we ran out of water and I got sick.Â  I think what pushed me over the edge was trying to watch my 20-month-old as she sat at the edge of a pool while my other children and husband went on the water slide.Â  It’s hard to explain to someone who doesn’t know, butÂ being this hugely pregnant isÂ basically like being incapacitated – if my toddler had fallen into the water, it would have taken me way too long to getÂ over to her.Â  There was a lifeguard present, but still I was a nervous wreck andÂ the stress of the situation was too much, so IÂ picked her up and took her away from the pool.Â  This of course made her cry, and so the exhaustion came from trying to redirect her andÂ do something else in the heat…Â  it was all just too much for me when all I wanted was a seat in the air conditioned arcade.Â  And for his part,Â my husband only got to go down the waterslide once which also made me feel badly because he had so much fun, but I just couldn’t handle our toddler any longerÂ in the heat alone.

After the water slide fiasco, Â we made our way to the animal area – they have a macaw parrot and a few baby deer and some big cats.Â  They are rescue cats; lions and tigers and a cougar, and I’m not sure where they were rescued from.Â  I was a little disenchanted with how small the animals’ enclosures were, but since they are large cats and spend roughly 20 hours a day sleeping, I think it’s a good thing that they’ve been rescued at all and get food and shelter every day.

Then it was time for more rides, and this place is built for kids my daughters’ ages!Â  They have about 10 kiddie rides which all 3 of them could ride, and my 8-year-old still really enjoys these since she’s not ready for big rides yet.Â  Her little sister, on the other hand, cannot wait until she is a little taller and gets to ride the 4 roller coasters the Fun Spot also has.Â  Then they have several middle-of-the-road rides for everyone, like flying boats, a scrambler, a tilt-a-whirl, and even more I’m not mentioning.Â  Compared to the carnival that just left our town, admission into the Fun Spot is a steal – it was $4 for me, a non-rider who just wanted to visit the zoo.Â  Our little toddler cost only $4, and she was able to ride about 10 rides.Â  Our 4-year-old was $8, and my husband and our oldest were $16 each.Â  So for a grand total of $48, it was a full day of family fun and much cheaper than the traveling carnival or even the county fair, based on what you get for your money.Â  And I have to add that in June – too bad it’s over now – but in June they had a special promotionÂ where if you bring in a report card with A’s and B’s on it, the kid that earned them gets in free!Â  So subtract $16 from our $48, and our day of fun was only $32 – we were really pleased.Â  The only problem with the place is that they are at the mercy of the weather always, and with all the rain and storms we’ve been getting, our day of fun was no exception and was cut short when a sudden storm moved in.Â  But it was only an hour and a half away from closing anyway.Â  Also, we had been about to leave as it was, and the staff handed out half-price admission coupons, so we will definitely be back when I can enjoy some of the rides myself after the baby is born.Â  And I willÂ be able to give hubby another few rounds on the water slide!Â  We were so pleased with the place that we tried to go back Sunday since we wanted to take advantage of the report card promotion one more time before June was over, but alas, the weather foiled our plans and we ended up at [Crazy Pinz](http://www.crazypinz.com/) in Fort Wayne, Indiana instead.Â  Still a fun day, but no where near the value of Fun Spot.Â  Crazy Pinz is an indoor entertainment place, and they have an arcade, mini-golf, bowling, and a 3-story play area for the kids.Â  We’ve been there before and really liked it, but this time, everything had changed and was MUCH more expensive.Â  But, we had 4 little kids (brought a friend along) who really thought we were doing something really fun that day, so what could we do but spend the day at Crazy Pinz regardless.Â  I have to mention that somehow, on the way to Fun Spot on Sunday, my husband and I got to talking I guess and somehow missed the exit and overshot the place byÂ about 20Â miles.Â  (Sorry for not using you, Mr. GPS, I thought I knew where we were going!)Â  Then Fun Spot was closed for rain, so we had to head down to Fort Wayne, and overall we ended up spending an extra $20-30 on gas…Â  Kind of a big oopsie with gas prices being so highÂ in this day and age.Â  It was a bad luck kind of day, but we did end up salvaging it, and overall, it was an AWESOME weekend.

Saturday we went with friends to see the movieÂ [Wall-E](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910970/) and then visited a friend who is recovering from heart surgery.Â  He is doing well thankfully, and we all enjoyed our visit together – even the kids, who played with cats and bugs and other creatures foundÂ around their house in theÂ country.Â  We ran up to their church which was having an ice cream social and enjoyed delicious food and homeade ice cream – a dream for a pregnant lady – YUM!Â  Wall-E was pretty good and as it turns out, the Pixar people had a brainstorming meeting years ago, and this is the last film to be made from ideas presented at that meeting.Â  Others are [A Bug’s Life](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120623/), [Monster’s Inc.,](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0198781/) and [Finding Nemo](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0266543/), so needless to say, that brainstorming lunch should go down in history!Â  I have to say I was a little taken aback by the lack of human dialogue in Wall-E.Â  Even after seeing the previews, I wasn’t prepared for it.Â  I think this is what mayÂ have finished offÂ my 4-year-old since she had to leave the movie theater with dad beforeÂ the movieÂ was even half over.Â  She’s been able to make it through the last 5-10 movies we’ve been to in a theater, so that’s why I think it was the lack of dialogue in this one that did her in.Â  It was a cute movie though, but not on par with Pixar’s latest features like Monsters Inc. or especially Finding Nemo, at least in my opinion.Â  Then again, it wasÂ SO different, mostly because it was so futuristic that I suppose it’s hard to compare to the others.

So yeah, fun extended weekend, even though piles of laundry await my folding.Â  If you’re anywhere nearby, head out to Angola, Indiana and visit the Fun Spot, it’s well worth it especially if you have really little ones – it totally trumps a place like Six Flags with their high admission prices and long lines.

### Comments

**Baby S Gang » Crazy Busy**[...] Crazy Busy After the water slide fiaso, we made our way to the animal area - they have a few baby deer and some big cats. They are rescue cats; lions and tigers and a cougar, and Iâ€™m not sure where they were rescued from. … [...]  
**taylhis**I knew what you meant, derek... sure we can meet there. If you want to go to Taylor's play, we'd have to go Aug 1 since the Aug 3 show is during the day and FunSpot gets REALLY crowded on Saturdays they said. Maybe you can catch a ride with my family - they're coming up on Thurs the 31... I will talk to them and see if you want.  
**derek**Ug. Just read my comment back to myself. Rephrase: Next time I go to visit all of you we will meet up in Angola, IN, right? :D :D  
**derek**So next time I go out there we will meet there, right? :D  
**» Crazy Busy Bad Cats: What The World Is Saying About Bad Cats And Their Music**[...] Busy Posted in July 2nd, 2008 by in Uncategorized Crazy Busy After the water slide fiaso, we made our way to the animal area - they have a few baby deer and [...]

# The Mole - Week #5

SPOILER ALERT – The following contains a synopsis of the June 30th episode of the ABC show, The Mole.Â  Do not read if you don’t want to know what happened, including results of the elimination quiz!

I got some really interesting comments about mole-y behavior on last week’s post.Â  They were thought provoking and fun to read, so keep them coming!Â  As for this week, unfortunately my kids were going completely crazy during my viewing of the show, so I won’t be able to go into much detail since I missed a lot.

My husband thought Craig was acting very mole-y.Â  I somewhat agree, although I just don’t get the moleish vibe from him.Â  Could someone really be SO intolerant to cold weather just from living in California?Â  If so, that seems really unhealthy!Â  But anyway, back to the episode.Â  In my opinion, Kristen and Mark were the least suspectable contestants left, so I just knew one of them was going to be eliminated.Â  I think Paul seems like too much of a loose cannon to be the mole, but who knows, it could always be an act.Â  This week, I think my official guess will be Nicole.Â  It stinks because I think I’m really influenced by my husband’sÂ equation using Nicole’s nameÂ – (N+I) (C+O) L E = M O L E  
In past seasons, the show has been known to do things like this, and I just can’t get it out of my head.Â  Plus, last night I noticed a change in her personality where she seemed to act like an actual human being for the first time during the run of the show.Â  So that makes me think the extreme bitchiness was just a facade and as the show progresses, it’s starting to crack.Â  I mean, could anyone really be THAT much of a bitch?Â  During the first few weeks of the show, I thought that her extremely bitchy and arrogant personality excluded her from being the mole, but now I’m not so sure, and I don’t know if it’s just that equation getting to me or not.

So continue to comment and post your thoughts and feelings – I really enjoy reading all the theories and observations.Â  Here are the official guesses for this week:

Jamiah – Paul

Chris – Paul

Taylhis – Nicole

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I think Paul is more intelligent than he seems to be. He plays a slimy jerk very well. Nicole being the last woman standing... NAH. I don't think it would be that obvious

# Hereditary Thespianism

Ok, so thespianism is not a real word, but it should be!Â  My husband has been acting inÂ plays since an early age, and I was even in shows way back when before the stage fright got ahold of me, so it’s only natural that we’ve been waiting for the chance to get our daughters involved in plays and community theater.Â  Now that our oldest has finally reached the minimum age to participate in the local summer children’s theater, weÂ find ourselvesÂ back in the world of rehearsals 3 nights a week – yuck to that part of it.

But we are greatly anticipating her stage debut in the Phantom Tollbooth…Â  though judging from her audition, she is more like me on stage than her father.Â  Hopefully she’ll overcome her shyness because she will have lots of fans in the audience!Â  Performances are August 1, 2, and 3rd in case you’re wondering!

### Comments

**derek**Perhaps if we meet at FunSpot! (see my post in other topic). I wonder if there is any chance gas prices will fall again by then...  
**taylhis**Will we be seeing you there, D? :)  
**derek**She has been the shy one, hasn't she? Perhaps this will be her chance to open up, if just for a show. I read that book some time ago- a very interesting book. I then had a chance to start a 5th grade class on it as well when I was student teaching. I hope she enjoys it as much as I did!  
**justj**I guess I'm going to be there too. Not that I know anyone in the show. ;)  
**jamiahsh**And you should submit "thespianism" to Webster's... sounds like a good word to me  
**jamiahsh**Added on my calendar :D can't wait!

# Tim McGraw - Country Singer, Actor, Vigilante?

Being a country music fan, a recent news item caught my attention.Â  Seems country superstar [Tim McGraw](http://www.timmcgraw.com/login) had to step in to performÂ security duties at his own concert.Â  He spotted a large man in the front row roughing up a female concert-goer, and since security wasn’t close to the guy, McGraw grabbed him up on stage to intervene in the situation.Â  I don’t know why security wasn’t anywhere near the front row at the time, but it seems McGraw can add something else to his list of accomplishments.Â  The guy already has an pretty interesting biography…Â  He believed his step-father was his biological father until the age of 11 when he accidently discovered his step-father was not listed on his birth certificate.Â  His mother took him to see his real father, baseball superstar Tug McGraw, who denied him untilÂ Tim was 18Â and he realized how much they looked alike.Â  They remained close until Tug’s death in 2004.Â  He met fellow country singer [Faith Hill](http://www.faithhill.com/timeline.php)Â – a country superstar in her own right –Â when they toured together, and they married and have 3 daughters.Â  He is one of the most talented and successful country singers of our time and has been in the headlines for a few bizarre incidents, including a [run-in involving a police horse](http://www.courttv.com/archive/trials/countrymusic/verdict_ctv.html) (his friend [Kenny Chesney](http://www.kennychesney.com/), a huge country star himself,Â was accused of stealing the horse and McGraw was accused of shoving an officer during the melee.Â  The two were later acquitted of all charges after it was proven that Chesney had permission to ride the horse and McGraw was trying to keep his friend from being thrown off the horse).Â  And now this.Â  What a way to get on stage to meet your favorite country singer.Â  And throughout the entire incident, the band played on and McGraw didn’t miss a lyric.Â  I really have to get to a country music concert; it’s been awhile!Â  Check it all out here:

Â  If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

# Too Much To Expect?

This is going to have to be a very brief post…Â  We’ve been SO busy lately, and I would love to make a post or two about all the fun things we’ve done this weekend, but my 20-month-old is quickly approaching her terrible two’s and is constantly spilling things and needing attention;Â therefore, I cannot sit long enough these days to make any kind of worthwhile post.Â  My 8-year-old is off school for the summer, and started off as a really big help with her little sister, but since it’s almost July, her enthusiasm for helping around the house is waning.Â Â Part of me feels badly expectingÂ her to help out and babysit so I can get some rest and her father can catch up on work, but then I also feel somewhat irritated that we went to all these fun places all weekend, even spending extra money for her to be able to bring a friend along, withÂ no chance for me to recooperate.Â  I can’t help but think maybe we overdid it this weekend…Â  How is she going to learn any appreciation when we’re constantly doing fun stuff and she doesn’t have to contribute (much) to the work load around the house?Â  On the other hand,Â being the youngest child when I was growing up, I was never expected to watch over a younger sibling, and I have no idea how muchÂ to expect from her – I don’t want to use her or take her for granted as a built-in-babysitter…

All I know is, it would be wonderful if I could catch a break around here and have a good week or maybe even a few days to rest before my body must endure the huge ordeal of giving birth – I’m not sleeping at night very much and today the Dr. confirmed my suspicions that the baby has dropped, leaving me feeling constant pain and pressure down below which is exhausting in itself…Â  Time to get off my rear end to make lunch, more later, I hope!

### Comments

**Baby S Gang » Too Much To Expect?**[...] Too Much To Expect? Weâ€™ve been SO busy lately, and I would love to make a post or two about all the fun things weâ€™ve done this weekend, but my 20-month-old is quickly approaching her terrible twoâ€™s and is constantly spilling things and needing attention; … [...]  
**taylhis**Good advice... Gradually they've been getting better about cleaning up their stuff after mealtimes, etc. And toys haven't really been a problem since we got rid of most of them! I agree about them knowing things are expected of them in the house - especially because when they get older, it will be so much easier for them to take care of their own living space if they are taught good habits from early on. I just don't know where to draw the line about Taylor watching Disney. Sammie is in school still, thank goodness since she's the real trouble, but T is so good with Dis that's it's hard not to rely on her.  
**justj**At your oldest child's age, I think you could depend on her to keep 1/2 an eye on her younger sisters. She can definitely help you by getting things you need while you are taking care of things you need to do. But starting slow, and finding things all your kids can do to help in the house will make things easier in the future. I think it helps a lot that they know things are expected of them in the house, even if it is just taking their dirty dishes to the kitchen or picking up their toys. What sort of things you do or don't do things around the house is up to you. Delay a trip for a day, until everything gets done, don't let a friend come over until things are done and things like that work very well.  
**derek**Ouch. I pray for a rapid, painless and healthy birth.

# Doomsday - A Week Away?

One week from today, I will be hitting a milestone – the big 3-0.Â  To say I am dreading it would be a huge understatement.Â  It’s not that I feel old – at times I do, but mostly I enjoy being older because in some ways, my early 20’s really sucked.Â  After working out the growing pains of my early 20’s and figuring out how and where to settle our family for the rest of our lives, my late 20’s went really well.Â  But there are a few things about turning 30 that have me feeling a little depressed lately…

This first thingÂ is really not a big deal, just food for thought, really – I read an article about a year ago about fashion ettiquette, and apparently ettiquette says I can no longer wear my hair in pigtails.Â  They say 30 is too old for this.Â  I haven’t worn my hair in pigtails since I was about 6 years old, but it’s the principle of it now being inappropriate because I’m too old.Â  What if I wake up one day wanting to wear my hair in pigtails all of a sudden?Â  Not really a catastrophe, but again, it’s just the principle – something I CAN’T do…Â  Maybe I should wear my hair in pigtailsÂ ON my 30th birthday…

My biggest qualm about turning 30 is that I feel too old for a career.Â  Over the past year and especially in the last few weeks, I’ve been thinking about all the things I’ll never be nor do because it’s too late…Â  So I guess this is it – I am officially locked into the Mommy career path, sigh.Â  Not that there is anything wrong with that, some people thrive on it.Â  I’m just not one of them.Â  While I truly appreciate being able to stay home and watch my kids grow without having to take some low-paying horrible job, I will also greedily admit that sometimes it’s not enough.Â  Sometimes, I think about maybe taking a minimum wage job, just to be able to contribute, just to be able to have a logical conversation with adults during the day.Â  Most of my daily conversations nowÂ revolve around poop, Barney, Hannah Montana or what was stuffed into the toilet.Â  When a person is in their 20’s, I always figured that was the time for establishing one’s career path, but my 20’s are gone, so I guess this is it.Â  Some days, I’m ok with it.Â  Some days I don’t even have time to really think about it.Â  ButÂ other days, I think about how I want to do something much more productive and lucrative, make a mark on the world while having fun and feeling like a contributing citizen…Â  I know, there are lots of people (especially stay-at-home-moms!) who say that raising happy, healthy, successful children IS the most productive and rewarding job out there…Â  But that’s easier said than done.Â  First, I don’t yet know if my efforts will be fruitful – what if the kidsÂ don’t turn out so well?Â  And second, and I hate to say this, but I will anyway –Â some days it just doesn’t seem like enough…Â  I want to be creating something, doing something, making money – I lack that immediate sense of accomplishment in my life, and I am a person who thrives on immediateÂ payoff for effort.Â  Third, there’s always the thought in the back of my head – what am I going to do with myself when the kids are grown and in school?Â  I will be in my mid-thirties at the youngest, and since I didn’t use my 20’s to develop career skills for myself, where will that leave me when my days are no longer filled with changing diapers, preparing meals, cleaning up spills and mishaps, and chasing after kids?Â  Lately I’ve been dwelling on all the careers I’ve let it get too late to pursue, but there’s also the terrifying thoughtÂ  – suppose I actually had some free time for myself…Â  WHAT ON EARTH WOULDÂ I WANT TO DO WITH IT?Â  I never have any free time, so I don’t even know what I would do if I got some, and that for some reason, is terrifying!

I’m sure the pregnancy is adding to some of the anxiety I’m feeling about hitting the big 3-0.Â  After all, I’m due, well, actually, scheduled to give birth only 5 days after I turn 30.Â  And like I said, most days I can look at my 4 beautiful children and think, wow, creating them is a lot to accomplish by the age of 30…Â  But what about the dark days when all 4 are acting up at the same time, and I justÂ can’t feelÂ pleasure nor reward in the career path I’ve chosen?Â  And most of all, what career is just going to suddenly pop out of the woodwork for me once the kids have grown and aren’t so needy?

Can’t I just turn 29 again?

### Comments

**derek**How about becoming a substitute teacher? :P  
**taylhis**JustJ - Working at a pet store actually sounds like a great idea (what I really wish is that we had a zoo closer - then I would volunteer there all the time) - but I have hangups when it comes time to do certain tasks, like sell someone cute little critters they will be using to feed snakes, etc. Good advice though - I truly DO appreciate what I have, that's not the problem, I just feel lost when it comes time to think about what I'm going to do when the kids don't need me as much - it's kind of a lonely, depressing feeling, and I need to not let it consume me as much... Maybe gas will be cheaper by then and I can volunteer at the zoo, you never know :) Thanks for your well-wishes and for taking the time to write so much!  
**justj**Ah,something I can actually relate to. In my early thirties, my last little girl was born, my wife turned 30 a year after her birth. That feeling of wanting a career was very strong in her, even though she loved staying home with the girls. The desire for a career was (how shall I say this?) consuming her thoughts. In society today, and 16 years ago, a stay at home mom is a rare thing indeed. As a mom you don't get to have that adult interaction on a daily basis, and that, of course, can make someone bonkers. My wife was no exception. But, she didn't want to leave the kids either. It took a while, but she actually found her career for a few years. She worked in a pet shop. It wasn't the customers and that interaction that gave her pleasure, it was dealing with the wide variety of animals. She dug into the needs of dogs, cats, mice, rats, rabbits, birds, fish, snakes, lizards, and more exotic pets like sugar gliders, and chinchillas. For a few years she was in bliss. The money wasn't the best, but the rewards were exceptional. Unfortunately, this does not take care of your situation. You want and need to take care of your children (and husband), but at the same time you want to do something different for you. A feeling of contribution? A feeling of worth? Just making your way in this world? All valid feelings, especially during another of Societies' milestones. My suggestion, well this is were I step in it... Take a step back on your 30th. If you want, delay the celebration of it until after your newest has arrived. Sometime when you can get out and be yourself. Be that with your friends or family, or just your husband, get to a point when you can be you, and not the 30 year old, or not the 'pregnant lady'. Take a look at what you have, and revel in that. Too often we forget what we have when looking at what we don't have. Not that your dreams aren't important as well. Now I've almost written as much in reply as you wrote in your blog post. You should know I think the world of you, your family, and of course your husband. That little group of yours help in my life regeneration. I am blessed to know all of you. Oh, yes take it from someone who will be hitting 50 on my next b-day, 30 is easy. But then again, you're a woman, you can be 29 as long as you like, I think that's a rule.  
**taylhis**C, you kinda missed the pointâ€¦ For one thing, I AM appreciative, that has nothing to do with wanting a career. Your long comment is from the mouth of someone who is very successful at his career AND being a parent - in fact, you get all the benefits of having a career, making money and getting to enjoy the fruits of your creativity, plus the kids even prefer you over me; it's an extra job during the day just to keep them away from your work space, so what would you know about not feeling useful? And I would LOVE to spend all my time with you, that would be my goal, but it's just not logical - someone has to work. If I had my choice, I wouldn't have a career, I would be with you! But when you're working, I need something to do because doing nothing but waiting for you to finish working gets depressing! The early 20â€™s being horrible had nothing to do with you - but rather circumstances happening in our lives, you know that - you were the rock that got me thru itâ€¦ so now that youâ€™ve taken everything the wrong way, you should know that I felt the blog was for venting, but now I feel censored!  
**jamiahsh**Well said, C. You two really are the greatest couple I have had the pleasure of knowing. Although I did have the 3-0 anxiety, but, eh.  
**Chris**For me, every year continues to be better than the previous one. So, I cannot wait until I am 40 -- imagine how great life will be then!! Although I do miss how I used to be able to eat anything and not show it... Ahhh. The early 20s... It is sad that your early 20s were so bad... My memories of your early 20s are the best. We got married, had our first baby, went to the ACM awards, gave away some hearses -- lots of amazing stuff! Aside from my dad's passing, I only remember wonderful times. Your late 20s were great also. And the best part, if you think about it, is that your agreeing that your late 20s went really well -- and that is when you officially became a full-time mommy. In your early 20s which you seem to not have enjoyed you only had one kid, now you have 3 and things are going really well. Maybe the mommy career path is not so bad! :-) When the kids are out of the house you will be stuck with me. :-) But we always have a fabulous time together. We get along better than any other two people I have ever met! I soooo look forward to when the kids move out. I love having them, but I look forward to when it is just you and I versus the world again. So chin up sweety! You're suffering from the "grass is greener" syndrome. You live a very blessed life; we have a family and a lifestyle like nobody else I know. The other side of the fence is full of women wishing they could spend more time with their children. Wishing they could be mommy, not employee. I know cannot wait until I can retire (shooting for the next 2 years!) and be with you guys all the time!! So don't wish for 29 again... Age with me and enjoy the amazing journey life has to offer us. Even with all the incredible experiences we've had and moments we've shared,, the best is yet to come. We're still in the infancy of our life together. We need to cherrish the good things in our lives and enjoy the gifts we've been blessed with every day.

# Get Smart - Don't Waste Time On The Love Guru

The advice in the title of my blog post sounds obvious in retrospect.Â Â [Mike Myers](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000196/)‘ newÂ movie [The Love Guru](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0811138/) did not look funny, nor did it look like a good movie…Â  But date night this week found us in a neighboring town whose movie theater has a card club – you earn points every time you see a movie and earn rewards with the points – free popcorn, drinks, candy, movie tickets.Â  We were lucky enough to have earned movie tickets the other day, and when we realized this would probably be one of the last movies we’d see without a newborn baby along, we decided to make it a double feature with our earned tickets.Â  We had gone to the theater to see [Get Smart](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0425061/), the latest [Steve Carell](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0136797/) movie.Â  Since the times lined up well and we wouldn’t have much time to kill between the movies, we chose The Love Guru (regrettably) for our second movie.

Get Smart  
There is one reason why I would want to see this movie after never having seen the ’60’s tv show: Steve Carell.Â  The guy is a good actor who is always fun to watch, so we couldn’t resist checking out his latest work.Â  It wasn’t the best example of Carell’s talent, but it was exactly what I was expecting, plus entertaining andÂ amusing.Â  The fictional gadgetry was clever and the action was plentiful; there were alsoÂ some funny jokes thrown in ([Bill Murray](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000195/)‘s cameo is one of the best parts), and overall it was a good time.Â  Anne Hathaway was good as Agent 99, but it makes me wonder what the character was like in the tv show…Â Â And IÂ wonder what elseÂ I missed since I’ve never seen an episode of the tv version of Get Smart?Â  Maybe I’ll some across one someday, but for now, the movie wasn’t good enough to make it a priority.

And because I don’t want to waste any time talking about The Love Guru, I’m just going to copy and paste someone else’s review from imdb.com which I think sums up the movie perfectly:  
***R.I.P. Mike Myers Career****I saw this film last night in a advance screening. I can say without a doubt it is the worst movie I’ve ever seen in the theater. It is simply a terrible movie. For every joke that’s funny (which are few) there is about dozen that are not. Then there’s all the jokes we’ve seen in previous Myers films that aren’t so funny the 4th time around when they appear in this flick. Many moments in this film will having you looking around the theater wondering if anyone else finds this movie as stupid as you do.  
That’s really the bottom line. This movie is stupid. Take every fear you’ve had watching the trailer, times it by 10 and you will get an idea of how bad this film is.  
By the way, the hockey in this movie will leave any one who loves the game sick to there stomach. The hockey portrayal left me in tears. Its brutal ! The film is a HUGE slap in the face to hockey. Thanks Mike Myers !  
On a positive note though, Justin Timberlake and [Stephen Colbert](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2871213/) are hilarious. The only time i enjoyed the movie at all was when they were on screen. I never thought in a million years I would leave a movie saying ” Thank God Justin Timberlake was is it.”  
In short : this movie is terrible ! Don’t believe me ? Then throw your money away and see for yourself.*

HAHAHA – I especially like the part in the review, “I never thought in a million years I would leaveÂ a movieÂ saying, Thank God [Justin Timberlake](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005493/) was in it.”Â  So true…  
At least we got in for free, though the movie was so bad, it was almost a waste of reward points!Â  But it was a short movie and any time together for husband and wife away from the kids is priceless by itself, so I can’t say it was a total waste – but seriously, don’t see it! Â

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Just going by the ads on tv is enough for me to avoid the Love Guru. I was hoping to get to Get Smart while I am here by myself, but I have found a lot to do othewise.  
**Baby S Gang » Get Smart - Donâ€™t Waste Time on the Love Guru**[...] Get Smart - Donâ€™t Waste Time on the Love Guru We were lucky enough to have earned movie tickets the other day, and when we realized this would probably be one of the last movies weâ€™d see without a newborn baby along, we decided to make it a double feature with our earned tickets. … [...]

# The Mole Week #4

SPOILER ALERT!!! – The following is a summary of Monday, June 23rd’s episode of The Mole – it contains outcomes and spoilers.Â  Do not read any further if you don’t want to know about past Mole episodes.

6/23/08 – The focus tonight was on Clay and Victoria.Â  Since VictoriaÂ ended up gettingÂ eliminated, the episode’sÂ emphasis on Clay put my mole-suspecting focus back on him.Â  That and his mole-y behavior.Â  Before the gold-brick-up-the-mountain challenge, Clay made sure to talk about how little money he wanted his team to earn.Â  He was so focused on getting up the mountain toÂ win the exemption from the quiz that he specifically said that bringing bricks to earn money was not important.Â  That’s understandable, but then when they did get to the top of the mountain, and Clay already knew that his team had won the exemption, he was still making comments about how much money his team had won.Â  And his comments were about how the team won too much money for his liking.Â  Then, when it was discovered that the team had earned only one exemption and they had to decide which of the 3 got to use it, Clay both insisted to and bargained with his teammates in order to be able to use the exemption for himself.Â  That seems like something theÂ mole would do in order to “prove” his or her “need” for the exemption – ie, throw others off his mole-y trail.

I hated how Nicole was Ahem-ing and blinking rapidly during the journal question activity at dinner, but then again, I hate many of the things she does.Â  I hadn’t really considered her for the mole until my husband brought up a very intriguing point – Take a look at Nicole’s name: NICOLE.Â  It’s very easy to change Nicole’s name to MOLE with a simple equation:Â  If you “add” the N to the I, it makes an M.Â  If you “add” the C to the O, it makes an O: Â (N+I )(C+O) LE= MOLE  
The show has been known for slipping in little clues like this in the past.Â  They will even highlight some of them in the finale once we find out who the mole is.Â  Now I am really starting to consider Nicole.Â  Her ultra-bitchy attitude could be a ploy for the cameras because she is the mole.Â  She was just the woman you love to hate, so as an audience member, you don’t want to think her awful personality if fake because you’re busy hating her.Â  But it’s just a thought for now; I will keep a close eye on her now, that’s for sure.Â  For tonight’s official guess, I’m going to have to go with Clay again.Â  Chris is still guessing Paul.Â  Though that Nicole hypothesis is a good one, I guess it wasn’t enough to convince him of Nicole’s role as the mole.Â  Until next week…

### Comments

**rocker135**Another thing I think is that Paul could be the mole because he is a very confusing person and in the opening credits the at the end when it says "who is the mole" and the words appear at different times but when "the mole" comes up it shows a silhouette of someone who looks just like him.  
**taylhis**I did not notice either of these things, but now I will have to watch it again and look. It's stuff like this that makes this show so awesome! Thanks for your posts, keep them coming!  
**mole watcher**Did anyone else notice two interesting sites in 6-23's episodes? At the first dinner at La Estancia De Elias Resturant the camera zoomed in on the sign outside the resturant. However standing in the doorway below is the silhoute of a man too small to be craig and clay. Though at the 2nd dinner appearing in the reflection of a wine glass during camera panning was upside down image of Kristin. Hmmmm???  
**taylhis**Interesting... If Mark is the mole, then he's a great one because from week #1, I had crossed him off my list and said to myself, he is DEFINITELY not the mole - don't know why, just seems high strung, I guess. I don't really have a good reason for thinking it's not him.  
**rocker135**I think Mark is the Mole. He over exaggerates all of his emotions and he gave up 500 dollars in one of the challenges. I think that he tried on the first few challenges to keep away suspicion but he may begin to start moving downhill in the challenges. Mark is one person who you take out because he said he was doing this for his family which may earn him money just from being there. Also in the past few challenges he hasn't had to do anything to make sure their team fails.  
**jamiahsh**I think Nicole is too outspoken and callls way too much attention to herself to be the mole. I beginning to think it is Paul. Last night, he seemed to switch very quickly to a semi-likable character (unlike previous weeks) by showing some concern for Craig and jumping into the "Selfless" group? He does not seem very selfless to me.

# Last Chance

This is probably one of the last posts I’m going to write about pregnancy.Â  As we get down to the end, there’s not much to report (I cannot physically do much TO report!), and I will definitely post pictures of the baby.Â  I started my weekly Dr. visits a few weeks ago, and today, finally we are starting to see some action.Â  The Dr. says my pregnancy is now officially full-term, and my body is preparing for birth.Â  At today’s Dr. visit, the baby was moving around lots while she was listening to his heartbeat, and it accelerated nicely while he moved.Â  The Dr. wants me to get induced the week before my due date because I have big babies (Taylor was only 7 lbs 2 oz, but the last 2 were 8 lbs 12 oz), butÂ Dr. isÂ off on Monday, so right now we’re looking at July 8 or 9.Â  I don’t have to decide until next Monday, but I think I’m going to go with the 8th since I’m so anxious – why wait if I don’t have to?Â  I have a few meetings scheduled that week, but I will have to miss them.Â  Besides, that’s a nice date for a birthday – 7/08/08 – since we have no hope of holding out til the 21st.Â  Our first 2 daughters were born on the 21st of their months, December and May, and then our third daughter was born a day early, on October 20…Â  sometimes I forget and celebrate her “month” birthdays on the 21st out of habit…Â  But baby Christopher will be no where near the 21st…Â  July 8th – that’s only 5 days after my birthday!Â  But I like the sound of it and can’t believe that it’s only 2 weeks away!Â  Time flies so fast, 2 weeks will pass in no time!Â  Good thing tooÂ because I get less sleep by the night.Â  I’m up going to the bathroom at least 3-4 times, and then I’ve been having trouble sleeping when I lay down again.Â  But since I don’t plan much during the day and my oldest daughter is out of school for the summer – she is a great big help with our youngest-for-now, I have been getting good naps for the most part.

Please send thoughts and prayers for our friend Cathy who is in the hospital after having a heart attack on Sunday.Â  We’re going to visit her tonight and hopefully she’ll be feeling well soon!

### Comments

**Baby S Gang » Last Chance**[...] Last Chance This is probably one of the last posts Iâ€™m going to write about pregnancy. As we get down to the end, thereâ€™s not much to report (I cannot physically do much TO report!), and I will definitely post pictures of the baby. … [...]  
**jamiahsh**of course 2 days later would be just as good but...But seriously, please send Cathy my good wishes.

# Windy City Classic

Back in the days when it didn’t count, there was only one yearly face-off between the Chicago cross-town rivals, the Cubs and the White Sox.Â  It was called a number of things, but when I was younger, I remember it being referred to as the Windy City Classic.Â  No matter which side you cheer for, these games are important to every sports fan in Chicago.Â  I even remember cutting school one year to attend…

But now that there is something known as inter-league play, there are 6 of these games a year, and they do count.Â  Today was the opening game of one such series, and I am suffering through it.Â  One of the rare Cubs games I’ve actually gotten to watch on tv this year, it has to be broadcast by Sox announcers, even though the game is being played at Wrigley Field and theÂ Cubs are the home team.Â  I cannot stand the Sox announcers.Â  Not only do they stink as announcers (I would be rich if I got paid for every time they’ve said “south-paw” – some diversity in your subject matter, guys, please?), but they are on *their* side.Â  So every time the White Sox make a play, even though the crowd is booing, the announcers get excited.Â  And I won’t even waste much time complaining about the shouts of “Put it on the Board!”Â I’m subjected to every time the Sox score runs.

There’s a lot at stake for this series – both teams are in first place in their respective divisions, even though it must be noted that the Cubs have a much better recordÂ – but I’m not really minding the errands I have to run that will take me away from today’s game.Â  Watching the Cubs lose to the Sox is one thing if that happens, but hearing these horrible announcers rub in every homerun or lucky playÂ the Sox make is a new brand of torture of which I’m glad to be relieved!

### Comments

**taylhis**AWESOME weekend - now for a replay next weekend!  
**justj**Cubs sweep the Sox!!!  
**justj**Way to go Cubs... I'm rooting doubly hard for them in this series. Any time they bet the Sox is good for my main team...

# Another Infamous List

I mentioned my infamous listing a few blog postsÂ ago – I make lists of everything; including (rarely) lists of lists to make!

This list is for physical things, rather than everything that will change with the addition of a boy.Â  Obviously, things like potty-training,Â long car rides,Â and even every meal time will be different while taking a boy’s eating habits into consideration in our household full of girls.

***ThingsÂ ThatÂ WillÂ Change When We Add a Boy to Our Household***

*NoÂ need forÂ baby-sized headbands or barrettes*

*Boys need only 1 pair of shoes.Â  Girls love shoes, so they need at the bare minimum,Â aÂ pair of sandals, a pair of gym shoes, and a pair of dress shoes PER GIRL – our 20-month-old daughter already likes to try on shoes – just for fun!*

*Accessories like hats, socks, beltsÂ are all different between boys and girls things*

*Pillowcases, bedsheets, pillows, blankets*

Hmm, so far I only have wardrobe changes listed…Â  I’m sure there will be a lot more differences and I will start another list so I can compare while I’m actually living with the differences every day!

### Comments

**Baby S Gang » Another Infamous List**[...] Another Infamous List … even every meal time will be different while taking a boyâ€™s eating habits into consideration in our household full of girls. Things That Will Change When We Add a Boy to Our Household. No need for baby-sized headbands or barrettes … [...]  
**derek**I mean, it doesn't work in *comments*, not posts.  
**derek**Gah- the strikeout HTML tag doesn't work in posts! White Sox is supposed to be crossed out. :o  
**derek**He will of course still need some sportswear, such as a White Sox Cubs cap, Bears shoes, well you get the picture. :)

# Little Women

We were privilaged to get to spend an evening without kids to take in a local community theater’s production of Little Women, the Musical.

I must be honest – the music in this musical is not my favorite.Â  It has nothing to do with how it was performed or who sang it; it just seemed to me to be words set to random music.Â  But I don’t know much about singing, music composition, or even good theater for that matter.Â  That being said, I will say that it’s definitely a production worth seeing.Â  The costumes and set were great, and the large cast of talented actors and singers seemed very cohesive and never crowded on the stage.Â  The play took me back into civil war times, and I do like to see stories from this time period played out live.Â  I was pleasantly surprised by a few of the characters’ performances since they were people I’ve worked with before so I thought I knew what to expect – butÂ a few of their performances were much better than I even expected, and yes, two of those people read or are closely related to people who are regular readers of this blog 

But I’m not being biased…Â  I really was impressed.Â  A few of the new people – performers who haven’t done much or anything for this particular theater group – were surprisingly talented also, though I have toÂ say at least one was not.Â  And I might even say that the beautiful wigs almost deserve a curtain call of their own…Â  but don’t let the wigsÂ steal your thunder, cast, because you can expect standing ovations from your audiences throughout the run of the show, I think.Â  Overall, it was a nice evening out – the show part of the dinner and show anyway.Â  I was so disappointed in my lack of a good meal last night that I composed this little ditty:

**RIP – Maywood Restaurant in Montpelier, Ohio**

They sold the restaurant but kept the name,  
The tables and chairs are all that’s the same.  
The food quality’s gone,  
Bob’s recipes too  
It’s a shame that my dinner  
Tasted like old shoe.

It was onceÂ premium food  
ButÂ now it’s soured my mood.  
Advice I would give:  
Eat here if you dare  
Since I traded gourmet  
For mereÂ Sysco fare.

The ditty tells the story – basically we had this awesome restaurant nearby with **very** high quality food that was always cooked by the chef-owner personally.Â  I understand that people have to retire, but it is almost a crime that they still use the same name for the restaurant.Â  I mean, with a food quality drop this severe, it’s their duty to warn people before they are tempted to eat there!Â  Too bad dinner didn’t work out, but if the theater keeps putting on shows like Little Women,Â it will be enough of a reason to drive across the county to see them.

### Comments

**derek**Wait- they **are** doing Little Shop after all? And I just got through commenting on C's (2-week+ old) blog post the other day... I'm glad the show turned out well.  
**taylhis**Hehehe... but seriously, is there really one down there? I didn't see any! Last night during your pictures I was watching to see if anyone did that, but they did not, so the person I know who did that got deservedly teased... I'd be over it if a replacement picture was put in the basement - after all, it was promised to me...  
**jamiahsh**I only notice the one with someone in the back row hiding themselves behind the person in front of them. Who could that be?!  
**taylhis**Yes... well, hopefully a new restaurant will be opening up before next October - I'll be going there lots to watch my husband direct Little Shop since I got booted from the director's team. And no, last night's check of the basement did not produce any SHR cast picture. :(  
**jamiahsh**Too bad about the Maywood. Hopefully, the theatre will continue to entertain :D

# The Happening

We went to see the newest [M. Night Shyamalan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0796117/)Â movie last night – The Happening starring [Mark Wahlberg](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000242/) and [Zooey Deschanel](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0221046/).Â  It’s an end-of-the-world type movie, but what sets this one apart from the others is that neither the audience nor the characters in the movie know what is happening to the populationÂ and why.Â  People just start acting strange – it begins in parks, where crowds of people freeze in their tracks, and then they begin to slowly and methodically commit suicide.Â  It’s really creepy!Â  I especially liked how little gore and there was and how tame the violence was, especially by today’s standards and with all the death that was occuring in the movie.Â  Before we went, I had read some bad reviews about it, but I didn’t find it boring in the slightest as some of the reviews suggested.Â  It was a gripping, intense, and interesting movie, not to mention effectively eerie.Â  I don’t want to give too much away, so all I will say is that I was hoping for more of a resolve and explanation at the end, but since I’ve seen other M. Night Shyamalan movies, I was also expecting even less closure than we received.Â  He writes, directs, and produces his own movies; they are usually thought-provoking suspense films, often laced with twists – I recommend [The Village](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0368447/), [Unbreakable](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0217869/), and [The Sixth Sense](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0167404/) to try a few.Â  Overall,Â I would say it was a really good doomsday-TYPE movie.Â  Please don’t think it compares to the movie called [Doomsday](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0483607/) – one of the most awful I’ve ever seen.Â  But The Happening has an interesting premise, and it achieves fright without overdoing the gore, which is unusual for scary movies in this day and age.Â  My one problem with the movie is Mark Wahlberg’s acting – at times it’s just awful!Â  I don’t know why he was cast in this movie, but at least he doesn’t ruin it.Â  Zooey Deschanel is good – didn’t even see any glimpse of her character from [Elf](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319343/) -and [John Leguizamo](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000491/) has a strong performance as well.Â  It is 90 minutes well-spent!

### Comments

**taylhis**I guess I've never seen Leguizamo in anything else... and maybe his performance seemed alright cuz Wahlberg's was so awful. I did see Lady in the Water - don't remember much about it, but it doesn't stick out in my head as a horrible movie - like the infamous 2 we hated - the Doomsday, Night Listener pair.  
**jamiahsh**John Lequizamo with a strong performance?! Interesting. There was lots of speculation about Shyamalan's last movie (Lady in the Water... was that it? Missed it apparently with most everyone else) and if he could redeem himself with this.

# About the Zoo...

Oops, I forgot to mention a few things about the [Potawatomi Zoo](http://www.potawatomizoo.org) in South Bend, Indiana in my post the other day.Â  Even though it was small and not very well taken care of from an aesthetic point of view, we had some of the best animal encounters there – can’t believe I forgot to mention them.

First, they have a white tiger, and he was right up against the glass.Â  We could see his beautiful eyes and everything.Â

The African lions at this zoo have a small exhibit (but didn’t seem to be unhappy in the slightest), which means we were able to see them pretty close up also.

The red pandas were very active and we got to see them climbing around.Â  This creature is so agile, he made climbing branches of trees look like he was climbing stair-steps.

They had a baby Amur Leopard who was born in Decemeber and had just been put on exhibit 2 days before our visit.Â  He was so cute and curious.Â  He climbed all the way up the cage wall and tried to get on the ceiling, then he had a little trouble getting down, but he was so excited when he did it, and mom scolded him a little bit – it was awesome to see that kind of interaction.

So overall, it was a great zoo experience.Â  A cute little zoo, even if it could use some touch-ups.

### Comments

# Jubilee Time

It’s time for our town’s annual summer fest; they call it the Jubilee.Â  Every year I’m compelled to attend, even though I become more disenchanted with the whole affair as years pass.Â  I just really like summer fest atmospheres, and I can’t resist going when we live within blocks of it.Â  It’s fun to take all the kids there without having to pack up everyone in the car, spend a few bucks for gas to get there, or haggle over parking.Â  But as every cost in our economy rises, the Jubilee is no exception.Â  And if the kids had lots of fun, it’d be worth it, but every year it seemsÂ the JubileeÂ finds ways to cut corners and disappoint my kids.Â

Take this year, for example.Â  “Wrist band day” was on the first day of the carnival; a day whenÂ you buy a wristband for one “low” price (now $16, up $2 from the $14 it cost last year) and it gets you on “unlimited” rides.Â  I think they planned wrist band day on the first day of the carnival for a reason – before anyone could get to the carnival and look around to see that some of the usual rides are missing.Â  Not only that, but for small children, because of height requirements, there are only about 4 rides they were able to use their wristband on.Â  My 4-year-old is a little daredevil and wanted to ride everything, including the “Kamikaze”, a ride that goes upside down.Â  She was too small to ride that one of course, and I completely understood the rhyme and reason for that rule, however, when she got excited about the Ferris Wheel only to be turned away, I began to lose my patience.Â  Seems the rules require that she ride with an adult, no problem there, my husband would have rode with her even though he’s not crazy about ferris wheels…Â  except that the escorting adult had to have 3 tickets to ride!Â  And at $1.50/ticket, we’re talking about spending an extra $4.50 *for one ride,* on top of the $32 we had already spent on wristbands for my 2 daughters – just for my daughter to follow their rule and be escorted on the ferris wheel – no thanks.Â  So after 2 disappointments, we went over to the other side of the Jubilee and found the “scrambler” ride, so my daughters went on it and had a good time.Â  They got in line to go again, and 4-year-old Sammie was turned away because she wasn’t tall enough – apparently she shrank while waiting in line to go a second time?Â  Again, I’m all for abiding by safety rules, etc., but they need to adopt a uniform policy that will be in place the entire run of the carnival.Â  Try explaining to a 4-year-old that she isn’t tall enough to ride a ride that she just got finished riding!Â  We actually ran into the same problem at Disney World, but they were very sympathetic and understanding and offered us ride passes as compensation.Â  And as if all this at the Jubilee weren’t enough, my daughters have a favorite “ride” at the Jubilee every year – the funhouse.Â  They actually usually have 2 funhouses, but for whatever reason, my girls have their favorite.Â  So they’re standing there on the steps of their favorite funhouse, waiting to get in, and the ride operator is trying to tell them something, and that’s when I see the signs.Â  “No wristbands or tickets.Â  This ride is $2″Â  WHAT?!?Â  Why would they do this?Â  To make money obviously, but that funhouse had no one there all night, was it really worth it to disappoint all the kids who go there year after year and look forward to that funhouse?Â  And like I said, since wristband night was on the first day of the Jubilee, we didn’t have an opportunity to tour the grounds to see what would be included in the purchase of the wristband – regrettably.

Despite all the disappointments, my daughters took them all in stride and still had fun.Â  We ran into some friends, so we decided to take one of their daughters home with us for a sleepover.Â  Even though we had bought the wristbands that were good until 11, we just wanted out of there after all the disappointment and money wasting.Â  I did get my Dippin’ Dots, but the vendor forgot my root beer float this year Â  I was pretty happy with the cookie dough that my husband got for me, and it was actually better than I remember.Â  Not worth going back to the Jubilee for more, but still good.Â  I think we’re done with the Jubilee already this year.Â  We usually go back Friday night for the karaoke contest and Saturday after the parade, but I think we can find something better (and cheaper!) to do this year.Â  Next year, maybe we’ll plan a vacation for Jubilee week and skip it all together!

### Comments

**jubilee day | Hottags**[...] Jubilee TimeAnd like I said, since wristband night was on the first day of the Jubilee, we didnâ€™t have an opportunity to tour the grounds to see what would be included in the purchase of the wristband - regrettably. Despite all the disappointments, …My Food Chain Gang - http://taylhis.tangents.org/ [...]  
**jubilee day : scriptbest**[...] Jubilee TimeAnd like I said, since wristband night was on the first day of the Jubilee, we didnt have an opportunity to tour the grounds to see what would be included in the purchase of the wristband - regrettably. Despite all the disappointments, … [...]  
**justj**Yes, the Jubilee has gone downhill in recent years. I remember when I first moved out to the area, it was almost another county fair (without the animals). Now, I'm not even sure it is worth blocking off all the streets for it.  
**derek**I don't go to our festival anymore either, but that's more because I have no one to go with. It just seems like a huge waste of money for just me.  
**jamiahsh**WOW.... sounds like the Jubilee has gone to downhill.. Of course, it has been a few years since I have gone. I remember the Witch's Castle ride and bumber cars, the Hymalaya was always my favorite. But the prices you suggest really turn me off especially if the rides are a downer ($2 EXTRA FOR THE FUN HOUSE?!)

# The Mole Week #3

Watched this Mole episode a little late this week since the kids were rambunctious about settling down after an exciting week at Grandma’s – turns out I hadn’t missed much.Â  I really liked the Fruit of the Luge challenge where the players divide into teams of 2, and one person is blindfolded and driving the pair on a luge.Â  The other player is supposed to call out the types of fruits that are depicted on signs they pass on the luge course.Â  When they are at the end of the luge course, they are not to talk, and the blindfolded player takes off his or her blindfold and picks out the fruit in the order the other player had seen it.Â  Alas, a few teams ended up getting their points taken away since they brokeÂ a rule and chatted after finishing the course.Â  But it was an interesting challenge; an aspect of this show that I really enjoy.Â  Unlike the following challenge…Â  something about the contestants running around Chile in underwear trying to find clothes.Â  It was a stupid, pointless, sell-out challenge; something that once set this reality show apart from the others because theyÂ hadn’t yet stooped to this level – what a shame.

But anyway, no one really stuck out at me as being that moley tonight.Â  PaulÂ kinda was, but then when he got angryÂ during dinner, it didn’t seemÂ mole-like to be so upset.Â  But if he is the mole, maybe that was part of his game, who knows.Â  Clay always seems to be in the backround, and if it weren’t for last week’sÂ episode where heÂ had only about one line to say throughout the entire show, I would think it’s him.Â  But because of last week, I can’t picture them only showing the mole once during an episode.Â  The blonde neurologist isÂ looking suspect also – her name escapes me at the moment.Â  I also thinkÂ it could be Nichole, but the whole point of Nichole is that she thinks she is so great at so many things when she really isn’t so perfect because she’s too busy being full of herself…Â  I don’t see how she’d have time to be the mole when she’s so busy beingÂ so arrogant.Â  And I definitely don’t think the mole is Mark.Â Â There are a few people thatÂ just don’t seem suspect to me, and Mark, Craig, the model and Bobby were 3 of those people.Â  The model and Bobby are both gone now (YAY!Â  I was getting soÂ sick of Bobby’s antics; he was not veryÂ likable), soÂ I guess I was right about those two.Â  So here is where I am so far:

POSSIBLE SUSPECTS:  
Paul – My husband’s top pick since the beginning.Â  Tonight, he was standout mole-y to me, but he also doesn’t seem smart enough to pull off being the mole…Â  maybe just part of his act?  
Alex –Â  He’s the guy who wins everything; every reality show has one.Â  Usually they do pretty well and become finalists if not win the entire competition.Â  I don’t think he’s the mole though, but he’s more of a suspect than not at this point.Â  It’s getting on my nerves that he can speak such fluent spanish.Â  I don’t think they should have picked only one contestant with this ability when filming the show and doing the challenges in a spanish-speaking country.  
Clay – I wish he wasn’t so ignored last week, otherwise he would be my top guess again…Â  he’s just SO neutral seeming and in the backround.  
Kristen – the bike thing from last week made her a suspect…Â  and she just acts generally mole-y; I can’t really pinpoint it.

NOT ON MY SUSPECT LIST (yet)  
Nichole – see above – the part about the being to arrogant to be the mole.  
Craig – seems too genuine?Â  I don’t know what it is, but if this guy is the mole, he’s good!  
Victoria – Not only does she not seem very bright, but her infatuation with Bobby just doesn’t fit as mole behavior.Â  It wasn’t obvious enough to be present to throw others off, so I think it was genuine.Â  And besides the other clues she’s given, the fact that she would have a genuine crush on a fellow reality show contestant, especially someone like Bobby all point to the fact that she is too dim to pull off being the mole.  
Mark – something last week had me convinced he is NOT the mole, forgot what it was, but it sticks with me enough to know that I still do not suspect this guy at all.Â  Just seems too real I guess.

I guess after re-reading my contestant breakdown, my official mole guess after seeing this week’s episode is Clay.

Chris’ guess is Paul.

Jamiahsh can post his guess in comments.

### Comments

**Luge » Maquoketa man dies while riding street luge in Kansas City**[...] The Mole Week #3I really liked the Fruit of the Luge challenge where the players divide into teams of 2, and one person is blindfolded and driving the pair on a luge. The other player is supposed to call out the types of fruits that are depicted on … [...]  
**Luge » The Mole Week #3**[...] The Mole Week #3I really liked the Fruit of the Luge challenge where the players divide into teams of 2, and one person is blindfolded and driving the pair on a luge. The other player is supposed to call out the types of fruits that are depicted on … [...]  
**jamiahsh**I knew Bobby was not going to be around much longer. Nicole is way too much the diva of the group. I am torn now between Clay and Paul (but leaning toward Paul more). Clay seems to be disappearing (have to keep an eye on him).

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE BEST!

Today is my husband’s birthday!Â  Poor guy, he has to work.Â  It stinks that when you become an adult, you can’t take the day off on your birthday.Â  When you think about it, each person would get only one day per year, it could be easily proven when your day is and if you’ve already taken it, but I guess in larger workplaces, it wouldn’t be very economical when there are lots of employees.Â  Plus, it’s not like you can take a break from every responsibility in life for a day – though that would be nice!Â Â There’s no ‘off’ switch on the kids, the pets still need to be cared for, bills are due, errands to run…Â  the list goes on…Â  so why draw the line at having a day off work?

But anyway,Â my husband isÂ going to take a half day off tomorrow so we can celebrate just the two of us;Â and we’re both really looking forward to that – I just have to make it through today.Â  I’ve had a terribly stressful day so far, but I shouldn’t vent about it to my husband on his birthday…Â  so instead I’ve recorded a time table of everything that’s been going on in our house for the last hour.Â  Normally, this wouldn’t be that big of a deal, but since I’m now up going to the bathroom half the night and our kids spazzed about going to bed last night and kept everyone up late, today I was really looking forward to some downtime and maybeÂ even a nap.Â  I was hoping to just sit here and write a blog post or two, mostly about how wonderful my husband is on his birthday…Â  but instead I find myself venting about the kids because they’re being really needy.Â  Not bad really, but I am so tired!Â  I don’t know how I’m ever going to find the energy to take them to the carnival tonight!Â  So anyway, my hour that I’ve set aside to blog before lunch has gone something like this:

11:24 – getting youngest something to drink *(and there’s been lots of stuff before this, this is just where I got frustrated enough to notate everything)*11:27 – sat down again  
11:29-11:34 – setting up youngest outside at the ‘picnic’  
11:34-11:38 – sat down to blog  
11:38 – a request comes in for more Pringles  
11:39 – After some discussion, it’s decided that if they eat their sandwiches, they can have popsicles instead of Pringles  
11:40Â  – whats this about giving their lunchmeat to the dog?!?  
11:42Â – About this time, I should be getting up to go take a peek out the window to see if I can determine the fate of the lunchmeat.Â  But I have a big long day ahead of me, and it’d be nice if I could sit for a FEW mins!Â  I will just have to trust the kids to tell me the truth.Â  I have a bad feeling about this.  
11:45 – The back door opens.Â  This time it’s the oldest with an update – “Sammie stepped on dog poop and she doesn’t have shoes on.”Â  UGH – I make a quick note of the time in my blog and head outside to clean it up.  
11:46 – turned the hose on right on my sock-and-shoed-foot while washing dog poop offÂ of Sammie’sÂ foot  
11:51 – Friend shows up for help in carrying furniture – ringing the doorbell and making the dog go completely crazy.Â  Shoot!Â  I totally forgot he was coming today!Â  Now my husband has EXTRA responsibilities on his birthday!  
11:55 – UPS guy pulls up, dog still going crazy from friend stopping by  
12:08 –Â Wow – have theyÂ really let me sit and type this for a whole 13 minutes?!?Â  Uh, oh – back door opens again – “I have something in my hair.” – Guess who?Â  Surprise – it’s the same kid who stepped in dog poop.  
12:10 – bug detangled from hair

And the day is just beginning.Â  So it will go on like this, and on, and on…Â  So now maybe you have some insight as to why it takes me a good hourÂ to write one blog post or get much of anything accomplished around here, really.Â  But on to my birthday wishes for my hubby, since I only have 5 minutes left of my blogging hour.

So I have absolutely NO idea what to get him.Â  I’d like him to have a gift to open, even though he says he doesn’t care.Â  Everything he wants (and that’s not much, he’s not really into material things) he says he buys for himself and he’d be happier knowing that no money was spent on buying him any birthday presents.Â  But the way I am, I like to give gifts; I like people to have something to open and to see them get gifts on their birthdays, so I feel badly that he doesn’t have anything.Â  I was going to go out today and get something, but I really can’t think of anything to get him…Â  I’ve had some good ideas in the past, but this year I’m at a loss…Â  So I will just try to keep the kids good and out of his hair, which is actually much more difficult than it sounds for me right now.Â  But my husband said earlier today that he wants to make my day extra special and good.Â  He woke up early with the kids (as usual) and had the dishwasher emptied and the kids’ breakfasts cleaned up by the time I got up.Â  OnlyÂ the mostÂ wonderful man like my husband would go out of his way to make *my* day extra special on *his* birthday!Â  And that’s why I say Happy Birthday to the BEST!!!

### Comments

**Chris**You are the best sweetie! Thanks - I love you!!  
**derek**I must have caught him in his half-day off. Tried to IM a happy belated birthday but got no response. Well, here goes here: **HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY  
justj**I can't help you on the gift, but I can help wishing that husband of yours a very happy birthday. He is one of the best.  
**jamiahsh**Sometimes the best things are those that seem small but come from within.

# Third Trimester Blues

Well, it’s that time again, the lovely third trimester of pregnancy.Â  It creeped up on me really fast while I was waiting for the ‘golden age’ of pregnancy to kick in – the second trimester.Â Â Except thatÂ I never felt as great as they say you should feel during the second trimester, so while I was waiting, time passed on by and here we are in the third trimester.Â  I guess I should be happy that the pregnancy is almost all over, but it’s hard to look at it that way.Â  This is the time when babyitis kicks into overdrive.Â  The yearning to hold and sniff and care for the newborn baby becomes so overwhelming, it’s intense.Â  And then there’s the lethargy and the grumpiness.Â  I just don’t feel like doing anything lately!Â  It’s really difficult to not be grumpy while chasing after kids all day when all I really want to do is sit on my butt and play video games.Â  But if I were even to allow myself to indulge in some “doing nothing” time, I know I would be interrupted constantly by needy kids – kind of like when I sit down to type a blog post!Â  And then there’s the guilt…Â  now that we’re past the 85Âº+ heat wave, I feel like I should take the kids outside, but I’m just too tired!Â  Besides, as much as I tell myself to let the housework go for a month or two, I still can’t bring myself to actually let it happen.Â  So by the time I’m done with my “dailies” (daily chores like laundry, meal making, picking up after kids, errands, etc), I have barely enough energy for anything extra like my long-gone daily walks.Â  This week, I have to unpack the kids from their trip to Grandma’s, but at least I got caught up on laundry while they were gone and lucky for me, Grandma sent them home with literally only 2 pieces of dirty laundry – NICE!Â  The kids had a lot of sleeping to catch up on, so they’ve taken naps today, and I’ve gotten a lot done, so maybe tomorrow or later this week we can get out and enjoy the beautiful weather.Â  Our town’s annual carnival is in town starting tomorrow, so I know we’ll be up there once or twice.Â  They have Dippin’ Dots, ice cream super-frozen into little balls, and it’s SOO good!Â  It’s my favorite thing to begin with, so during pregnancy, it’s a MUST-HAVE!

The good news is that my mood seems to be improving.Â  I actually wrote the beginning of this post weeks ago – I just haven’t had time to finish it until now.Â  And now that I’m finishing it, my feelings have changed a little.Â  Instead of feeling the usual ‘my-body-will-never-be-back-to-normal’ frustrations, it seems like the birth of our baby is right around the corner; actually I have to start doing the weekly doctor visits already!Â  And I feel less grumpy than I did a few weeks ago, and even less sore in my body, though physically even more tired.Â  The difference is that instead of not feeling like doing anything, now I feel more like doing things, but I physically cannot because I am so huge.Â  I have gained over 50 lbs with this pregnancy.Â  Perfectly normal, I know, especially with the insatiable appetite I encountered between 3-5 months, but things like bending over to pick things up off the floor have become impossible.Â  You wouldn’t believe how long it takes me to put on lace-up shoes without help – which stinks because those feel much better on my aching feet than my sandals.Â Â And turning over in bed has evolved beyond the 3-point-turns into the 5+ point turns – I kind of have to scoot in a circle until I’m turned over…Â  not fun for me; must be incredibly annoying to my bedmate – between me and our kids who wake up very early and sometimes throughout the night, he doesn’t get much sleep!Â Â And with all this fun comes the feeling of dread that I know labor is just around the corner…Â  I sure hope this baby is easier on me than my second child was during labor…Â  long story short, she took forever then came really fast, which meant that the ‘window of opportunity’ where I was supposed to get the pain medicine opened and closed too quickly for anyone to do anything for me, leaving me with a ‘natural labor’ – andÂ NOT by choice!Â  But kid #2 has been trouble from the time I could feel her kick right up until this morning’s tantrum, so as I always say, hopefully she is one of a kind!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I was the opposite... third of three boys then had the baby sister. Talk about overprotected and spoiled.  
**derek**A boy will bring some completely different challenges- hopefully not too many! Anyway, three older sisters will keep him in line- I think I'm glad not to be him... (in having three older sisters- **nothing** to do with who those older sisters are, or who the parents are for that matter :) )

# Fun in South Bend Indiana

Of all the places to find fun, who would have thought that middle of nowhere, IN would be such a sight?Â  Every summer, we meet my mom there about 4 times to swap the kids.Â  She’ll take them for a week, twice a summer, so because South Bend just happens to be about as close to halfway for each of us to drive, that is where we meet.Â  We used to meet at a Wendy’s just off the expressway, but our horizons have broadened, and my husband and I have been venturing off the beaten path to discover new things to see and do in the area.Â  We found a good restaurant called Eleni’s with amazing gyros and saganaki, two of our favoriteÂ dishes.Â  We also found an authentic Greek restaurant called Elia’s right down the street, but oddly enough, they are almost never open.Â  They have more exotic Greek food like stuffed grape leaves,Â moussaka, and baklava, YUM!Â  Their food is excellent, though we’ve only been able to eat there once because of their strange hours and seemingly constant family vacations.Â  After eating and getting the kids back from my mom, we headed to the [Potawatomi Zoo](http://www.potawatomizoo.org/).Â  The zoo is a really cool size, perfect for our family of 3 small children and a now VERY pregnant woman.Â  Not much walking to do at all, yet it has a good amount of animals, native and exotic, all types and sizes fromÂ lions, tigers, and bears, to monkeys, bison, alligators, parrots, and red pandas.Â  I wil have to mention that the Potawatomi Zoo did not seem very well-kept.Â  A gardener in that place could have done wonders as there were many overgrown weeds, trees, and shrubbery, some even blocking what could have been better views of the animals!Â  One tree was so untrimmed it was blocking a drinking fountain!Â  But as I said, it’s a very cute little zoo, and they reciprocate with our home zoo, the Toledo Zoo, so our admission price was free and they don’t charge for parking.Â  I was surprised to see that the zoo wasn’t very crowded seeing as how it was a Saturday in June under 90Â°…Â  That zoo could really use a Jack Hanna to fix it up and get the publicity rolling – I see a lot of potential for it, but it does need some work.

After the zoo, we had kids begging for ‘one more fun thing’ (remember, they had been used to the fun of Grandma’s forÂ just short of aÂ week!), my husband whips out Mr. GPS, and apparently he has a phone book feature on him, so from your car, you can find gas stations, restaurants, and most importantly, fun places and attractions to visit!

So KUDOS belong to Mr. GPS this time!Â  Instead of getting us lost and chuckling at us electronically, he led us right to this strip mall that was like a step back in time, it was really strange.Â  It looked like it was right out of 1983.Â  I don’t know how to explain it – we should have taken pictures.Â  It would have been a great place to film a movie set in the early ’80’s, took me right back to my childhood.Â  Anyway, in this strip mall was a place called Mega Play.Â  From the outside, it looked closed down – they really need to get themselves a big bright ‘open’ sign.Â  But once inside, it was a huge space where they had tons of video games, pinball machines, indoor minigolf, bouncy castles and tunnels for the kids, lots of ride-ons for toddlers, and right out of 1983 – a ball pit!Â  The ball pit had a pyramid in the middle of it that the kids climb up with ropes and once they got the hang of it, they had a ball – cheesy pun intended.Â  That pyramid gave me a flashback of playing on the same thing when I was little.Â  I think they used to have them in KMarts, and my husband agreed.Â  It was neat to seeÂ vintage video games and pinball machines also.Â  The arcade ATARI games they had in one bouncy castle area were free to play – they had Kangaroo, Pole Position, Asteroids, and some shooting game I hadn’t heard of.Â  I walked over to the pinball machine area because days earlier, we visited this cool pinball shop in a suburb of Toledo.Â  The guy started it as a hobby, but it grew into a store, and he had all kinds of pinball machines, new and mostly vintage.Â  He had titles on display like Demolition Man, Star Wars, The Shadow, and Hercules (anÂ older game – it was HUGE!).Â  He even had this Looney Tunes racing game (not pinball) that was really vintage and one-of-a-kind…Â  it was cool to see.Â  I wonder if the pinball guy outside of Toledo is familiar with Mega Play?Â  But anyway, back to Mega Play…Â  it was a huge, wide-open strip mall space that had tons of games, ride-ons, and bouncy castles packed into it – lots of fun there, but still spacey so you didn’t feelÂ closed it.Â  It was the exact concept my husband and I had in mind for our own business of the same type we started a few years ago.Â  We ended up having to sell the business because it was too labor intensive for the time and staff we had however.Â  Too badÂ Mega Play isÂ all the way in South Bend, or we could challenge our putt-putt-ing friends to the mini-golf course 

After Mega Play, it was time to find something to eat, and before we knew it, we were out of South Bend and into the country.Â  The kids started getting crazier and crazier, and we vowed to stop at the very next restaurant we found before someone passed out or went insane – and some of us were close to either condition!Â  So, we stopped at a restaurant called Dakota’s in Elkhart IN, and I highly recommend it if you’re ever out that way.Â  They had the best cornbread, and their steak and cheese sandwich was simply AWESOME!Â  They also have barbecue items, and they happened to have karaoke the night we went…Â  it wasn’t too intrusive though.Â  They were in another room and we didn’t even know it was karaoke at first until the audience began applauding.Â  The DJ hosting the karaoke was singing a few songs also, and he wasÂ pretty good, so he actually sounded like a recording with a live quality.Â  I don’t how often they have karaoke there, but their food is great, prices reasonable, nice atmosphere, and the staff is amazingly friendly.Â  Keep in mind I say this coming from a super-friendly town myself, so we’re used to the usual chit-chat when we go out to eat –Â  but people in Elkhart were *exceptionally* friendly.

Overall, not a bad place to spend a day – fun and very inexpensive to boot.Â  Too bad with gas prices the way they are we can’t consider South Bend for a normal day trip for our family – there is plenty to do!Â  Maybe we’ll wander around some more the next time we meet Grandma there in July…

### Comments

**derek**I think next time I go over there it will take me a few hours longer to get there... :P  
**jamiahsh**Morat not understand dis a Pit of Balls. Dis is ride for little peoples. Morat see peoples in pit before but they not come out.

# Murder on Friday the 13th

With the kids out of town and Friday the 13th upon us, we found it to be the perfect time to break out a game we found at the thrift store months ago – a Murder Mystery Party.Â  After a check to make sure all the contents were there, we started inviting friends to attend a murder mystery party at our house:

**Dear *Name of Character Here*,  
Hart’s untimely death casts suspicion on us all.Â  The police report has already been filed (see enclosed).Â  We must meet quickly in order to solve the murder and clear our good names.  
Hosted By:  
on Friday, June 13 at 6:00pm  
Please RSVP by Wednesday, June 11  
Please bring a dish to share – no poison**

We sent this email to each guest along with the police report detailing the homicide.Â  We began with our game night regulars, then when some of them couldn’t make it, we tried to cast accordingly.Â  The casting, by the way, justÂ happened to workÂ out perfectly.Â  Originally, we were going to haveÂ toÂ make a male character female, but once we switched some things around based on which guests were coming, itÂ allÂ workedÂ out.Â  And in retrospect, the swapping male for female thing would not have worked well at all!Â  My husband and I were originally going to be the married couple, but those charactersÂ were a few decades older than us, and the characters we did end up playing had a secret infatuation with each other, soÂ we were both pleased to discover this in the course of the game.Â  Unfortunately, when my turn came to come up with a ‘formal accusation’,Â evidence dictated that I point my finger at my husband, aka, secret crush, but that’s how you play the game.Â  Each guest came in costume and character and stayed that way for the roughly 3 hours we played the game.Â  All in all, a lot of fun, and we’ve already had several people who were disappointed that they couldn’t make it.Â  So, we’ll have to scour theÂ thrift stores and / or the intenet in hopes of finding another one of these Murder MysteryÂ games to play…Â  providing we can get all (almost 4!) kids out of theÂ house for an evening again…Â  hmmm, that mightÂ be theÂ REAL mystery!Â

### Comments

**Frank**Hi taylhis, thanks so much for the response! This is exactly what I wanted to know :) Thank you, and best wishes to you and your family! Keep up the awesome blogging :)  
**taylhis**Hi Frank, thanks for visiting and leaving a comment! The game I was referring to in this post was a Murder Mystery Party game, and this particular episode is called "Intrigue at Sparkling Water" by Jan Sosa and Henry Sosa. We also have a few other brands of murder mystery games; there's How to Host a Murder and Murder Ala Carte... We also had an All My Children one, but we have it to a friend to host. We picked up all the ones we have at the Goodwill and other thrift stores, they're usually a few bucks. Well worth it, as long as you check for all the pieces. Our second murder mystery experience didn't go so well; it had a cassette tape, and you listen to little tidbits from the tape to give you clues. But the tape just blurted out who the murderer was when we weren't ready yet!!! Same thing happened on an episode of The Office, if you watch that show - it was hilarious! So I guess I would recommend trying one without a cassette tape, but either way, they're lots of fun!! Good luck!  
**Frank**Thanks for blogging about your murder mystery experience. I played this exact same murder dinner once before and thought it was absolutely great ... I wonder if you could please post the exact name of the game and the name of the company that makes it? I am eager to find out if there are more in the series because I'm sure they would be just as entertaining! Thanks.

# Leaking Trains

Recently there was a news item about a train that spilled its cargo – with a twist.Â  Instead of the usual hazardous chemicals that spill from trains like hydrochlorlic and phosperic acid, acetone, liquid soap, antifreeze, fuel, coal, and herbicide; this particluar train spilled its contents of tallow, also known as animal fat.Â  Unlike other hazardous spills, this one was dangerous in a different way than possible human ingestion of chemicals.Â  The fat on the roadway caused it to be slippery which led to numerous car crashes.Â  To make matters worse,Â apparently theÂ rush-hour vehiclesÂ got the tallow on their tires and tracked it around the entire area, causing more complications in cleanup.Â  And you thought rush-hour traffic was aggravating enough all by itself!

*Animal Fat Leak Wreaks Havoc For Commuters*ELMHURST, Illinois – An eastbound Union Pacific freight train carrying a load of animal fat sprung a leak as it passed through DuPage County Friday, dousing intersections between Elmhurst and Lombard with the slippery goo.

Police departments in the area reported numerous crashes that occurred as a result of the substance, also called tallow.

Tallow is the rendered form of beef or lamb fat. It is used for soap, cooking and bird feed.

Hazardous materials teams from various fire departments were sent to numerous sites trying to determine the best method to deal with the spill, said Union Pacific spokeswoman Donna Kush.

“We’re incredibly sorry for the trouble this has caused, but more importantly we’re working on a cleanup solution and we’re working as quickly as we can,” she said. “The hazmat officials are out there to ensure it’s handled correctly.”

What seemed to work the best for roads where the fat had spilled was sand to soak up the goo and provide motorists with traction, said Metra spokeswoman Judy Pardonnet.

Crews continued to add sand to the roads throughout the evening, she said.

Kush said there appeared to be a “heavy concentration” of the spilled fat in the Lombard area. Police officials in Elmhurst said they were working on several accidents as a result of the leak as well. Kush said the leak spanned miles.

Because cars carried the fat over all three sets of tracks, all trains were running at walking speed between Elmhurst and Lombard, Pardonnet said.

Commuter trains were running about 30 minutes late at the start of the evening rush hour.

Some trains were delayed as much as two hours initially, she said.

Saturday train traffic was expected to be normal, she said.

### Comments

# You Don't Mess With the Zohan on Prom Night

While my mom has had the kids this week, we managed to fit in 2 movies of opposite genres: the suspense / horror flick,Â Â [Prom Night](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0926129/) (2008 remake of the 1980 film), vs. the silly comedy, [You Don’t Mess With the Zohan](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0960144/), Adam Sandler’s new movie.Â  Suspense / Horror wins this time, hands down.

Prom NightÂ  – an easy, old fashioned slasher movie.Â  I really liked that the villian and his motivationsÂ were unveiled in the first scenes of the movie.Â  I didn’t have to waste the rest of the movie worrying about *what* was trying to get the victims, why, and how many of them the victims needed to eliminate.Â  Predictable yet startling –Â don’t expect too much and you’ll have fun.

You Don’t Mess With the Zohan – ok, I really wasn’t expecting much from this movie.Â  The previews had basically said it all.Â  A former Israeli terrorist fighter is looking for a fresh start and decides to become a hairdresser in the US.Â  The movie is what it is – a really dumb comedy.Â  As crude as [Adam Sandler](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001191/) promises to be, you have to have a certain type of sense of humor to enjoy this movie.Â  I didn’t have a bad time at the movie, but many of the jokes got old before they were done using them and the humor became even raunchier thanÂ expected.Â  While Adam Sandler does have aÂ few worthwhile movies to his credit ([Happy Gilmore](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0116483/) and [The Wedding Singer](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120888/) are my favorites), this is not one of them. Â Oh, well, it was bargain night at the movie theater, so $8 for two of us to see a movie, get 2 pops and some popcorn was well worth it!

### Comments

**Adam Sandler Celebrity Gossip | You Don’t Mess With the Zohan on Prom Night**[...] While Adam Sandler does have a few worthwhile movies to his credit (Happy Gilmore and The Wedding Singer are my favorites), this is not one of them…. As crude as Adam Sandler promises to be, you have to have a certain type of sense of humor to enjoy this movie…. Source: You Don’t Mess With the Zohan on Prom Night [...]  
**derek**I was wondering about the Zohan movie. I think I will be avoiding it. It sounds a little like Sandler's take on Borat, though I haven't seen that one either.

# Vacation!

In case you’ve been wondering where I’ve been lately (or even if you haven’t) – Grandma has helped us get one last little vacation before baby arrives.Â  We were going to head to New York, but decided not to do that, thank goodness.Â  Admittedly, the gas prices were the original deterrent, so then we explored taking a Greyhound bus there, but in my huge condition, I didn’t see any opportunity for good rest on a long bus trip.Â  I am really glad we declined the big trip, though, because my feet have been killing me, just from everyday tasks, like cleaning or shopping.Â  I would have had to cut short all of our sight-seeing in New York or rent a wheelchair for the week.Â  And staying home had afforded us time to do much needed catch-up work around the house.Â  We’ve been making landscaping plans, and I will be very excited to see how that turns out in a few weeks when it’s finished.Â  We cleaned out the famous closet o’ games, and we didn’t even need to knock down the wall to expand the closet as I was talking about in another post.Â  We found enough room for all of our games by sending all the kids’ games upstairs to their room.Â  Our house hasÂ lots of built-in shelving and drawers, and the kids had a huge cabinet in their closet that wasn’t even being used.Â  So, up went all the kids’ games.Â  I am a little concerned that they will tear apart their game collection and scatter pieces and whatnot, but they will have to be taught somehow that this is not going to be tolerated.Â  Most importantly on our vacation without the kids, we acheived the cleaning of their room.Â  It is a huge bedroom, and we have all 3 of our girls sharing it, but until we cleaned it, they could barely fit in there because they had so many toys.Â  Whenever we’d make them clean it, we noticed that they would play in there for such a long time afterward because they actually liked having all the open space.Â  So we donated about 90% of their toys to charity while they were visiting with Grandma.Â  It might sound mean, but we kept the important stuff, and like I said, they actually enjoy their room and the things in it much more when everything is picked up and they have fewer thins to appreciate.Â  I will keep you posted on how well (or not) this is received when they get home.Â  They will probably forget exactly what toys they once had, and by donating everything, more kids can enjoy them.

Even though it took an entire day of cleaning to reach the bottom of the toy pile in their room, we have managed to fit in lots of fun for just hubby and me.Â  We’ve gone shopping several times, and yesterday we were in Toledo all day getting good food, seeing a movie, and taking in a [Toledo MudHens](http://www.mudhens.com/) game.Â  If you’re not familiar, the MudHens are minor league baseball.Â  I’ve been wanting to get to a [Chicago Cubs](http://chicago.cubs.mlb.com) game last year or this year, but with the baby coming, I’ve ruled it out until at least next year.Â  So, minor league baseball it was, and we had a blast – I got my live baseball game fix for awhile…Â  there’s just something about hearing the crack of the bat, the slap of the ball in the glove and the other sounds of a baseball game in the beautiful summer night air.Â  And it was a great game.Â  Seems a player from the [Detroit Tigers](http://detroit.tigers.mlb.com) was rehabbing with the MudHens, so we got to see a major-leaguer pitch for a few innings.Â  The Hens were up 3-0 early in the game, then they let Indianapolis tie it up, only to hit a walk-off homer in the 9th with 2 outs to win the game – awesome!Â  And if you’re not from the area and want to experience food that is uniquely Toledo, I recommend a restaurant called [Tony Packo’s](http://www.tonypackos.com) to you.Â  Their menu is somewhat limited; there aren’t very many choices, so pass on it if you’re a picky eater.Â  But if you’re like me and you like to try all different kinds of ethnic food, give it a whirl.Â  They serve Hungarian food, namely sausage, cabbage rolls, and chili mac over dumplings.Â  It’s really good and a unique dining experience.Â  It’s also really interesting how we heard of the restaurant in the first place.Â  We were in a thrift store and I saw this stuffed baby in a diaper with a tomato head.Â  I thought it was really cute, even though it creeped my husband out, but it was only 5Â¢ so I bought it.Â  Turns out, it’s a character from Tony Packo’s as labeled on the rear end of the baby tomato.Â  I googled Tony Packo’s, found out it was a restaurant an hour away from usÂ in Toledo, looked at the menu, and we decided to give it a try.Â  The guy who works their marketing in the gift shop really liked that story.Â  What’s weird though, is that while gutting my kids’ room this week, the baby tomato never surfaced.Â  Hmmm, I wonder what happened to it?

Sometimes you get more of what you want from a vacation by staying home.Â  In this age of the horribly high gas prices, the media has even coined a new word for the ‘vacation taken at home’, but I can’t recallÂ what it is.Â  If you know, post it in my comments – it’s bugging me that I can’t think of it.Â  Anyway, by staying home, we saved a ton of money on gas alone, and we got some things done around the house that we will appreciate for months or even years to come, all while having a great time with just each other, no kids!Â  Thank you, Grandma!

### Comments

**derek**Going away for vacation can be stressful too, besides the gas prices. Staying home, or at least in the area, sounds like it was a good idea. And sorry, I think Packo's is too far of a drive for me... :P  
**taylhis**Went to Packo's at the park both times. Since it was right before a game, it was PACKO-ed. We were a little rushed, but they did manage to get us fed and out before the game started. I like the stuffed cabbage, though I was thinking about trying the chili mac. I like their chili, and I wanted to try it on dumplings... next time.  
**justj**I could go for a Packo Dog right now... It has been awhile since I have been there. Which Packo's did you go to? The one right near the ball park? I haven't been to that one yet. I've been to the one in Sylvania, and the one in East Toledo. I haven't stopped at the Packo's in the Anderson Stores yet.  
**jamiahsh**a "stuffed baby in a diaper with a tomato head" would freak me out, too. Tony Packo's is the restaurant Toledo native Jamie Farr (as Corporal Klinger)would mention on M\*A\*S\*H from time to time as well as the MudHens.  
**Kim**We've all been having a wonderful time with the girls. All the kids had their picture taken today - it was interesting trying to get 5 kids to sit still AND smile! I think you'll like the pose I chose, and I'll email it once JC Penny's sends it to me. We pick up the pictures on June 24th, and then I'll send them to you. I know what you mean about staying home on vacation / days off. In our busy society, it is so tempting to just be go go going all of the time. I am often on fast forward, trying to fit as much as I can into each day, and often I forget to just BREATHE and take everything in! I am trying to learn to slow down and maintain balance in my life (although it isn't always easy, especially with a new baby in the house!). I like to schedule "catch up" days into my week during which we stay home. Then I can catch up on items from my to do list that didn't get done earlier in the week, and I also try to focus on just hanging out with my kids. That's great that you were able to do so much around the house and use it as quality time together at the same time! Hope you enjoy your last day of "vacation". Kim

# The Mole Week 2

After getting to watch week #2 of the new Mole season UNINTERRUPTED by kids since they’re with Grandma this week (can’t put a price on that by the way, it’s funny how simple pleasures like watching a favorite tv show uninterrupted can feel really nice :)), I am going to change my mole guess from Clay to Kristen.Â  I don’t really have a good reason why; she was just acting kind of moley.Â  And her way of sabotaging the task could have been to get that chain to keep falling off the bike, cuz that *was* unfortunate.Â  Clay had like, one comment during the whole episode, and I just don’t think they would shove the mole into the backround like that.Â  And I have to add that I just knew this week was going to be the end of Liz somehow.Â  Chris thinks the mole is Paul, going with his first week’s guess.Â  I guess what I will do is give everybody a point for every week they guess the mole correctly at the end once we find out who it is.Â  Do you have a guess this week, Jamiahsh?Â  I got your comment on my other mole post, and I will repost it here:

*After watching the first 2 episodes. It is definitely NOT BOBBY. Trying way too hard to draw attention to himself with his ‘overexertion. It could be Alex… unless he really did leave his journal behind by mistake.*Â

Interesting comment.Â  We too, think that Bobby is drawing way too much attention to himself to be the mole.Â  He’s just coming across as a lazy jerk, and it’s not fun to watch.Â  I will go with Chris’ theory on him – he is trying to throw off other players by acting like the mole.Â  I see Alex as the guy who wins everyting – there’s always one of those on every reality show – and I don’t think he’s the mole.Â  I don’t know whether or not he left his journal laying around on purpose.Â  He could have done so or he could have left it accidently and just tried to cover it up with the explanation of trying to throw others off.Â  But anyway, another good episode, and here is where we stand on mole guesses:

Lisa – Clay, Kristen

Chris – Paul, Paul

Jamiahsh – Clay, ?

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I guess you have a point there. It would appear as if the chain falling off would be helping the others...hmm.... IT'S A CONSPIRACY!!!  
**Chris**Wasn't the team on the bike esentially helping the group when the chain fell off?  
**derek**No vote for me, as I haven't watched it. :P  
**justj**I have a mole? Never mind. Its just not a show I could get into. But then again, I haven't seen one single reality show that I enjoyed. I guess I'm in the wrong demographic.  
**jamiahsh**I thought it was of the bike riders as well... Mark or Kristen. The chain endlessly falling off got me, too.

# It's HOT!

For a few days now and a few more days to come the temperatures in our region have been over 90Â°.Â  For a pregnant woman of my girth, it is proving disasterous.Â  I am so lathargic – I don’t feel like doing ANYTHING, including eating!Â  The house is a mess, and the kids have been cooped up because I’ve been cooped up in the a/c.Â  It’s not the best a/c though because we have window units, not central air, so it’s still hot!Â  Luckily, the kidsÂ are going on vacation with their Grandma and will get plenty of stimulation next week.Â  After that, I have to hope and pray for an arctic streak until I deliver the baby in mid-July or we won’t make it.Â  Since I’m sitting here doing nothing, just as I want, I decided to post this poem as a distraction to myselfÂ in lieu of the heat.Â  It’s a poem by Shel Silverstein, and I had to memorize it in 5th grade.Â  While I no longer have it memorized, certain lines keep running through my head as I sit here and boil.Â  Enjoy and stay cool!

**Itâ€™s Hot!***By Shel Silverstein*

Itâ€™s *hot*!  
I canâ€™t get cool,  
Iâ€™ve drunk a quart of lemonade,  
I think Iâ€™ll take my shoes off  
And sit around in the shade.

Itâ€™s *hot*!  
My back is sticky,  
The sweat rolls down my chin.  
I think Iâ€™ll take my clothes off  
And sit around in my skin.

Itâ€™s *hot*!  
Iâ€™ve tried with â€˜lectric fans,  
And pools and ice cream cones.  
I think Iâ€™ll take my skin off  
And sit around in my bones.

Itâ€™s *still* hot!

### Comments

**justj**It has been hot, especially for early June. Shel Silversteen is on of the best, I always liked "Where the Sidewalk Ends".

# Tevye No Longer

I had my ultrasound yesterday, and something occured that has left me in shock; that’s why it took me a day to blog about it…

My doctor is a female who has 3 sons.Â  Actually, 2 of her sons are the exact same age as 2 of my daughters, because our dr. was 9 months pregnant when she delivered my 4-year-old, and she was on maternity leave when her replacement doctorÂ delivered my 19-month-old.Â  But anyway, during my ultrasound yesterday, she was talking about how her other dr. friend came to visit over the weekend, and he has 4 daughters.Â  He was wistfully throwing around a football with her sons and she was talking about how into sports girls are in this area, trying to console her friend because he didn’t have boys.Â  She was telling this story because we have 3 daughters and one on the way, and my husband is starting to feel like the character Tevye from Fiddler on the Roof who is famous for having 5 daughters.Â  So anyway, the dr. gets to the point in the story where she’s talking about lots of girls in our area being active in sports.Â  All of a sudden, she kind of pauses, then she goes, “wait a minute…Â  what’s this?”Â  Seems the ultrasound had picked up a certain little “bleep” on the radar that hadn’t appeared on the February ultrasound…Â  Seems our little Lyndsey or Evangeline is going to be Christopher Vincent instead!!!

It’s especially funny because my dr. has a reputation in the area for being wrong about these kinds of things.Â  I’ve heard stories of at least 5Â  of her patients’ babies whose gender was predicted wrong; inlcuding one from the delivery room nurse I had when I delivered my second daughter.Â  I am glad thisÂ “misdiagnosis” happenedÂ now rather than at birth, otherwise our firstborn son would be going home in pink – after 3 girls,Â pink and purpleÂ onsies are all I have!Â  And in the past 24 hours since I found out, I’ve been looking around the house, noting how easily and unnoticeably we’ve emersed ourselves in pinks and purplesÂ over the years.Â  We have pink blankies, bedsheets, clothes, stuffed animals, doll’s clothes, furniture, carpet, curtains, pillows…Â  the list goes on and on and on.

We are ecstatic; we’ve never had a little boy in our house, so it should be interesting to say the least.Â  And my greatest wish of courseÂ is for a healthy baby anyway, gender is not a concern.Â  But now that we know he’s a boy, I do feel kind of lost.Â  I’ve never had a boy baby before, and I had gotten into a sort-of comfort zone with my girls…Â  I even had a nice system worked out with their clothes.Â  The clothes that my 19-month-old was growing out of weren’t even getting packed away in the basement – I was just keeping them around for the new baby to use!Â  My girls are close enough in age where I was just putting all their clothes in one closet, and they would make the transition to the next size seamlessly – I thought I had it all figured out!Â  The good news about the clothes is that my sister has gratiously offered us the use of her boys’ clothes.Â  She has a baby who will be 2Â½ months older than baby Christopher, so if we can keep the transportation line open between her home in Illinois and mine in Ohio, we shouldn’t have to put our baby boy into any pinksÂ or purples.

And that reminds me…Â  I got my husband to promise me (somehow, we have both forgotten how!) somewhere between the last 2 baby girls that if we were to ever have a baby boy, I would get to name him Christopher after my husband.Â  Now that it’s a reality, he is getting cold feet about the name, but I am not letting him out of this one!Â  People have suggested using Christopher as a middle name, but Vincent was decided upon way back in 1999 when my husband’s father fell ill and passed away – I was pregnant with our first child when he was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig’s Disease), and we agreed that when we had a boy, he’d have the name Vincent…Â  little did we know it would be 9 years later!

So anyway, I just wanted to share our happy newsÂ with everybody…Â  Doctors can be wrong, and it seems our family is the latest victim of our doctor’s reputable gender inconsistencies.Â  And here is the poll we took way back when in February (before our first “gender revealing” ultrasound – or so we thought!)Â of some of our family and friends’Â predictions.Â  It was just for fun, no prizes or anything, but the people who thought they were right really were not (including our whole family except Taylor – good job, T!), and vice versa!

Â Gender Prediction – Feb. 2008

GUESSES:  
Mommy – g  
Daddy – g  
Taylor – b  
Sammie – g  
Mary Beth – b  
Great Grandma and Great PaÂ – b  
Shirley – g  
Keith and Trudy – g  
Linda – b  
Jamy – b  
John – b  
Elizabeth – b  
Jenny – g  
Tracy – g  
Gerry – g  
Tim and Kim – g  
Austin – b  
Sharon – b  
Lilly – b  
Vickie – g  
Kristen – g  
Sue – b  
Megan – b  
Carol – b  
GrandmaÂ B – g  
Cathy – b

12 guesses for girl – 14 guesses for boy

FEB 11, 2008 – ULTRASOUND / DR. says IT’S A GIRL!!!  
JUNE 3, 2008 – ULTRASOUND / DR. says IT’S A BOY!!!

### Comments

**justj**I wouldn't begin to know where to look for old ultra sound pics. If I still have them, they'd be 22 years old.  
**Kim**We are really excited for you guys! Little boys are a handful, but so much fun! Christopher and Ryan will be so close in age. When I told Austin you were having a boy, he said, "See, I was right all along.". He actually told me a few months ago he thought you were having a boy. Very weird!  
**taylhis**That's some good advice - I'm really starting to get used to the idea of a boy, so to be shocked again would be... shocking! I don't know what else the "bleep" on the "radar" could be. Ultrasounds can be difficult to interpret - there's a quiz somewhere online where you're supposed to guess boy or girl based on the picture - I didn't do very well on it. If you happen to have your "boy" ultrasound pictures handy, I'd love to see them, maybe it will shed light on how they were misinterpreted... did we share the same dr., perhaps?  
**justj**Don't count your chickens... My second daughter was supposed to be a boy, at least that's what the ultra sound picture looked said.... I'm pretty sure she came out a girl. I'll be a little jealous if you have a boy.... says the father of 4 girls....  
**derek**Well now... News indeed. Is that "blip" a certainty? Maybe you get a second shower for your first male baby, that would take care of the clothes problem!  
**jamiahsh**Hooray!!!  
**Mary Beth**YES!!!!!!! I knew you guys could do it! Congratulations!!

# "New" Kids on the Block?

Does everyone remember this boy band from the 80’s?Â  I remember them well because being a young preteen girl at the height of their popularity meant that their marketing was pointed directly my way.Â  I went to 3 of their concerts, had my bedroom wallpapered in New Kids posters, and had everything from tapes (for younger readers – that’sÂ what we played musicÂ on in those days), buttons, t-shirts, books, magazines, and stickers to trading cards, shoelaces, and even a Joey McIntire doll.Â  Yes, it was ridiculous and more than a little embarrassing.Â  But girls will be girls, and the groupÂ had a clean-cut, boy band image, so my parents willingly obliged my fanfare.

You may have heard that the band has reunited.Â  Yes, I’m serious, and yes, I’m talking about now, in 2008, when the members of the group are over the age of 30 and some are pushing 40.Â  Why now, you ask?Â  Probably because pop culture has a way of recycling itself.Â  They often resurrect fads decades later when people who were kids at the time of the fad can now enjoy them again as adults (now that they have their own money to spend)Â and share them with their own kids.Â  They did this with a number of fads from the ’80’s – My Little Pony, Cabbage Patch Kids, Strawberry Shortcake, Transformers, Star Wars, Indiana Jones, and now, The New Kids on the Block.Â  What perplexes me most of all about this whole thing, is that they didn’t change the group at all.Â  They are out there, singing the same songs they sang as teens and early twenty somethings, about dating girls and “Hangin’ Tough”.Â  They are attempting to perform the same dance moves they made popular decades ago, and results are not pretty.Â Â I wasÂ one of the biggest fans of the group way back when, and now I say they’re terrible.Â  I don’t like the music anymore (it was of a genre they used to call bubblegum pop – and it’s definitely the type of music you grow out of), they sound terrible singing it, the lyrics are ridiculous, if not downright creepy, coming from near-middle-aged men, and the dance moves are horrible.Â  They are actually going to tour this (circus) act come fall.

So why now?Â  Why do we need an updated version of New Kids on the Block?Â  Actually that’s not even right.Â  There’s nothing updated about this group except their ages.Â  Everything else is EXACTLY the same!Â  An updated version would be better musically and probably make a whole lot more sense.Â  There’s what I talked about earlier – the fad revival tactic.Â  I guess that’s why they did it.Â  But I find it amazing that they found enough people who thought this was such a good idea that they made it happen – inlcuding the 5 original members of the group.Â  Some have gone on to mildly successful movie or solo music careers.Â  Some have raised families.Â  But how someone got all 5 to agree to resurrect the New Kids on the Block circa 1991 is astounding.

If you don’t believe me about how terrible they are or if you just like to watch train wrecks in action, check this out.Â  Help me figure out who looks more ridiculous – the group or the fans.Â  This video is part one of three, but you’ll only want to see the first part, if that, trust me:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**taylhis**Funny you should mention Weird Al - he is playing the Toledo Zoo concert series this summer and will be there in July!  
**jamiahsh**Is Weird Al still around or is he sitting around "Eat(ing) It" and getting "Fat"? Oh, the 80s had to love 'em... Anyone remember Falco and their one hit "Rock Me Amadeus"?  
**taylhis**Actually, I left out one of the worst parts - there WAS a scheduled reunion concert before now, I'm thinking early 2000's - and not one ticket was sold. Probably should have taken that as a hint.  
**derek**O-o-o-o-oh, O-or-e-o. O-o-o-o-oh, the white stuff (Weird Al shortly after the original hit...) So- the not-very-young-but-not-quite-old-either men on the block?  
**jamiahsh**Did they ever consider reuniting before now? Another more recent boy band group has always been rumored to be reuniting but at least one member refuses...N'S(t)ync, anyone?

# To Do

This seems a littleÂ strange to me, but the other day my husband suggested that I should put everything into my blog.Â  Every to-do list, shopping list, etc.Â  Anything I’m putting into my computer should be in my blog, he says.Â  I’m a person who makes a lot of lists.Â  I’ve even been known to make a list of the lists I need to make!Â  It might sound dorky or anal, but it makes me feel better and more organized – I’m a busy person with a terrible memory, so any way I can feel a little closer to keeping my head above water when daily life becomes overwhelming is worth trying for me.Â  And often I do so with lists.Â  So,Â upon the adviceÂ of my husband, a person whose knowledge of everything seems to know no limits (and no, I’m not being sarcastic!), here goes – hope it doesn’t bore you too much, but here is my To-do List for when Grandma has my kids for just under a week –Â an event I am anticipating so anxiously that it seems to have SLOWED the passage of time…Â  We were going to take a trip to New York, but we declined it because of gas prices and in favor of getting things done around the house, sigh.Â  Besides, I don’t know how a woman who is 35 weeks pregnant would fare walking around such a big city!Â  Such a shame, though, it’s the LAST time we will be kidless for a long period of time because Grandma can’t fit 4 kids into her car to take them all at the same time 

**To Do While Kids Are Gone**

RELAX!  
clean game closet  
organize kids room – clean out their toys, add toddler bed, create play room  
hook up hose  
clean out laundry basket o’ junk  
clean out playpen  
~~wash baby’s clothes~~ – *(now that we just found out we’re having a boy intead of a girl, I have no boys’ clothes to wash!)*pack away Disney’s clothes *(now that we won’t be needing them for the new baby!)*fix pipe in upstairs bathroom – and the light that got broken and flooded because of the pipe!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**AWWWWW... no a vacation, but it looks like you will have a LOt to do while the three a little people are gone.

# Baby Christopher's Warm Fuzzies

*When I was in high school, I was in a peer group called Snowball and one of our activities was to write “warm fuzzies” about each other.Â  Warm fuzzies are kind thoughts.Â  When we told family and friends we are now expecting a boy instead of a girl, we got lots of warm fuzzies, so I decided toÂ collect them in one place so baby Christopher can read them someday.*

Lisa,  
How exciting to find out about your new son, we are so excited for you.  
Love, Linda  
——————————–  
YES!!!!!!!  
I knew you guys could do it! Congratulations!!  
Mary Beth  
——————————–  
Hooray!!!  
That is sooooo great. I can’t wait for HIS arrival. I sure Dad is as excited.  
Jamy  
——————————–  
Wow!Â  No wonder you are in shock!Â  I’m excited for you.Â  I had 3 boys and the last was a girl, and I didn’t know till she was born – no ultrasounds in those days.Â  All I can tell you from my experience is the girl was nothing like her brothers, from day one.Â  For me, 3 boys were easier than one girl!Â  I’ll be interested to see how your experience is.Â  Can’t wait to meet little Christopher.Â  I have one of those as well. (He is and was the “toughest”, most bull-headed of my boys.)  
Shirley  
———————————  
CONTRATULATIONS!Â  Iâ€™m so happy for you â€“ although it does turn out that I was wrong on the poll LÂ  You are going to love having a son. I know I was very nervous about having a son because I wasnâ€™t sure if I could feel the same way about a boy as I did about Abby.Â  Because she was a girl, I thought we had this unusual bond that couldnâ€™t possibly exist between a mother and a son, but it turns out that gender has nothing to do with it. Â Â I knew Iâ€™d love him, but I wasnâ€™t sure that thereâ€™d be that â€œclickâ€ I had with Abby.Â  Iâ€™m glad to reports I was very wrong.Â  Iâ€™m positively in love with my son and couldnâ€™t imagine life without a boy to raise.Â  Iâ€™ve often said that Iâ€™d have a whole ball team of boys before Iâ€™d have another girl, so if that tells you anything, youâ€™ll LOVE having a son.Â  HOORAY for you!  
Tracy  
——————————————————————–

Congratulations! Wow – will YOUR household change!!!! BUT, as a mother of 2 boys, I have to say that boys are EASY! I, too, was scared about having a boy – I had a sister, all girl cousins, even babysat for girls! But I soon learned that they are, in many ways, easier than girls! Still, I did go through a time from about 4th grade ’til college (or after) ’til they actually CONVERSED with me! Heaven forbid a boy would share an actual THOUGHT with a FEMALE in the house! But – I wouldn’t trade a thing – they were both healthy and happy boys (and now, grownups!). That’s all we can askÂ for, right?!Â  So – big CONGRATS to you all! Here’s to a healthy and happy Christopher Vincent Avell, soon to join a great family! Thanks for sharing your news~  
Hugs, Dawn  
———————————————————————  
how exciting – boys love those boys!!!!!!!!!!Â  can’t wait – now i can buy blue stuff!!!  
Sue  
———————————————————————-  
Lisa & Chris,  
Yea, a boy!Â  I’m excited for you and I guessed right!Â  lolÂ  Just lucky! lolÂ  I didn’t realize it was coming  
up so soon.Â  You will have fun with a boy.Â  I’m glad you are naming him Chris.Â   
Sharon  
————————————————————————  
Lisa and Chris,Â  We are sooo exited for you!!!!Â Â  Way to go , You are in our thoughts and prayers.Â  Keith and Trudy

What exciting news – we are thrilled – but most of all that baby is happy and healthy – and family – God bless you all – Trudy and Keith

————————————-

Don’t count your chickens… My second daughter was supposed to be a boy, at least that’s what the ultra sound picture looked said…. I’m pretty sure she came out a girl.Â  I’ll be a little jealous if you have a boy…. says the father of 4 girls….  
John

————————————-Â   
EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD NEWS!!!  
Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â  And, I love both names. I sometimes call Stephen, Nick, because his middle name is Nickolas, after my brother. He answers to Nick more than Stephen. It’s all good.Â  Boys are fun too!Â  Yahoo! Fun, fun, fun!Â  God Bless, and All my Love, Lilly

————————————–

Congrats!Â Â  I picked boy, too,Â but didn’t e-mail it.Â  I told you at game night shortly after that.Â  I have toÂ be around you to get a “feel” for it.Â  In case you didn’t remember.Â  I hope it’s right this time!

Cathy  
—————————————————————————-  
We are really excited for you guys! Little boys are a handful, but so much fun! Christopher and Ryan will be so close in age. When I told Austin you were having a boy, he said, “See, I was right all along.”. He actually told me a few months ago he thought you were having a boy. Very weird!  
Â Kim, Tim, and Austin

——————————————————————————

### Comments

# I'm Not Rubbing It In, Honest, But...

With ***NINE STRAIGHT WINS***, the Chicago Cubs are the HOTTEST team in baseball right now!Â  I am ecstatic about this and just had to make a remark or two.Â  So I’m sorry to my friends who follow MLB, choosing instead to support franchises other than the Cubs – I don’t know how your teams are doing, and I don’t mean to rub it in about how incredibly awesome the Cubs are this year, but these days, “How about those Cubs?” is not just a conversation starter, it’s aÂ question being asked by baseball fanatics, Cubs fans,Â Chicagoans, and probably anyone who has ever heard of the Cubs, theirÂ ‘loveable losers’Â nickname, and theirÂ awesome 2008 baseball skills.Â  Gone are the days it seems when the Cubs were the laughing stockÂ of baseball; the “maybe next year” mantra andÂ when an 8-0 deficit in a game meant certain disaster for my favorite team.Â  The other day, they were able to turn an 8-0 losing game into a 10-9 **WIN** over the Rockies!Â  Honestly, the Cubs have never been known for great comebacks in a game, and this was no fluke – that game was followed by 2 more games where the Cubs came from behind to save the game and declare wins for themselves.Â  Then again, rallies areÂ nothing new to Cubs’ manager, LouÂ Piniella – no manager in history has managed more eight-run comebacks.

So could 2008 be the year for the Cubs?Â  Could 100, aÂ whole century,Â be the magic number of years us Cubs fans have had to wait for another World Series win?Â  That remains to be seen, of course, it is only June, but keep this in mind: according to the Elias Sports Bureau, the last time the Cubs had the best record in baseball entering June was 1908, the year they last won the World Series.Â  Coincidence or fate?Â  We will find out come OctoberÂ – I know I willÂ be glued to the Cubs website until then!

***How about those Cubs?!?***

### Comments

**justj**Ok, I'll start watching the National league... Sometimes it just hurts watching my favorite team play.  
**jamiahsh**At least one of our teams is winning.... GO Cubbies

# Name Origins

With the revelation that we will be parents of a baby boy for the first time ever, I guess this puts the great ‘Frances’ debate to rest – at least for now.Â  Since we already have 3 lovely girls and have gotten to name them all of our favorite names, I thought I’d like to name our fourth girl after my deceased grandmother Frances, even though neither me nor my husband really like the name itself.Â  But, since we’re now having a boy and I got my husband to let us name the baby after him and his father, we don’t have to worry about the Frances issue anymore – but I wonder if getting to name the baby Christopher has me losing leverage if we were to need any baby girl names for the future?Â  While thinking about all this name business, I searched through my email for our arrival announcement of our third daughter who has quite an unusual name, and if you’re wondering, here is the email we sent out when she was born about how we came up with it:

How did she get the name Disney?

Well… We took our honeymoon (back in 1999) at Disney World in Florida and  
a few weeks after we returned we discovered we were pregnant with our first-born Taylor!  
The next time we would go to Disney World in 2003 we would return home to  
learn that there was again some “Disney magic” and baby Samantha was on her  
way! In late 2004 we decided we wanted another baby but we were  
disapointed month after month; it seemed we were having trouble getting  
pregnant for the thrid time… But wouldn’t you know it — we took a trip  
to Disney World in early 2006 and guess what? MAGIC — AGAIN!Â  So in October of 2006, we welcomed Disney Alyssa!  
Â

As I’ve said to people many times,Â her name seems to have worked, because it truly fits the child.Â  Disney is our most mild-mannered, sweet, and happy child so far.Â  But it makes me wonder, since little Christopher is the only one who was conceived without Disney World magic, could this be the secret to us finally having a boy?!?

### Comments

**derek**No problem- I timed it, you know... :P (not really!)  
**taylhis**The masculine version of Francis is even worse than the feminine version, in my opinion - especially after reading about your "friend". And I have to tell you that your comment is probably the funniest I've ever read!!! Came at such a great time too - the kids were driving me nuts and I was literally in tears until I read your comment and laughed out loud - so THANKS!!! :)  
**derek**Well, you could always name him Francis instead of Frances (or is it the other way around?). He would be called Frank for short though. Personally, I don't like that name- maybe it has something to do with a classmate named Frank who invited me to his house when I was in sixth of seventh grade, or thereabouts, and he grabbed my crotch. Never set foot there again...  
**jamiahsh**That is sooooo great. I can't wait for HIS arrival. I sure Dad is as excited.

# The Mole is Back!

The Mole is the best reality show ever, I think.Â  And now it is back for another season, starting Monday, June 2.Â  It airs on ABC, and I highly recommend it.Â  A quick synopsis in case you missed my previous post about the Mole – 12 contestants complete various stunts and missions, although one of them is the mole.Â  The audience and other players don’t know who the mole is, and he or she tries to sabotage the missions while staying undercover.Â  Each week, the contestants take a quiz about the mole, and the person who guesses the most answers incorrectly must leave the game.Â  About the new season, I must say how much I don’t like the new host, but other than that, the show seems to be just as it was before – extremely entertaining, thought provoking, and FUN!

I think it’d be fun to keep a running tally of Mole guesses for viewers who read my blog.Â  So if you’re a Mole fan also, submit your guess to me each week and I wil post it.Â  So far after week one, my guess for the Mole would be Clay, and Chris is guessing Paul.

It’s fun to see if anyoneÂ can guess who the mole is from early on, so stay tuned to my blog throughout the summer for updates on the show, and if you decide to watch it, and I HIGHLY recommend that you do, join in the fun by posting me a comment with your thoughts on the episodes and guesses on who is…  
THE MOLE!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**After watching the first 2 episodes. It is definitely NOT BOBBY. Trying way too hard to draw attention to himself with his 'overexertion. It could be Alex... unless he really did leave his journal behind by mistake.  
**jamiahsh**Clay

# The Strangers

Such a busy week this week, we had to move date night to Monday since we have meetings every other day this week.Â  So we traveled down the road to see the movie called [the Strangers](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0482606/), a suspense horror film.Â  And I don’t really have much to say about it.Â  It was exactly what I was expecting, not a thing more.Â  Lots of suspense, so the movie was good for that edge-of-your-seat anticipation, but there was no backround about why the terror was taking place, which I would have liked – just a movie about a couple whoÂ are victimized in a remote vacation home by scary people with extremely creepy looking masks.Â  And, this isn’t really a spoiler because right there in the film’s introduction they tell you that the main characters are not going to make it.Â  So watching these people struggle the whole movie knowing they won’t triumph over evil was kind of…Â  well, I guess I’d say almost pointless.Â  There is also another event that takes place in the movie involving someone’s demise that you can see coming a mile away.Â  So, while the film was incredibly predictable, it was good for suspense; it’s not like I’d say it was a bad movie or boring or anything like that…Â  Just nothing to write home about.Â  [Liv Tyler](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000239/) is not a bad actress either, but I’d have to say this wasn’t one of my favorite horror / suspense movies.Â  I appreciated the fact thatÂ it was doneÂ without the gore that seems to be plaguing many a horror film these days, but I really would have liked more story than just people getting terrorized by other people for no reason.Â  If you like suspense, check it out; it is 90 minutes of nail-biting tension, but don’t go expecting too much.Â  I like many horror movies better, includingÂ the [Texas Chainsaw Massacre](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0324216/) remake from 2003 to name an example.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**kind of like the soundtrack to Office Space that I so thoroughly loved :(  
**taylhis**Now that all my regular readers have read this post, I forgot to mention one of my favorite things about the movie - the soundtrack! Not only did I thoroughly enjoy the classic country, but it added an interestly creepy mood to a horror film, especially when played upon a record player.  
**justj**Ok, one I can skip then... I need a little more plot than just making my heart pound.  
**Chris**Yep. And this one really did keep me tense. Some "thrillers" keep you guessing and can actually be quite involved plot wise. This however was more classic horr/suspense. I too appreciated the low gore-level. Gore is not scary, it is just gore. I like to feel my heart pounding!  
**jamiahsh**Of course, who goes to horror movies expecting to see a great, thought-provoking experience. The edge-of-your-seat tension filled suspense is all you really need. 90 minutes of mindless fun.

# Newhart Nightmare

These pregnancy nightmares I’m having are out of hand.Â  Not only is my sleep interrupted, but the dreams areÂ getting just plain weird!Â  Before this pregnancy, I would rarely have dreams that I would even remember when I woke up, let alone have dreamsÂ so vividÂ that I’m unable to sleep after waking from them.Â  It’s funny how a nightmare can make one wake with such an unsettled feeling…Â  I’ve had a few now where I wake up scared – too scared to even get up to go to the bathroom.Â  And I can’t explain why.Â  Some of the nightmares are just plain scary, like the ones involving guns and violence.Â  But some of the crazy ones that have me waking scared actually make me laugh later in the light of day.Â  Last night’s was a real whopper – seems [Bob Newhart](http://www.bobnewhart.com/) wanted to steal my husband’s organs.Â  He had a surgical setup all ready to go with dishes out for the organs and everything.Â  We packed up our family and fled our house just in time, thank goodness, but the vision of Bob Newhart peering out the front door and trying to not let us leave was a creepy image that I couldn’t shake for about 15 minutes until IÂ did finally getÂ back to sleep.Â  I have no idea what caused this craziness to rush through my head at 4 in the morning.Â  It’s not like I’ve seen Bob Newhart anywhere lately; and I especially haven’t come across a scary Bob Newhart – until last night in my dream, anyway.Â  The good news is, scared as I was at 4am this morning, I’m now laughing about this, and I hold nothing against Bob Newhart!

### Comments

**newhart | Hottags**[...] Newhart NightmareLast nightâ€™s was a real whopper - seems Bob Newhart wanted to steal my husbandâ€™s organs. He had a surgical setup all ready to go with dishes out for the organs and everything. We packed up our family and fled our house just in time, …My Food Chain Gang - http://taylhis.tangents.org/ [...]  
**newhart | Lasts information**[...] Newhart NightmareLast nightâ€™s was a real whopper - seems Bob Newhart wanted to steal my husbandâ€™s organs. He had a surgical setup all ready to go with dishes out for the organs and everything. We packed up our family and fled our house just in time, …My Food Chain Gang - http://taylhis.tangents.org/ [...]  
**jamiahsh**A Bob Newhart nightmare?! That IS scary funny :D |

# MOTORcycles

Typing in CAPS is considered yelling, as far as computers and text messages go.Â  And I’m yelling MOTORCYCLES because that’s what you have to do in order to be able to hear yourself talk or even think while one is nearby.Â  With the horrible reality of gas prices these days (holding “steady” at $3.99 in my area currently), it seems that people are turning in their minivans and SUVs for more fuel efficient vehicles, especially motorcycles.

This is unfortunate for me because I can’t stand the things.Â  Normally I’m all for people doing their own thing; if someone wants to ride a motorcycle, why should it bother me?Â  Because simply put, it DOES affect me.Â  I can’t stand when I’m walking down the street, talking to my husband or my girls, only to have one of us drowned out by the awful noise of a motorcycle.Â  Some moron on a motorcycle revving his engine even startled one of my kids so badly that she cried!Â  It affects us even when we’re inÂ our ownÂ car, and the noise of a motorcycle drowns out our conversations, the kids’ movie, or even wakes the kids up.Â  Sure, you can roll up the window, but oftentimes it’s too late, unless you want to drive around with the window closed.Â  And why should I have to do that?Â  It’s MY car; I shouldn’t have to be so negatively affected by other people’s actions in my own car!Â  And the fact is, these effects come from just one motorcycle.Â  The situation can be especially compounded when there are a whole pack of motorcycles, and they do often travel in packs, which means even louder interference.Â  I don’t understand why it is that cars can be ticketed for having loud mufflers, yet motorcycles can drive down the road, revving their noisy engines and being as deafening as they please.

The main reason why I hate motorcycles doesn’t even have anything to do with the fact that their racket makes their owner seem very discourteous and not aware of others at all…Â  I also have a major beef with the safety issue motorcycles present.Â  It would be one thing for a rider to drive down the road on a motorcycle, not wearing a helmet –Â as they often do –Â if it only affected him…Â  But unfortunately, that is not the case.Â  If any type of car accident were to happen involving a motorcycle, no matter who was at fault, any driver involved would have to live with the guilt for the rest of their lives that someone got hurt.Â  And if a motorcycle is involved in an accident, it is relatively easy for the cyclist to get injured – it’s a proven fact, plus I’ve witnessed 2 such crashes – neither were pretty, and one ended with the motorcycle’s *helmeted* occupant being airlifted by helicopter to the trauma center.Â  His helmet was smashed almost flat, and If he hadn’t been wearing it, my kids and I and whoever else happened upon that scene would have witnessed a fatality, no doubt.

So now that I’ve sounded off, I feel better.Â  It’s not like I think motorcycles should be banned or anything like that…Â  though if my kids or I get interrupted by the clamor of a motorcycle and I’m having a bad day I might feel differently.Â  And in this age of $4/gallon gas with no end in sight to the price increase, I can’t say I blame people for wanting to lower their transportation bill.Â  I just wish it didn’t affect other people so extremely!Â  So if you’re a motorcyclist, please be considerate, don’t rev your engine unessessarily, it makes kids cry!Â  Please always have safety as your #1 priority, and ALWAYS wear a helmet – not just for you, but for the rest of us!Â  Helmets and other safety gearÂ a motorcyclistÂ might wearÂ look much cooler to me than the idiots who wear do-ragsÂ or shorts while riding…Â  What’s a do-rag gonna to do for you anywayÂ in case of an accident, soak up the blood from your head wound?

### Comments

**jamiahsh**DVD players on motorcycles... build it into the side car please.  
**taylhis**Crypto, I see you are unable to read carefully, so let me type it again: weâ€™re in our own car, and the noise of a motorcycle drowns out OUR CONVERSATIONS, the kidsâ€™ movie, or even wakes the kids up. Note, if you are able to, that I listed our conversations BEFORE I mentioned the movie player, and that was just an example anyway. Of course I interact with my kids in the car on a daily basis, and on walks, etc... as was all stated in my post. I'm sorry you have such a problem with kids watching dvd players in the car. Maybe you're just jealous they haven't invented dvd players for motorcycles :)  
**Chris**Crypto -- You probably shouldn't be interacting to intensly with your kids while DRIVING. You may fail to hear one of the loud motorcycles and hurt someone!  
**Crypto**OMG! Your little darlings movie audio is drowned out? WHAT A TRAGEDY! I'm yelling in case one of those monsters is driving by. We do have one thing in common though and that is the fact that we both "can't stand" something. You, it's loud bikes. Me, it's any parent who must have video players in their motorized cocoons so their little darlings can be kept comatose at all times. God forbid there should be interaction with their parents or the world in general.  
**taylhis**I see what you're saying about the loudness... however, doesn't that mean ALL vehicles should be equally loud if it's meant to get attention from drivers? Drivers should just be alert enough on their own of course... and "Mrs. Soccer Mom" isn't the only one to be distracted behind the wheel... correct me if I'm wrong, but don't car insurance companies charge more to insure MEN than WOMEN? So maybe it's Mr. Soccer Dad we should watch out for :) But whatever... thank you for having your say with some logic and without ignorance, which is more than I can say for a few commenters I've had... And I'm sure you weren't the motorcyclist who drove by the park the other day during my daughter's girl scout ceremony interrupting the entire thing... and that happened AFTER my post!  
**Scott**Being a motorcyclist, I do not want to enter into an argument with you, however, I hope I can clarify a few things. First I will concede that there are some inconsiderate jerks out there who rev their motorcycles unneccessarily. That being said, have you considered the possibility that motorcyclists like their bikes loud NOT to look or sound cool but to make it more safe for us? Try navigating the streets with all the distractions drivers (in cars) have....cell phones, stereos, etc. Along comes Mr. Motorcyclist obeying the speed limit & wearing his approved safety gear, and out pulls Mrs. Soccer Mom yacking on her cellphone not paying attention. CRASH....DEAD! Could that loud exhaust get her attention and prevent an accident?? Ever wonder why all the really fast bikes come in bright colors, yellow, red, orange? Do you think that maybe it helps cars SEE them better (not that they are exceeding the speed limit - that is a whole different conversation) Many motorcyclists have patches that say LOUD PIPES SAVE LIVES. Ponder for a moment that maybe they have a point. So many laws are passed using the verbage "If it helps save just one life, then it is worth it". Using that, I could argue that loud exhaust pipes should be mandatory on motorcycles. As for your helmet argument.....NHTSA estimates that motorcycle helmets reduce the likelihood of a fatality by 29% in a crash. 29% is not a huge number. I'd rather have my freedom to choose whether or not I want to wear a helmet. My freedom is more important than my safety. If I didn't believe that then I wouldn't have served my country. Yes, witnessing a fatal accident is very traumatic......no matter what the vehicle. That is what they make counselors and therapists for. Bad things happen all the time. In case you are wondering though, yes I do wear my helmet religiously. However, I am strongly against mandatory helmet laws. Unlike seatbelts which can reduce fatalities by 50%, helmet laws do not have the same effect because of the type of vehicle you are driving. Lastly, I'd like to say that I am sorry that loud motorcycles annoy you that much. I'm just glad that I live in a country that still allows them. Maybe New Hampshire has it right with their moto "Live Free or Die". (I'm from PA - never been to NH - just admire their spirit)  
**derek**Well said! Gas is $4.17-$4.25 around here, so I guess you're cheaper again...

# Walking With Dinosaurs

In case you haven’t heard of it, [Walking With Dinosaurs](http://www.dinosaurlive.com/) is a traveling show that is based on the BBC documentary of the same name.Â  It is in Fort Wayne, Indiana this week, which isn’t too far from us.Â  They’ve been advertising it heavily, and I’ve been meaning to check out ticket info, but I kept forgetting.Â  Thanks to our local paper who ran a story about it the other day, I was reminded about it just in time!Â  Seems the tickets are QUITE costly!Â  However, my computer-savvy husband went online and found a discount that saved us SO much money on tickets, but only if we went opening night…Â  So, we dragged all the kids to Fort Wayne to see some dinosaurs on a school night.Â  Let me say, it was SOOOÂ worth it!

It’s been a really long time since I was really excited about something thatÂ actually ended up measuring up to my expectations.Â  I was really excited about this show; I thought it would be a good show, but I will say that it *EXCEEDED* my expectations!Â  Not only was it visually stunning, It was a perfect show for the whole family.Â  There were lifelike dinosaurs engaging in battles, flying, and scavenging…Â  what’s not to like?!?Â  We have kids of all ages and bravery levels, and theyÂ were all entertained.Â Â Our 8-year-old and our 4-year-old did get a little nervous in the beginning, but their fear quickly turned to excitement and awe once the dinosaurs started appearing.Â  Our 19-month-old LOVED everything about the show.Â  She is getting to the age where it’s hard for her to sit still, especially now that she can walk, but she watched every moment of this show, and clapped and laughed so hard that I was even distracted from the dinosaurs at times by my daughter’s cuteness.Â  I wasn’t distracted too much though, cuz the dinosaurs were totally AWESOME!Â  They were life-size and SO realistic looking, it was amazing.Â  Our seats were great too – best in the house, front row center.Â  These dinosaurs were even better looking than the ones in the movie [Jurassic Park](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107290/)!Â Â Walking With DinosaursÂ operates on a $20 million dollar budget, and it shows!

I would venture to say that this is probably the best professional live show I have ever seen, and that includes musicals from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, The Phantom of the Opera, Camelot, and Les Miserables to other shows like Monsters Inc. on Ice, Dragon Tales Live, and dinner shows like Medieval Times, Arabian Nights, and Pirates Dinner Adventure in Orlando, Florida.Â  This was fun for the whole family; probably even most fun for my husband and I!Â  If the tickets weren’t so pricey, I would definitely go back and see the show again – even with the $20-30 it cost in gas money alone.Â  My 4-year-old suffered from what I call “fundown” after the show – a feeling of disappointmentÂ when an event is over that is so intense for kids, they usually cry or throw tantrums.Â  But I can’t say I blame her.Â  When I realized the show was ending, I had my own “fundown” when I realized there weren’t going to be any more dinosaurs!

Totally awesome show – wait, that’s not even the right word.Â  It was more of an experience than a show.Â  Even better than the dinosaur-themed rides at Disney World and Universal Studios.Â  As we were leaving the coliseum, the rest of the audience seemedÂ very pleased as well.Â  Everyone was smiling and jabbering about the dinosaurs a mile a minute.Â  They also had one actor – who was upstaged by the dinosaurs, of course! – and some other props and effects in the show that made it totally awesome.Â  Also pretty impressive were the rows upon rows of trailers parked outside that carry the dinosaurs from venue to venue.Â  I knew it would take a few semis to cart around all those dinosaurs, but there were probably at least 25 semis parked out there!Â  It is understandable that all these lifesize dinosaurs would create such an entourage, since the Brachiosaurus alone was 36 feet tall and 56 feet from nose to tail.

If this liveÂ ~~show~~ experience is going to be anywhere near your hometown, I highly recommend that you do your best to get tickets.Â  It is a perfect show for the young and old, dinosaur fans, skeptics, or even those who are indifferent toÂ the world’s history; I don’t see how anyone could NOT enjoy Walking With Dinosaurs!

### Comments

**justj**Too dang busy with other things to get to Ft Wayne this Weekend.. Dang. I wanted to go to that.  
**derek**Hmm. Already passed this area more than a couple months ago. Unless I had someone to go with I probably wouldn't have anyway. I did buy the DVD set for this show a while ago, though I have since given it to someone else.  
**jamiahsh**Sounds great to me. I could imagine a certain 9 year old nephew having the time of his life.

# OOPSIE - UPDATE

Here is anÂ update on a story I posted last week about a man who was pulled over and subsequently backed his car up onto the police car.Â  Seems the officers did manage to find something to charge him with besides the original speeding ticket:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/05/car-on-police-car1.jpg)

**Police Charge Niles Man They Say Backed Onto Squad Car**

A Niles man who reversed his car so that it ran on top of a Buffalo Grove police car Friday has been charged with reckless driving.

Henry Raskin, 70, had been pulled over by a police officer around 11:30 a.m. Friday for speeding. He had been driving 58 mph in a 35 mph zone on Dundee Road, police said.

After the officer wrote Raskin a ticket, he hit the gas while he was in reverse and ended up with his vehicle on top of the squad car, police said.

Sgt. Scott Kristiansen said Tuesday that police determined the incident wasn’t purely an accident after watching the squad car video and talking to Raskin.

“It appears to be a little bit more than a mistake,” he said. “We think it meets the criteria for reckless driving.”

Kristiansen said that most drivers if they found they had accidentally reversed in this situation, would have hit the brakes before driving over a police car.

Raskin posted 10 percent of his $2,000 bond Friday and was released. He has a June court date in Rolling Meadows.

### Comments

**derek**Well, it could still have been a mistake- the driver is 70 after all. However, the police are a bit closer to this story than I am of course.  
**jamiahsh**If it were a lady, I would have thought she was the little old lady from Pasadena.... have to change the song a little. Speed demon or was it a speed trap?

# Did I Miss Something?

We watched an interesting movie tonight, for lack of a better word.Â  It is called [Funny Games](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0808279/).Â  It wasn’t funny, and let me apologize ahead of time for the vague review – you’ll have to see the movie to understand why I couldn’t write too much about it.Â  I had never heard of it before, but it was a thriller, so my husband suggested it.Â  If you like thrillers, see it and then tell me what you think.Â  I don’t really know what to say about this movie.Â  It was captivating and VERY tense, so I was never bored, but I was disappointed with the way it ended.Â  For one thing, I did not understand the movie.

Let me back up and give a quick synopsis.Â  [Naomi Watts](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0915208/) stars as a mother who, along with her husband and son are held captive by 2 very well-spoken young menÂ in their remotely secludedÂ (of course it’s secluded – this IS a thriller movie!) vacation home.Â  As I said, the movie is very intense but onlyÂ afterÂ what is aÂ somewhat slow start.Â  I don’t want to spoil anything,Â so I will just say thatÂ are no words for what happened in the last 40 minutes of the movie.Â Â Near theÂ conclusion, itÂ took a turn for the confusing, and what happened made me not really understand the entire movie.Â  It’s based on an Austrian film, and imdb.com said that the American guy who remade it didn’t change much from the Austrian version, so maybe it didn’t translate well?Â  I liked the movie, for the time being anyway while I was watching it, but I would really like some insight about a certain event that took place…Â  it might actually be a thriller I would watch again, which is rare, but I might want to see if I can get what I must have missed.Â  Like I said, if you’re a big fan of suspense movies, I would try this one, it’s definitely different from all the others!Â  And if you have seen it or do see it, make sure you try to fill me in on what I missed, cuz I just didn’t get it!

### Comments

# Bring Him Home

We organized a concert in January with our local theater group where we had a collection of totally awesome singers perform selections from popular musicals.Â  My husband has an excellent singing voice – I’m not biased or anything, I swear!Â  Plenty of other people have said so…Â  If you were to ask *him* about it though, he would say much differently – he has a bit of an ego problem, but it goes in the opposite direction than that of most singers and actors – he does not have nearly enough confidence.Â  So even though there were other songs in the concert, this one might be the only one we actually get to see because I don’t know how to post on youtube – that’s his job and he doesn’t deem the other songs worthy of posting!Â Â And if you are a stage veteran orÂ know someoneÂ who is, you have had to suffer thru awfulÂ recordings of stage performances.Â  It seems that no matter how beautiful a play or song sounded on the stage, it will never translate correctly when recorded and played again – SO GET OVER IT AND JUST POST THE REST OF THE CONCERT ALREADY!!!Â  Â Â  My favorite song from this concert was actually Bui Doi from Miss Saigon, and I was PROMISED that I would get the link to that one soon, so stay tuned!Â  Don’t hold your breath though…Â  I was also promised a new altered picture from a show we directed last fall because *someone* ducked out of it at the last second, and a picture in the director’s hall of the basement of the theater should haveÂ the show’sÂ director in it, right?Â Â But that hasn’t happened yet, so hopefully this will be more of a priority, even though I’ve stated how much that picture means to me…

I feel sorry for all those friends and family members who couldn’t make it to this great event – you really missed a great showcase of talent, especially if you’re a fan of showtunes!Â  Maybe you’ll be able to make it next year if we do it again.Â  This is a clip ofÂ Chris singing the Les Mis classic, “Bring Him Home”:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**derek**Excellent job C. Next up, C singing it in the original key... :) Seriously, I always have trouble with that song. I mustn't forget though, that if I ever get a chance at that song I'll need a key change too. The song to fit the actor, not the actor to fit the song. Congrats again.  
**jamiahsh**Yes, he is amazing.

# Pet Day

What a frenzied way to start off the shortened week after a 3 day weekend – it was Pet Day at my oldest daughter’s school today.Â  So this morning saw us trying to unload a parrot, a 19-month-old little girl and a dog from the car, all while trying to get the other dog to stay in the car – it must’ve made for a funny scene.Â  We had to bring our “veteran” dog with in the car since the other pets got to go out, but she was not invited into the classroom because of her nervousness around kids.Â  So while she stayed in the car, Squawky the parrot and Beesley the dog visited a classroom full of 2nd graders.

It went surprisingly well!Â  And we were very impressed with our normally shy daughter, who got up in front of her whole class to tell about her pets.Â  She shared information about them, and patiently called on individuals from her class and answered their questions.Â  Neither pet had any accidents in the classroom, and the kids seemed to really enjoy seeing and learning about the animals.Â  Squawky got shy and wouldn’t talk for the kids of course, he never does, though he did yell out “HI!” when we entered the school – wonder if anyone heard that or what they thought it was?Â  He enjoyed himself, didn’t bite any of my husband’s fingers off, and returned home in time for a relaxing perch in front of The Price is Right.Â  Beesley loved being around all those kids, I think her only problem was being on a leash so she couldn’t be let loose to turn onto her back and let them all pet her at once.

Now, should we try Pet Day at the preschool with my younger daughter?Â  I wonder how a roomful of 3-5 year olds would handle the parrot and vice-versa…Â  I will let you know if I get brave enough to attempt that one!

### Comments

**taylhis**No, he was on a leash - but no need to worry about him going after a kid. He likes them, but he's also scared of other people. So if a kid were to reach out and sneak an unwelcome touch, Squawky would take off one of Chris' fingers or leave him a serious wound instead of going for the kid. Chris wears a glove and is hopefully aware of the situation enough to be very careful with himself - HOPEFULLY!  
**derek**I'd probably leave the parrot at home or at least caged for that group. Was she caged for T's class?

# OOPSIE!

Â

What NOT to do after getting pulled over:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/05/car-on-police-car.jpg)

## Cops: Niles Man Backs Over Squad Car After Getting Ticketed

Illinois: Police puzzled over driver who drove up and over a squad car.

A man who had been pulled over and ticketed by police ran backward up and onto a Buffalo Grove squad car Friday morning, apparently in his haste to drive off.

Henry Raskin, 70, of Niles had been pulled over by a Buffalo Grove officer on the 400 block of Dundee Road around 11:30 a.m. Friday for driving 58 mph in a 35 mph zone, Sgt. Scott Kristiansen said.

The officer wrote the ticket and returned to the car, and Raskin got ready to drive away. Except he went flying backward.

“(He) apparently was going to pull away at a high rate of speed, but the only problem was that he was in reverse,” Kristiansen said.

He said Raskin was not happy about getting a ticket. He said police are reviewing the squad car videotape to see what Raskin might also be charged with.

Raskin was taken to Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights as a precaution.

Kristiansen said police don’t believe Raskin has any medical conditions that could have led to the crash. Raskin’s age also didn’t seem to play a factor, he said.

The officer, a 20-year veteran of the Buffalo Grove department, was not injured, but his car will be out of service for a while.

“He ended up with the left rear wheel of the car coming through his windshield, about 6 inches from his face,” Kristiansen said. “Luckily, he was not injured.”

The squad car suffered significant damage to the front end, including the windshield and the hood.

Kristiansen said the police investigation so far shows the officer initiated the traffic stop properly. He said officers are trained to treat every stop as if it isn’t a routine procedure so that they are aware when unexpected circumstances like this one take place.

“The officer stopped the car properly and positioned himself properly,” he said.

*From the dailyherald.com*

### Comments

**derek**It's the copyright police, look out...  
**taylhis**Double Oopsie - fixed it, thanks for noticing!  
**Tracked In**You quoted a entire article and didn't provide a link to the original or even a byline for the original author. That's called plagarism, but I'll provide the benefit of doubt to you and assume you didn't do it intentionally. Please remediate.  
**derek**So... I wonder if they found anything else to charge him with?

# Watching the Indiana Jones Series - Backwards

Before last night, I had never seen an Indiana Jones movie.Â  So when the opportunity presented itself to view [Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0367882/) on its opening day rather inexpensively via email coupons from [Fandango.com](http://www.fandango.com/), I couldn’t resist the temptation to see what all the fuss was about.  
I walked away entertained, but still a little bewildered about why the character is SO popular.Â  The people I saw the movie with (both have seen all of the movies in the series) said this was not the best of the Indiana Jones movies.Â  Not that it was a bad movie, but I would have chopped off about an hour of it.Â  A few of the chase scenes ran a little long, and there was a little too much hokeyness in my opinion.Â  Before I went, I was hearing critics talk about the Indiana Jones movies and how they are a throwback to the adventure movies of the 1930’s and 40’s.Â  I thought this might be a good explanation for some of the cheesy action; for example, characters swinging through the air andÂ falling exactly where they need to in order to avoid certain death or to land the perfect punch, etc.Â  I can deal with hokey action sequences.Â  What was a little hard to swallow however, was the origin of the movie’s namesake, the crystal skull.Â  Since I’m at risk of spilling some major spoilers here – and don’t readÂ any further if you’re worried aboutÂ learning anything about the movie you don’t want to – Â it will suffice to say that I did not appreciate the supernatural element they gave the fourth Indiana Jones movie.

The acting wasn’t anything Oscar worthy, but that is to be expected in this type of movie.Â  I didn’t see [Shia LeBeouf](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0479471/) as the kid from [Disturbia](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0486822/), so he must have some diversity in his acting.Â  [Cate Blanchett](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000949/) was really good as the villianess, and I found it funny when I read that when people heard she was in the movie, they just assumed she was [Harrison Ford](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000148/)‘s love interest.Â  People were so critical that an older man’s love interest was going to be a much younger woman, then they had to eat their words when it was leaked that she was playing the part of the evil enemy.Â  Indiana Jones’ actual love interest in the movie was a character played by [Karen Allen](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000261/)Â that had been in some of the previous movies, which I liked.Â  What I didn’t like is that there were 2 characters in the movie who were supposed to be former friends of Indiana Jones, however, my Indy experts tell me that neither of them were in the previous movies.

I was entertained throughout the entire movie, and there were funny jokes and interesting characters.Â Â Also aÂ few plot twists anyone with half a brain could see coming from a mile away.Â  During most of the action sequences, I couldn’t help but feel like I was watching a video game.Â  I was really appreciating theÂ components of the questÂ to obtainÂ the crystal skull, at least until the supernatural element came into play.Â  Parts of the movie also made me envision a Universal Studios ride – it would probably be really cool, maybe a splashdown ending…Â  I didn’t fall asleep during this movie, but as you just read, my mind did wander a bit, probably because of the lengthy action sequences.Â Â Â  Overall, I’d sayÂ the movieÂ was exactly what I was expecting, perhaps even aÂ wee bitÂ better.Â  And hearing from 2 experienced Indiana Jones viewers that this was not the best movie makes me willing to give the others a try – providing they are not over 2 hours each, of course – that’s just too long to sit through an action movie in my opinion!

### Comments

**justj**Just saw the Crystal Skull tonight. If I were to rate the movies in order of how much I liked them... 1 Raiders of the Lost Ark 2 The Last Crusade 3 The Crystal Skull 4 Temple of Doom So, no this wasn't the best, but in my opinion not the worst either. I won't spoil them for you, but the Temple of Doom was a darker picture. There were some light hearted bits, but the overall theme was dark. The Crystal Skull was good, but the alien part was way over the top, especially the end. I think that spoiled what could have been a better movie. I originally thought, based only on previews, that this would be a movie I would want to see in a stadium seat theater. I may go see it again, just because I'm a big fan, and I will buy the DVD when it comes out. At $3.00 early show price, yeah it is worth that. I have to find the Star Wars tie ins.  
**jamiahsh**WOW... I forgot she was in that.  
**taylhis**Seeing Karen Allen's picture on imdb made me realize where I know her from - Scrooged. I verified it on the site and yep - she's Bill Murray's love interest in Scrooged.  
**jamiahsh**Speaking of watching the movies "backwards" Raiders takes place in 1936, Temple of Doom in '35, and Last Crusade '38. Not really important but a nice bit of trivia.  
**jamiahsh**Sorry to disappoint but each of them are just over 2, but great movies nonetheless. It was not the best but still enjoyable. Karen Allen was in Raiders of the Lost Ark and Indy had a different leading lady in the other two but she is definitely the best of the three... her return was among the best elements.

# Trading Parrots

I’ve always wanted an African Grey parrot; it all started when I was a kid and IÂ read the wonderful book [“Harry’s Mad” by Dick King-Smith](http://www.amazon.com/Harrys-Mad-Dick-King-Smith/dp/0679886885/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1211473224&sr=8-1), the guy who wrote the book-turned-movie, [The Water Horse](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0760329/).Â  African Greys are not nearly as “beautiful” (colorful) as other parrots, but they sure can talk and even use logic to demonstrate an intelligence level equivalent to that of a 4-year-old human child.Â  We did end up with a parrot, but we got the eye-candy version instead, a Scarlet Macaw.Â  HereÂ is a picture of Squawky – he was molting at the time, which is why his chest is gray:



At the time we got him, it was an opportunity we couldn’t pass up: he was a previously owned bird who was still very young andÂ inexpensive, and gorgeous, of course.Â  We’ve had him for 6 years now, and he is part of the family.Â  He has quite aÂ personality, and I get a kick out of most of the things he does.Â Â He’s in my laundry room, so it’s an especially nice break in my daily routineÂ when I open the door and he bursts forth with a very enthusiastic “HI!”.Â  But there are days when I still long for my African Grey, mostlyÂ becauseÂ Squawky is my husband’s bird,Â which means that no one else is allowed to touch him since birds tend to bond to one person.Â  I think Squawky loves me and the kids, but we are not allowed to touch him under any circumstances.Â  We can talk to him, and he’ll even talk back.Â Â He can be quite entertaining with his vocabulary of about 20 words, more if you count the human and animal sounds he likes to imitate.Â  He especially likes to laugh.Â  He likes to pick up toys and drop them, then he’ll laugh.Â  But sometimes, and it’s especially horrible when he’s molting, sometimes he screams so horriblyÂ loud, you cannot hear yourself talk or even think.Â  I’ve had to threaten numerous times that my laundry duties will beÂ forfeited to the owner of the parrot if I keep getting screamed at in the laundry room, but somehow, he always stops before it comes to that.Â  So anyway, there was a recent article in the news about an amazing African Grey parrot namedÂ Yosuke Nakamura – he lives in Japan – who got lost and then found.Â  He aided in his own rescue,Â even thoughÂ he wouldn’t talk to the police!Â  Read the article here:

***TOKYO, Japan (AP)*** *— When Yosuke the parrot flew out of his cage and got lost, he did exactly what he had been taught — recite his name and address to a stranger willing to help.*

*art.lost.parrot.ap.jpg*

*Lost in Tokyo, Yosuke the parrot was able to give his name and address to get taken home.*

**

*Police rescued the African grey parrot two weeks ago from a neighbor’s roof in the city of Nagareyama, near Tokyo. After spending a night at the station, he was transferred to a nearby veterinary hospital while police searched for clues, local policeman Shinjiro Uemura said.*

*He kept mum with the cops, but began chatting after a few days with the vet.*

*“I’m Mr. Yosuke Nakamura,” the bird told the veterinarian, according to Uemura. The parrot also provided his full home address, down to the street number, and even entertained the hospital staff by singing songs.*

*“We checked the address, and what do you know, a Nakamura family really lived there. So we told them we’ve found Yosuke,” Uemura said.*

*The Nakamura family told police they had been teaching the bird its name and address for about two years.*

*But Yosuke apparently wasn’t keen on opening up to police officials.*

*“I tried to be friendly and talked to him, but he completely ignored me,” Uemura said.*

If it weren’t for the expense and especially the screaming, I would definitely have my African Grey by now!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**What no phone number, too?! Amazing though.  
**derek**I read that yesterday- pretty cool. I just hope the family never moves!

# Japanese "Inventions"

When I was talking about the best reality show ever, The Mole, the other day, it made me think of my second favorite: American Inventor.Â  It was a show where people brought their inventions in front of a panel of judges, and the “good” ones advanced until a winner was chosen.Â  This show was fun to watch because some of the inventions were horrible ideas, and when the inventor pitched them, it was hilarious to see their inventions and the judges’ reactions to them.Â  It was also heartbreaking at times because there were people who put up everything they had to pursue the development of their invention – and some were so bad, they never had a chance.Â  Take Bulletball, for instance.Â  It was a game invented one night while the inventor and his wife sipped wine and batted a cat’s toy ball back and forth across a table.Â  So the inventor proceeded to invest everything he had, even living in his car, to develop the “high caliber” tabletop game of bulletball.Â  One of the judges asks, “So if you invested everything,Â what do you have?”Â  His reply?Â  “I have Bulletball.”Â  Oh my.Â  His segment on the show was very memorable (and sad – you had to feel sorry for someone who was so determned, yet his idea was SO bad, all 4 judges said no and broke his heart) that we were talking about it the other day and decided to look it up on youtube.Â  So, I will share his clip with you.Â  I admire his determination, but even I wouldn’tÂ get BulletballÂ if I spotted it at the thrift store…Â  see below.

Â If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

I wonder if American Inventor is going to return?Â  It was a good show, but the problem with it was that the inventions that end up winning aren’t realistic.Â  Both of the winning inventions were born out of tragedy, one was a special protective car seat thought up by a guy who lost his daughter in a car accident.Â  The other was a Christmas tree that extinguished itself if it caught on fire.Â  Both good ideas, but not really practical when you take cost and other factors into consideration.Â  But anyway, I’d like to see the show again, even if they keep choosing winners based on emotional reasons.

While we were looking up American Inventor on youtube, we came across this wacky video from Japan.Â  They call these “inventions”, and they are contraptions that make aÂ series – random objects falling, hitting other objects, etc. in order to cause the next reaction until there’s a whole chain of them.Â  Think of the game Mousetrap (found that one a few weeks ago, by the way, but it’s missing the big ball!) or dominoes without the dominoes.Â  Check it out below.Â  You’ll notice that after each series of reactions, there’s a cute little Japanese song that plays – it’s actually quite catchy.Â  There are a bunch of these on the video, it’s over 9 minutes long in case you’re wondering while you watch if it’ll ever end.Â  I wonder if these “inventions” are shorts that aired on Japanese tv, maybe before or after some weekly show or something?Â  Who knows, but it’s fun to see the different things they came up with:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**Panamena**I recently came accross your blog and have been reading along. I thought I would leave my very first comment. Nice blog. I will keep visiting this website very often.  
**taylhis**Yasuyuki - Thanks for commenting on my blog. What's that song they play after each invention?  
**derek**I never heard of this show, but it looks like it may have been interesting. That second video looks like they are building Rube Goldberg contraptions, the goal of which is to display whatever is is that shows at the end. I only watched a few though before I got bored of it.  
**Yasuyuki Maeda**Hello nice to meet you. KO-N-NI-CHI-WA (^\_^)v I am Japanese. I saw your wonderful site. Please link to this site ! ã€Websiteã€‘http://food-of-japan.blogspot.com/  
**jamiahsh**Somehow, I never got into American Inventors... from the mind that is Simon Cowell. But I always though the premise was interesting.  
**Chris**http://bulletballgames.com/  
**Chris**"I have Bullet Ball..." Well, at least he seems to have sold a few sets. GO BULLET BALL GO!

# Ignorant Viewpoint of Iron Man

I’ve never read a comic book in my life, so why did I go see[Iron Man](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0371746/)?Â  Easy – Tuesday is movie night for us, my local movie theater had 3 movies available, andÂ it only cost $3 for both of us to see one.Â  The choices were [What Happens in Vegas](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1033643/), which I wasn’t going to touch with a ten foot pole.Â  I don’t like [Ashton Kutche](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005110/)r, I’m not a big fan of [Cameron Diaz](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000139/), and I heard a reviewer say something about the audience being tortured, not to mention that the premise itself sounded terrible – more like a Saturday Night Live skit than a movie.Â  Another choice was [Prince Caspian](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0499448/), which I was somewhat open-mindedÂ aboutÂ watching since I did read the first of the Narnia books way way back when, but my husband wasn’t interested in seeing that one at all, and the 2 hour and 20 minute running time kinda turned us away also.Â  So Iron Man it was.

The movie started out interesting enough – it was never boring, so don’t let the fact that I fell asleep fool you.Â  That’s just what I do when I don’t have time to nap during the day and I see a movie too early before I’ve gotten my second wind that carries me through the evening.Â  So I would say that there was too much of a backstory given, even for people like us who had never really heard of Iron Man before and especially didn’t know his backstory.Â Â The backstoryÂ seemed to go on and on, but my husband liked that, and since I was sleeping through most of it, I can’t really fairly say that it was too long.Â  Super hero movies are not even close to being my favorite kind of movie, but I did enjoy this one.Â  It had the perfect amount of action (too much action makes my mind wander), cool special effects, and an interesting story line.Â  The acting wasn’t horrible or even bad, but what do you expect with veterans like [Robert Downey Jr.](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000375/) and [Gwyneth Paltrow](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000569/)? Â They had good chemistry; the love story wasn’t too cheesy, and I liked the ending of the movie.Â  I reallyÂ enjoyed seeingÂ all the technology as Robert Downey Jr. was working in his “cave” and whatnot, and the huge enemy suit was really fun to watch in the showdown between good and evil.Â  The people behind us came close to ruining things though, since it was a grown woman exclaiming things like, “Cool!Â  That’s awesome!Â  I wish I could do that!”Â  I’m glad she was enjoying herself, but it was distracting to the rest of us.

Since I’m not a comic book fan, I will pose a question to those who are.Â  What percentage of superheros are filthy rich tech geeks who develop their weapons inÂ reclusive mansions?Â  This seems to be a common theme, but maybe it’s justÂ in the superhero moviesÂ I’ve seen.Â  But anyway, I liked the movie; it tempted me to possibly check out Dark Knight this summer, unless I’m too busy like, having a baby or something.Â  Iron Man was well worth our $3.Â  I don’t think I would have said the same for What Happens in Vegas.

### Comments

**derek**Well.......... There was that sexual harassment episode, but that was the only one so far I had a problem with.  
**taylhis**Should have warned you - Chris had heard that about the British version - they are a bit less censored over there. European people on imdb are always saying that Americans are uptight about that kind of thing, but sometimes it's just not funny! Didn't think of using subtitles. I'm glad the american version doesn't have to resort to cheap or disgusting humor to be funny.  
**derek**I just started watching The Office UK and I found I had to turn the subtitles on- you're right about the accents. I just had to turn off the third episode though, too heavy on the adult content what with a giant blow-up male sex organ and "Pam" and "Jim" having fun with "Dwight" with a gay suggestive dialog that goes right over "Dwight's" head. Note I used the names of our Office characters though the names are different in the UK version. The main character personalities are pretty much the same in both series.  
**Gwyneth Paltrow Celebrity Gossip | Ignorant Viewpoint of Iron Man**[...] The acting wasnâ€™t horrible or even bad, but what do you expect with veterans like Robert Downey Jr. and Gwyneth Paltrow?… Source: Ignorant Viewpoint of Iron Man [...]  
**taylhis**It means more than you'd think because when I imdb'd the movie, they talked about Samuel L Jackson being in it, and I was like, what? I didn't see him? So that part does make sense.  
**justj**I'm not sure the extra at the end would mean much to someone who doesn't know the comics, but here goes. Samuel L Jackson is Nick Fury, head of SHIELD. He says to Stark, "what did you think, you're the only super hero around?"  
**taylhis**We gave the British Office a try, but couldn't muddle through their heavy accents. Too bad, it'd be fun to see the British equivalent of Michael Scott and co. Might be worth another try later this summer when the regular Office withdrawl gets too bad!  
**derek**Iron man does sound interesting. I vaguely remember reading the comics when I was a kid. I will probably see Prince Caspian with my small group, or if not when it comes out on video. I just got through watching The Seeker on DVD, a time-travel, good vs. evil, fantasy. There were no special features- zero, zip, none. I couldn't believe it. Next up: The Office, British style.  
**justj**Hmmm, Rich super heroes? I can think of a few, Green Arrow, Green Hornet, Batman, Ironman, the Shadow, Electra, The Phantom. I can't think of any others at the moment, but I'll think on it.  
**jamiahsh**Well... I know where I will be Thursday at some point. It looks like Iron Man will be one of the movies I miss seeing until it is released on video, BUT NOTHING will stop me from being in the movie house sometime Thursday... and no rehearsal so that is good.  
**taylhis**And now that I'm looking it up on imdb.com, I see that one of the plot keywords is 'surprise after end credits' - we didn't stick around to find out, so what was the surprise? Also, why is Jack Black in the photos for the movie?

# Collecting... or Hoarding?

When does a collecting hobby cross the line?Â  I’ve heard of people who collect things and sometimes get kinda crazy about it…Â  Like this one guest on Dr. Phil who collected Star Wars stuff.Â  No problem there, but once he started talking about the details of his obsession, it became obvious he had an unhealthy problem.Â  His wifeÂ felt like she came in second place to theÂ Star WarsÂ stuff all the time, and he even had a storm trooper costume he wantedÂ to be buried in.Â  When Dr. Phil pointed out the fact that the guest would never fit into theÂ costume, heÂ insinuated that he would beÂ dismembered or whatever it took to get his body into the costume for burial.Â  I guess it’s easy to say you’ve crossed the line when your spouse or the people you live with start to get annoyed and ask you to give them more room for *their*Â  stuff and toÂ get rid of the things you collect.Â  Or maybe it’s obvious you have an unhealthy addiction when you start to spend more money on your collection than things you should be spending it on to ensure a healthy lifestyle,Â like food or clothing.Â  Anyway, the reason I’m bringing this up is because my husband and I are developing an extreme board game collecting hobby.Â  It started years ago when we visited a few garage sales and saw some games we both had as kids, so we picked those up.Â  Then we started visiting thrift stores in the area, and we enjoyed doing that so much that we visit often and pick up several games each time we go…Â  it’s kind of like treasure hunting – you never know what you’ll find.Â  Games are anywhere from 25Â¢ to $3 and since they usually have all the pieces, it’s a pretty fun hobby to check out all kinds of different games.

Now, we’ve moved to a bigger house and have allowed ourselves a big game closet.Â  The problem is, we’re getting so carried away that we’ve outgrown the game closet – there are games now stacked on the floor since we’ve gotten so many that they no longer fit on the shelves.Â  When we go out to thrift stores, I can’t even remember what games we have and I’m always tempted to buy more, but my husband says, “we already have that one”.Â  It’s really not that big of a problem, I guess we just need a bigger closet…Â  we do invite friends over nearly every weekend to play games, so we are getting use out of them; it’s not like they just sit on the shelves (or floor!) collecting dust…Â  And the only family member whose living space is getting crowded because of all the games is the parrot.Â  He’s been screaming at me while I fold laundry so much lately that I don’t mind if he gets crowded out!Â  But I can just tell that it’s becoming an addiction because when we’re at the thrift stores, I always feel like getting new games, even if we already have them apparently…Â  I don’t see an end in sight, butÂ I think it’s still in the collecting stage; it hasn’t graduated to hoarding yet. Â After all, the duplicate board games we have are only for spare parts, and the other day, I had a brainstorm:Â  If we knock out one of the walls in our game closet, we can combine it with another large closet and have more than twice the space for all the games!Â  For some reason, my husband doesn’t share my enthusiasm for this idea…

### Comments

**derek**I've seen some photos of people's video game collections on the web. Absolutely huge, some of them. As for your game closet idea, I wouldn't be thrilled either if I was the husband who had to do all the work to fulfill the idea... :)  
**justj**You could alway take the games nobody likes playing back to the thrift store after the group decides the game stinks?? If you can't do that, you'll have to join board game hoarders anonymous. ;)  
**taylhis**Oh, yes, there are plenty we haven't played. I plan to make an inventory... in all my spare time :) Seriously, the day C puts aside to clean out the closet so we can fit more is the day I sit and make the inventory - that way I won't have to just sit and watch I can do something useful too. But that hasn't happened yet.  
**jamiahsh**:D. You should make an inventory of all the games. Are there any we haven't played? In any case, I have seen houses that were dedicated to Star Wars collectibles. Star Trek themed weddings (members of the wedding party dressed in full Klingon makeup, costumes, etc). All I can say is both people better be huge fans and have money to spare. The most I EVER got into it was collecting the movie cards and the Christmas wish list as a kid which always included Star Wars toys (and a piano that for some reason I never got).

# BEST Reality Show EVER!!!

My favorite shows are on tv Thursday nights, and last week’s episodes of both shows wereÂ really good.Â  The Lost episode and the Office were up to par for sure, if not even a little better than usual.Â  And some great news we got while watching ABC – it seems we won’t be entirely without tv this summer since they’re bringing back our favorite reality show, the best one ever in my opinion, [The Mole](http://abc.go.com/primetime/themole/index?pn=index)!Â  This showÂ revolves aroundÂ 12 contestants who perform various tasks.Â  In past seasons the tasks haveÂ involved navigating around strange countries and scavenger hunt-type things.Â  The contestants work together to try to add money to the “pot”; except for the twist:Â one of the players is a saboteur, the Mole, who tries to work against the other players, trying NOT to get money added to the pot.Â  Obviously the Mole cannot be obvious about his or her identity because if he or she is the last one left, then the Mole wins the game.Â  Each week, the contestants take a quiz about the Mole, and the person with the fewest correct answers gets eliminated.Â  There has been 4 seasons of the Mole, the first 2 being hosted by Anderson Cooper, the CNN anchor, and the next 2 being celebrity editions hosted byÂ Ahmad Rashad.Â  The show has not aired since 2004, and I have missed it!Â  It is very entertaining, and I am VERY excited it’s coming back to tv, especially since I will be going into Lost and especially Office withdrawl this summer!

Especially compounding the tv withdrawl this summer is that the episodes of my favorite shows were extra good last Thursday!Â  Lost actually answered more questions than it asked, they actually continuted some of the hanging plot lines instead of giving us new ones to ponder, and no new characters were introduced!Â  Part 2 of the season finale airs in 2 weeks, and last night’s episode really whet my appetite for this season’s cliffhanger!

The Office was back to being utterly hilarious this week.Â  The plot line with Toby’s replacement being under the impression that Kevin is “special” was my favorite.Â  I was also glad to see the return of Jan, though part of me was disappointed to discover it wasn’t Michael’s baby (according to Jan anyway – maybe a twist to look for next season?).Â  Michael’s new “love” for Holly was sweet and intense, but he actually might not be too far off this time – she seems like she might be a good match for him.Â  I loved the part where he breaks into a Yoda impression after she says yoga, she just stares at him like he’s bizarre, but then she breaks into a Yoda impression of her own.Â  This might be a match made in heaven!Â  But then again, Michael had to be an idiot and gloss over Holly’s invitation to get dessert…Â  typical Michael Scott behavior!Â  I can’t believe we’re back to waiting months for the show to come back on again!Â  At least The Mole will keep me busy with tv – I highly recommend it!

### Comments

**Anderson Cooper Celebrity Gossip | BEST Reality Show EVER!!!**[...] There has been 4 seasons of the Mole, the first 2 being hosted by Anderson Cooper, the CNN anchor, and the next 2 being celebrity editions hosted by A hmad Rashad…. Source: BEST Reality Show EVER!!! [...]  
**taylhis**Well, it premieres on Mon June 2, so I assume it will stay on Mondays, but it's just an assumption. Check your local listings ;)  
**jamiahsh**What night is The Mole going to be on? It definitely will be better than another Bachelorette fiasco.  
**Chris**I can't wait to watch "The Mole" with you again! It was sooo fun debating about who the mole was!!

# Academy of Country Music Awards Night!

Awards time was upon us again last night!Â  Overall, I had a good time during the Academy of Country Music Awards, not as much fun as actually being there like I was in 2000, but a good time!Â  There were some disappointments for me though, as you will read in my play-by-play of the awards below:

CarrieÂ Underwood opened the show – I likeÂ Carrie Underwood; even though she’s a country crossover, I think she has an amazing voice.Â  By the way, very early in her season of American Idol – when I still watched it – I predicted that she would win and also that she would be a very good country singer.Â  Just had to get that in there to boost myself after I did so horribly at predicting this year’s ACM awards.Â  But her new song isn’t country enough for me, and it made it seem like she is trying to cross back over into pop or rock.Â  Was not a big fan of her performance.  
Next Reba McEntire made a funny joke in a beautiful blue dress with a classy fit.Â  The joke was about 1986, and she said, “Back then, Roger Clemens wasn’t even interested in country music!”Â  The audience oohed and ahhed, I guess it was kinda controversial, but I liked it.Â  The joke was in reference to the affair that took place years ago and just now came to light between a married and much older Roger ClemensÂ and a teenage up and coming country star named Mindy McCready, who unfortunately is better known these days for controversy than for country music.Â  Reba’s jokes were actually pretty funny tonight, I liked the Kenny Chesney song reference: “she thinks my *fracture* is sexy” and also when Reba was talking about the correlation between #1 hits and birthdays, she said, “I have 33″.Â  Her delivery made that joke pretty funny, and I do like her as a host.

Next up was a live performance from Toby off-Keyth.Â  To his credit, many of the performers seemed off pitch tonight, could there have been some issue with the sound system?Â  That aside, his new song is simply awful.Â  Quite possibly the worst country song ever.Â  The lyrics are terrible, and hearing it off-key was even worse.

Time for the first award!Â  SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR – IÂ guessed Don’t Blink by Kenney Chesney, and hubby guessed Stay by Sugarland.Â  Other nominees were Miranda Lambert, Big and Rich, and Gary Allan -Slow start – hubby is one up on me already since the winner is Stay.Â  Gotta give him some credit, it’s a nice song.

Next is a live performance from Brad Paisley – his new song is ok, I like it, but he seems off key too.Â  Hubby says, Brad Paisley?Â  He’s always off key on the live shows.Â  I don’t remember this being the case, Is he?

Next, Taylor Swift wins TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST – no surprise there –Â hubby is 2 for 2, and I am on the board with 1.

Miranda Lambert’s live performance – alright.

Now the award for NEW DUO/VOCAL GROUP – Never even heard of any of the nomineesÂ since I listen to Kidsongs in the car now; I no longer get to listen to country radio, so all the new stuff on the awards show tonight was truly news to me.Â  Quiz me on Kidsongs episodes though, and I’d win every time!

Rodney Atkins gives an off key live performance.Â  Not thatÂ this song about kids swearingÂ sounds that great on the radio either.Â  It’s an ok song, but heÂ has a crackly country voice, and live singing just makes it worse.

TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST – Hubby guesses Luke Bryan I guess Jake Owen, and the nominee not chosen by either of us wins – Jack Ingram.

Live performance from Kenny Chesney – I’m never a huge fan of Chesney, but he wasn’t off-key, so I won’t complain.

Live performance by Geroge StraitÂ  – I was not crazy about his new song but at least he wasn’t off key either. Live performance duet – Kenny Chesney and George Strait – Chesney went a little off key, but I don’t like this song Shiftwork anyway.

Next was a world premiere of Sugarlands new single, which I really liked!Â  The woo-oohs were a littleÂ corny, but the song reminds me of 80’s country and it was a very catchy tune.

ALBUM OF THE YEARÂ was won byÂ Miranda Lambert – and nobody in our household guesses this category correctly.

Live performance by Brooks and Dunn – not off key

SONG OF THE YEAR –Â I guessedÂ Kenny Chesney, hoping he would win this instead of Entertainer of the Year, but I was disappointed becauseÂ Hubby guessed Sugarland’s Stay would get this award.

Taylor Swift gave a live performanceÂ – a little off key until it started raining on her on stage.Â  That was pretty cool, but did they turn off her mic and let her lip sync?Â  Would the mic even work in the rain?Â  She got pretty wet and was suddenly on key, so I wonder…

TOP VOCAL DUO – Brooks and Dunn – We both guessed this one correctly – EVERYONE WINS!

Trace Atkins live performance – pitch problems

I have to comment on the baby puking commercial that aired here.Â  I believe it originally aired during the Superbowl.Â  But it shows a baby talked into a webcam, and all of a sudden, he spits up.Â  I just love the irony of the baby talking like a normal adult, then all of a sudden spitting up like a baby.Â  You have to see it and probably have kids to appreciate it.

Now finally, after stringing us along all night, it was time for the Garth Brooks tribute.Â  Garth used to be my favorite country singer, way back when, until he sold out, retired a few times, became Chris Gaines, etc etc.Â  But he still has some great music in his library, some of which he treated us to tonight in a live performance.Â  Reminded me of the 3 times I got to see him in concert.Â  He was a GREAT performer, and even though he has aged a little, he can still give a good concert.Â  I loved how when he went off key, he covered by pretending he was just having funÂ with the song and meant toÂ have pitch problemsÂ – yeah right!Â  And he did mess up the words in The Thunder Rolls – he came in too early.Â  But a good concert by him overall, even if he was a bit rusty.Â  He also included the following songs in his montage:Â Callin Baton Rouge, Friends in Low Places, We Shall Be Free, The Dance, Just Ledoux, In Another’s Eyes (special guest duet with wife Tricia Yearwood.Â  Not to be rude, but I was POSITIVE Garth was going to be announcing some baby news – Tricia looked extra puffy.Â  He didn’t say anything though, so I guess I’m just a jerk for noticing and saying so.Â  Being in the public eye must suck!), More Than a Memory, Rodeo, and the finale Ain’t Goin Down Til the Sun Comes Up.Â  Then, Garth was given the Crystal Milestone Award of which he is deserving, despite all the selling out he’s done.Â  And when he called Reba Ms. Yearwood, it was hilarious, but since it was followed by “I love her”, I can see why he mixed up the names to say that about his wife – aw!

Next award – VOCAL GROUP – Rascal Flatts

Keith Urban live performance – liked the song, but what’s with the do doo’s?Â  This is the second do doo’s song tonight!

David Spade’s long joke was funny, but I have yet to understand his presence at country music awards?

Rascal Flatts live performance was off key.

Eddy Arnold tribute –Â Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley sang one ofÂ Eddy’s songs as a duet, and it sounded magnificent.Â  Awesome tribute.

Kellie Pickler live performance – off pitch, like so many others before her.

Trisha Yearwood comes out to present MALE VOCALIST – kudos on the costume change, shouldn’t be any baby rumors due to this dress.Â  I have Kenny Chesney,Â HubbyÂ has George Strait.Â  Paisley wins.

Lee Ann Rimes – live performance – not off key, but the band is way loud.

CarrieÂ Underwood wins FEMALE VOCALIST and puts me within one point of tying up the contest between my husband and me!

Montgomery Gentry – live performance off key – sounds horrible

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR – Wait, my ballot sheet says we still have Video of the year and Vocal Event of the Year, what happened?Â  Some research on the internet shows I lost both thoseÂ categories,Â ugh.Â  I guessed BradÂ Paisley andÂ HubbyÂ has Keith Urban – Chesney wins AGAIN!!!Â  I should have seen it coming, I was just hoping that with the new voting system this year – they let the fans vote for Entertainer of the Year – I thought the fans would take away Chesney’s monopoly on this category.Â  His joke about thanking his parents for doing what they did so many years ago that led to his creation was kinda funny, if a bit unexpected.

So, you can see where my disappointments lie – mainly with the entertainer of the year award, losing to my husband, and not liking many of the new songs that were performed.Â  But like I said, I had fun watching, and now I know I will have to do more research before the next country awards in the fall so I can get more correct guesses.Â  I’ll have to find a way to take back control over the car radio for starters!

### Comments

**taylhis**thanks for sifting thur my lengthy post about country music - probably not your favorite thing to read about. So you're a Carrie Underwood fan? Her tribute to Eddy Arnold was amazing!  
**jamiahsh**I would have lost, too. I would have voted Carre Underwood for everything, even if she was not nominated.  
**Chris**http://youtube.com/watch?v=6vW9gUmooFg (eTrade Baby)  
**Chris**Sorry. Maybe next year? If it is any consolation the CUBS WON!

# OPA!

Good news from our date night this week – we found a new restaurant inÂ a neighboring townÂ that has good gyros!Â  Finally, no more trekking to Toledo or further just for gyros off the spit!Â  And for you Greek food fans, stay tuned because we are currently trying to convince the owner toÂ offer Saganaki, another one of our favorites in Greek cuisine!Â  He said it’s a difficult thing to carry since many waitresses won’t serve it because of the fire involved.Â  Yes, I said fire!Â  For those of you who are unfamiliar, Saganaki is a greek dish made of sheep or goat cheese, and they bring it to your table, splash brandy on it, yell OPA! and light it on fire.Â  A large flame erupts, the entire restaurant turns to stare at you, children cry, they extinguish it with lemon juice, and then the other restaurant patrons begin asking questions – what is that?Â  Is it safe?Â  What does it taste like?Â  Can I have some?Â  One time we ordered it from a restaurant and 3 more tables ordered it after seeing ours!Â  It is DELICIOUS!Â  Just for fun, here is a video of a waiter serving it, though he begrudgingly *mumbles* opa while he’s really supposed to be yelling it while smiling.

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

Â  My 8-year-old daughter can eat a whole Saganaki appetizer herself.Â  She is part Greek, of course, but the stuff is that good.Â  It is my dream to get to Greece someday to try actual Greek food – if I ever had the babysitter, time, and money, it might just be enough (along with heavy sedatives or alcohol) to get me back on a plane…

Now onto the movie, I’ve been wanting to see the movie [Baby Mama](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0871426/) since I’m expecting and it looked like a cute comedy based on pregnancy – dumb title though I have to say.Â  For some reason, our local theater didn’t have it until now, so we finally got to see it.Â  It actually wasn’t quite as funny as it looked in the previews, but it did have a better plot and better acting than I was expecting – it did not disappoint.Â  [Steve Martin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000188/) was hilarious as a very hippy-ish owner of a large company; I would consider his character the CEO of the Walmart of organic food.Â  My favorite gag in the movie happened when [Amy Poehler](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0688132/) and [Tina Fey’s](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0275486/) characters were fighting in the car and Amy Poehler’s character couldn’t get out of upper-class Tina Fey’s “space car”.Â  So Tina Fey’s character goes, “Quit touching the door handle while I’m trying to unlock it for you!”Â  That is hilarious, I can’t tell you how many times that’s happened to us that the car door won’t unlock while an impatient person is touching the handle.Â  WhetherÂ you like comedies about pregnancy or just feel like watching one, I would recommend Baby Mama.

### Comments

**taylhis**and jamiahsh - what kind of medicine would this be?  
**taylhis**Of course, admin!!! Just J - I wanted to trick you into having to go with us... and throw in some mini golf too sometime soon... don't worry, I didn't see any cheese shakers to be licked!  
**admin**Of course the BEST part of date night each week is spending it with "taylhis"!!!  
**justj**And where is this fabulous place located? Hints of good Greek food, and no directions on how to get there?  
**jamiahsh**no planes? My dad has already gotten his medicine for their flight to California in June.  
**taylhis**The owner said that he is thinking of having a greek night every week with Saganaki, hopefully he still wants to do that. Hey Derek - interestingly, he is from Wheeling and owned Grandma Sally's. He said he knew C's dad from the track!  
**derek**Yes, saganaki is quite good. Probably all the fat for one day too. I wish you well in your quest for getting that restaurant to carry it. I'll have to have some next time I'm there (no, I don't know when... :) )

# Gump in Iraq

In my previous post, I touched on “Where are they now?” when it comes to celebrities.Â  I read an interesting article the other day about the “kid” who played young Forrest in [Forrest Gump](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0109830/), one of my favorite movies.Â [Â Michael Conner HumphreysÂ](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0402011/)is now a 23-year-old young man who is currently serving in the army like Forrest Gump did in the movie, ironically enough.Â  Another twist of irony – in the movie, a young undiscovered Elvis Presley teaches young Forrest how to dance, and Michael Conner Humphreys served in the same place that Elvis did in Germany when he was in the army!Â  HumphreysÂ joined the U.S. Army in 2005 and is currently an infantryman assigned to a tank battalion and isÂ known by the nickname Gump.Â Â After a year deployed to Iraq in its dangerous Anbar Province, Humphreys was transferred to Fort Riley, Kansas.Â Â He will leave the Army when his enlistment ends on June 4, 2008, and has already landed a part in an upcoming World War II film, Pathfinder*.*Â  It’s nice to see a former child actor making a good name for himself.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Or end up on Celebrity Boxing... not so much anymore think it only lasted for one special much like that Secret Talents of the Stars.  
**derek**That's pretty cool. Of course other former child actors run bad "reality" shows on VH1...  
**jamiahsh**I thought I would save that article just for you to post :)

# 15 Years Since Doubtfire?!

We put in the movie [Mrs. Doubtfire](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107614/) for the kids the other day, and I was curious about what happened to the youngest daughter in that movie, [Mara Wilson](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0933798/), because I’ve always thought she was so cute.Â  So I looked it up on imdb.com, and discovered that this movie is 15 years old already!!!Â  Which means that little Natalie, the cute girl from the film, is almost 21 years old!Â  I looked her up elsewhere on the internet because I get curious about the “where are they now” aspect of celebrities, and I found the following interview she did while promoting a Cinderella stage play sheÂ was in.Â  It wasÂ from 2006, when she was 18, but little “Natalie” is all grown up, and it’s weird to see her as an adult…Â  well, a legal one anyway.Â  Here is a link to the video:

<http://www.spike.com/video/2702330>

### Comments

**admin**I feel so old. But I agree taylhis, it is really surprising how many single parent homes these days (to divorce). A sad sign of the times.  
**derek**If they were to implement that DNA testing, they would have to be VERY careful that no mistake has been made. Just think of the new father told that he is not the father of the baby by mistake...  
**taylhis**Single parent households because of divorce, that is... And also, not only legally, but it's emotionally devastating for the kid to have a parent in their life only to lose them to divorce or mistaken paternity issues.  
**taylhis**I agree with you. When they get married, people seem to think, well, if it doesn't work out, I can always get a divorce... but I don't think they should view it as an option that way, just a last resort in extreme cases only. That would be hard to regulate, but still... And you're right, Dads definitely don't have enough rights. I get sick of hearing about stories where a dad is legally forced to support a child, only to find out the child is not his! I think everyone should be DNA tested before the babies leave the hospital and the dad is named on the birth certificate. Also, it's amazing to me what percentage of my daughters' friends have single parent households...  
**derek**Oh, and I grant that it has gotten better for dads in recent years, but as in other issues there is still a ways to go.  
**derek**I remember it. It was one movie that fueled my hatred of divorce. This coming from someone who has never been married in the first place of course :) . It seems that often it's the dad who gets the short end of the stick. His money is welcome in the child's life, but not dad himself. I just wish more people would remember the vows they made and pull through together when the worst happens. Obviously this won't always work, but if everybody gave sincere effort to it then far fewer people would divorce and shows like Divorce Court would not exist. Idealist? Maybe, but we have to do something about divorce becoming seemingly as normal and accepted as marriage itself. As to the movie, I enjoyed it but I wouldn't put it in my top 25 or 50.  
**justj**Hmm, never saw the whole movie. I think I fell asleep during it once and never had a chance to watch it again.  
**jamiahsh**Yes... 15 years already... my how time flies. Enjoyable movie. There is an excitement that comes with every opening night... IMHO.

# Gruesome and Disgusting - What are People Thinking?

I can’t imagine what these teens were thinking…Â  Teens often do stupid things, but this one is beyond stupid…Â  I just don’t have much to say about this; I’m dumbfounded.Â  I don’t understand howÂ a person or personsÂ would come up with such an idea – too bad they couldn’t use that “creativity” more productively!

<http://www.thesmokinggun.com/archive/years/2008/0509081corpse1.html>

And check out the part in the police report where they say that one of the defendents regurgitated upon being questioned…Â  is that a consequence of remorse or fear of getting busted?Â  Is there actually a chance that he realized how disgustingly heinous his crime really was?

### Comments

**justj**That's just disgusting. I'm not sure what would possess anyone to do that.  
**derek**Indeed. Though being of the 1920's probably meant anything that could have rotted away was long gone and wouldn't have caused him to get ill at the station I would think. I know Willie was long absent from his body, but this is still sickening.  
**jamiahsh**Or maybe sickness from the use of the bong in question? Disturbing to say the least.

# New Tangents

Well, this is my second post with the new “backend” of the tangents.org website, and I have to say, so far I like it better!Â  It really wasn’t that difficult to get used to the changes, and so far anyway, I’ve found everything I need.Â  If you’ve read my post called, “When Technology Attacks” then you know that I am reluctant to learn new ways of doing things on computers, etc. once I learn the original way to do them.Â  It seems right after I learn something new, it changes, leaving me right where I started – feeling dumb, frustrated, and like I’ve wasted my time.Â  ButÂ with the new tangents.org updates,Â I have to say that I’m pleasantly surprised sinceÂ I’ve figured out everything I’ve needed to use so far by myself without it even taking any extra time!Â  After that warning from O Mighty Admin, I have to say I was dreading the day when the updates would take effect, but now I see that my concerns were unfounded –Â for nowÂ at least!

### Comments

# Sorry Wrong Car!

So the other day I was waiting outside Walmart for my husband to get our Wii-fund…Â  I know, I said I wasn’t going to wait in the car with the kids anymore, but I dropped him off and went home to get some forgotten items for our Mother’s Day excursion, so I wasn’t sitting there the entire time.Â  Good thing too, because I went home, bumbled around the house for a bit, came back and still spent a good 10 minutes waiting for him to make his return.Â  But I turned the car off right away this time, and I was fully expecting it to take awhile because he was making a return at Walmart on a Saturday after all.Â  I even made the joke, see ya tomorrow…

But while I was waiting, I heard the cargo door of our minivan open up, and I thought, that’s strange, I didn’t know he was going to be buying anything he’d have to put back there…Â  so I look in my rearview mirror, and there’s a strange lady standing there with a confused look on her face.Â  “Sally?”Â  she said.Â  “Um, no, I think you have the wrong car…”Â  I replied as my 2 little girls turned around in the back seat and stared at her.Â  The van she was waiting for then pulled up beside us, with the driver – Sally, I assume – laughing hysterically while her friend loaded her items into the correct van this time and hopped in the passenger side.Â  She rolled down her window and tried to justify her mistake, “See they look alike; I’m not crazy!”Â  Well, her friends’ minivan was a Chrysler Pacifica, whereas ours is a Chevy Uplander, and her friends was 2-tone with gray on the undercarriage, but I guess they were similiar in color…Â  but still, it was a funny experience and probably really embarrassing for Sally’s friend – just a testament to what a circus Walmart can be on a Saturday no matter where you live…Â  Sunday I have to go there just to pick up my daughter’s birthday cake, ugh.Â  Maybe I’ll send my husband instead…Â  no wait, I’d better not – I’d like him to make it back in time for the birthday party!

### Comments

**derek**Madam, I'm Adam I'm **stressed** because I eat too many **desserts** :D  
**jamiahsh**Or should I say, astutes?  
**jamiahsh**How very astute of you... Mr. Palindrome .)  
**taylhis**I wish it was as fun as a circus is supposed to be... If you're talking about Mr. Palindrome For a Last Name, he would be funny as the ringleader... or the fire eater.  
**jamiahsh**That is TOO FUNNY!!!! :D . They have a circus at Wal-Mart on Saturday's? WOW... I never knew, must be over by the time I used to go to work, huh? I can see the manager as the ringleader making the employees jump through hoops.

# Teacher's Pet - All Grown Up

While serving on the board of a local community agency, a certain personality type came to my attention: teacher’s pet.Â  Yes, these people are alive and well and living as adults.Â  Surprisingly it’s not somethingÂ one grows out of whenÂ he or sheÂ leaves school; rather, the behaviorÂ seems toÂ evolve and follow the person into adulthood.Â  I use the term “teacher’s pet” loosely here because I don’t know how else to describe it, so I willÂ try my best to give examples.Â  Back to this person on the board – it starts when the person stops the flow of the meeting to contribute to every item on the agenda.Â  I think it’s good when people participate and share their ideas, but there is a fine line when their comments and “helpful” suggestions cross the line into being disruptive.Â  Case in point – at a meeting recently, an item on the agenda involved discussing traveling to Chicago for a board training seminar.Â  The teacher’s pet of the group spoke up and went into great detail about how the board of this organization should actually be taking more than one vehicle on trips like these in case something happens to the vehicle.Â  He explained that if theÂ vehicle carrying the entire board of the organizationÂ were to crash or something else horrible were to happen, we would no longer have a board if the President, Vice President, etc. were all riding together.Â  Good point, but a little extreme, I would say…Â  This board is not in charge of running a country or anything close to that scale.Â  I’m not saying that it’s not important or that steps should not be taken to safegaurd the staff involved, however, I don’t think dividing up into 2 vehicles has anything to do with preventative safety and actually seems like it might put a strain on the budget (**insert another gas prices gripe here**).Â  It’s a good idea for the President and Vice President of the United States and other heads of government to travel separatelyÂ but when talking about this particular group it just doesn’t seem like a logical idea, especially not an idea that should have taken 20 minutes or longer to discuss.

A second example of adult teacher’s pet behavior happens often in community theater.Â  My husband and I are active in our local theater group, and while directing a few plays together, we’ve come across at least one individual who was a bit over eager to please the directors.Â  Again, don’t get me wrong, enthusiasm, especially for community theater, is a great thing.Â  But when you interrupt the process of producing a play in order to offer “helpful” suggestions that aren’t reallyÂ helpful at all and just keep the entire group waiting for you toÂ finish talking, then it’s probably better if you just let the director do what he or she needs to do.Â  It’s also especially annoying when people offer things to help with the show; be it labor, props, etc. only to not follow through and actually deliver the work and/or goods.Â  Makes me think they were just sucking up to the directors!Â

So when I say ‘teacher’s pet’, I guess I just mean those people who are so overzealous about showing and proving to others that they are participating in the group that they come forth with ideas that aren’t always well thought out.Â  Like I said, it’s not that I discourage contribution, and by no means should people be made to feel that their ideas are stupid, however, they should use discretion in bringing up topics that are relevant to the conversations at hand and also make sure that they are going to follow through with what they say they will contribute.

*POST DISCLAIMER:Â  None of the above comments have anything to do with anyone who is a regular reader of my blog!!!Â  *

### Comments

**tramadol   
tramadol...** tramadol hydrochloride. buy tramadol online. online tramadol. tramadol online. tramadol. tramadol online. buy tramadol. tramadol online. order tramadol. buy tramadol. online tramadol. tramadol. online tramadol. cheap tramadol. tramadol. online tramadol...  
**tramadol   
buy cod tramadol...** tramadol hcl acetaminophen...  
**admin**That was soooo annoying! Adding minutes to a meeting just to let the powers-that-be know you've got something to input! ARGH! The meetings are long enough already!  
**Gas Prices » Teacher’s Pet - All Grown Up**[...] My Food Chain Gang wrote an interesting post today on Teacher’s Pet - All Grown UpHere’s a quick excerpt … think dividing up into 2 vehicles has anything to do with preventative safety and actually seems like it might put a strain on the budget (insert another gas prices g ripe here)…. [...]  
**jamiahsh**Oh.... WHEW!!! I thought I was the theatre suck up esp. when I am the world's greatest set builder and painter!!!! :D

# Happy Mother's Day!

I had a wonderful Mother’s Day weekend.Â  We decided to celebrate Saturday in order to avoid the crowds at all the restaurants and other establishments; also it worked out well because my kids often need all of Sunday as a rest day to recooperate from the previous week and the weekend before returning to school on Monday.Â  So, I slept in Saturday until I was awakened by the idyllic crow of a rooster…Â  wait a minute…Â we do live in a rural area, but that was no rooster – it was a screaming parrot and it wasn’t the least bit idyllic, just horribly annoying and not a fun way to get woken up.Â  But, it was nearing 10 am, and I figured I had left poor dad with the kids long enough.

I was making myself some oatmeal for breakfast when I was greeted in the kitchen by cute little girl #1.Â  “Happy Mother’s Day Mom!”, she said, and gave me a stuffed animal she had found in her room.Â  I find the re-gifting really cute; it’s her way of sharing what she has and also displays her thoughtfulness in wanting to get me something but being too little to go out shopping on her own.Â  She also gave me theÂ most adorableÂ essay she wrote in school – I will share, though it’s much cuter to see it in 8-year-old handwriting:

*Happy Mother’s Day!Â  I love my mommy for many different reasons.Â  One reason is that sometimes she gives me what I want at the store.Â  Another reason is that she helps me do stuff around the house like make soft crunchy cookies.Â  The last reason is she lets me have fun a lot like at the park!Â  I think that my mommy is triffic, wonder ful, and vary funny.Â  by Taylor*

Daughter #2 was next, and she handed me a singing gorilla from her room.Â  “Happy Val-tine’s Day, Mom!”, she said, hugging my leg.Â  She is almost 4 and apparently forgot the name of the day,Â only remembering that she was supposed to give me something and be well-behaved,Â but that’s all that mattered to me!Â  Don’t be fooled, however…Â  they are not perfect angels ALL of the time – my kids’ Mother’s Day sweetness was promptly followed by a HUGE knock-down, drag-out, screaming at the top of their lungs fight…Â  The first of many throughout the weekend.Â  We still had a great time though – my husband always does a great job of keeping his cool which is more than I can say for myself…Â  but there was something going on with my oldest this weekend, and it showed!

Next, we decided to go to a neighboring city to go swimming in a hotel – my husband can get GREAT hotel rates online for most places, and the overnight getaway was exciting for the kidsÂ and around the same price as driving somewhere far away (**insert gas price gripe here**) and spending $Â for other entertainment.Â  Besides, being in the water felt WONDERFUL for my aching pregnant body…Â  I would love to have access to a pool during a whole pregnancy sometime; it’s amazing how the sensations of all the aches, pains, and extra weight just melt away when under the water.Â  The kids had a great time, and we all got some exercise also, plus when we got home on Sunday, they all took at least a 2 hour nap – can’t put a price on that!Â  My husband of course, catered to their needs all day too, so really I got a whole Mother’s Day weekend out of it – 2 days when I was supposed to get 1!Â  I only hope I feel up to it enough to give my husband asÂ great a Father’s Day as I got a Mother’s Day.Â  But since I’ll be even more pregnant by then, we might have to reschedule…Â  ever heard of Father’s Day in August?Â Â ðŸ˜‰Â

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I'm sure you will come up w/ something to make your hubby's day just as memorable.

# Reasonable Running Time?

How long does it take you to “run in” to a store?Â  I suppose it depends on the size of the store and what you need.Â  If you’re running into the gas station to pay for gas, then it will probably take a fraction of the time it would take you to “run in” to a Super Walmart and pick up milk, diapers, and say, deoderant, or something else that is usually located all the way on the other side of the store.Â

But apparently the phrase “running in” has different meanings for different people.Â  To me, it means ‘get in the store and get what I need as quickly as I possibly can’.Â  To my husband, it means ‘get some shopping done so my wife doesn’t have to get out of the car, andÂ we don’t have to bother unloading the kids’.Â  The problem here lies where my husband is the *slowest shopper you will ever meet*.Â  This is **not** an exaggeration.Â  I’m very thankful sometimes that I was blessed with a man who doesn’t mind shopping, in fact, he even likes it, depending on what we’re shopping for, of course.Â  But it takes him **forever** to get *anything*.Â  I still can’t figure out why…Â  is it because he reads every package of every brand ofÂ every product in which he’s interested in order to comparison shop?Â  Is it because he is unorganized and doesn’t remember what he’s at the store to get?Â  Is it because he gets sidetracked and ends up shopping forÂ three items when he’s in the store to buy only one?Â  It could be a combination of all the above; I haven’t figured it out yet.Â  But what I have figured out is to no longer put myself in the situation of being the car babysitter while my husband’s 5 minute “run in” to the store turns to 10, 20, sometimes upwards of 30 minutes!

Now that I’m in the third trimester of my pregnancy, I don’t always want to go in the store, whereas normally, I don’t mind…Â  like most women, I don’t mind shopping, even if hubby is taking forever and a day in the electronics section.Â  Which reminds me real quick – TANGENT ALERT – a brand-new Super Walmart in a town nearby has the right idea.Â  They put a really niceÂ big magazine section right by the electronics department with benches in between for the wives to park themselves while the husbands wishfully browse the electronics – Walmart doesn’t often earn my kudos, but this is an example of some good store planning!Â  Anyway, back to my venting…

So before the pregnancy, for some reason I was never the one who got to “run in” to the store – I always got the ‘babysit-for-the-3-bored-kids-in-the-car’ job, ugh.Â  I finally put a stop to it because hubby’s “running in” took so long, and then I got pregnant and don’t have the foot power to last very long in stores anyway.Â  So the other day, we’re coming out of a store, and he says, very smoothly as he’s already walking toward the Office Max and away from the car, “I’m just going to ‘run in’ real quick and check for something.”Â  Uh-oh.Â  Did he say ‘run-in real quick’?Â  You may take me for a fool, but I believed him.Â  I thought he would be really quick because we had a meeting with a start time about an hour away, and he knew I wanted to make a few stops before the meeting, so surely he wouldn’t jeopardize my errands by letting Office Max take too long…Â  So I was under the impression that after I waddled to the car and pulled up to Office Max, he’d be ready to go…Â  WRONG!Â  I’ve been through this enough by now to know not to worry…Â  I used to sit there and seriously think, ‘what if he’s being held hostage in the Office Max or what if he’s passed out and gotten hurt or something?Â  But we’ve been together for over a decade, so I now realize he’s just a “forever shopper”.Â  I finished reading the daily newspaper and glanced around – no husband.Â  I put on the radio and listened to a song or two…Â  no husband.Â  I checked the time and started to get irritated, dreaming of the ice cream stop that was going to be one of my errands before the meeting…Â  no husband.Â  I put on the mp3 player and listened to about 3 songs, trying to keep calm and not cry out of frustration (impatience+pregnancyâˆ’ice cream = easy tears) …Â  no husband.Â Â Now ourÂ new car starts to rumble and shake.Â  Since we got rid of the Ford months ago, I didn’t think it was a mechanical problem…Â  then I remembered that the gas light had come on earlier, before my husband “ran in” to Office Max.Â  I turned off the car, and waited some more.Â  Finally he came out of the store – empty handed.Â  I hadn’t thought to turn off the car while waiting for him since he was just “running in”, and now we were out of gas after idling for a good twenty minutes or longer – I hadn’t been keeping track.Â  Luckily there was a gas station right across the street, and instead of walking there and having to buy a gas can, he pushed the car and I steered it over to the gas station…Â  it gave us time to blow off some steam…Â  well, me anyway.Â  I was also wondering what could possibly take a person so long in a store only to have them come out with nothing?!?Â  But, I was literally too peeved to ask and I didn’t want to talk about what happened at Office Max.Â  All I knew is that my errands weren’t going to happen andÂ IÂ was goingÂ to the meeting ice cream-less.

In my husband’s defense, he doesn’t do this because he’s not thoughtful or considerate; it’s actually the opposite.Â  He wants to save me from having to go into the stores, and save me from the trouble of having to deal with shopping hassles…Â  and he takes long in stores even when I’m with him, that’s just how he is…Â  He just doesn’t have a very good concept of time,Â and he doesn’t realize that I’d much rather entertainÂ the kidsÂ and myself in the store than in the car.Â  Also, being a woman makes me prone to thinking ahead, while he is impulsive.Â  If he had thought ahead about the Office Max errand, we could have discussed it, and I could have planned to get my errands done at the same time, or even gotten gas while I waited.Â  Instead, since the Office MaxÂ errandÂ was brought up at the last possible second when I couldn’t even say no because he was too far away to hear me, I thought it’d be quick enough where I could leave the car on and not run out of gas.Â  The good news out of all this is that the meeting ended early enough that I was able to get my daughter’s birthday party stuff before that store closed, so really the only errand I missed that day was my ice cream.Â  And I can do without putting more weight on my poor feet right now anyway, I guess…Â  And this experience reinforced my mantra that I will NOT wait in the car while my husband “runs in” to anywhere ever again.Â  At least not without a full library of reading materials or a laptop so I can blog about him while I wait…Â  In case you think I’m being too hard on him by the way, I told him I was going to be blogging about this incident – he took so long we ran out of gas, for crying out loud!!!Â  And NEVER will I wait in the car for him to ‘run in’ anywhere while the kids are with us!

### Comments

**taylhis**Sure it is... after being in the situation, I HAD to go off about it for a bit to vent my frustration  
**jamiahsh**Good point D; I dunno.... Taylhis, your title and your entry is it reasonable?  
**derek**So J, are you saying her blog entry doesn't have a reasonable running time? [deadpan expression]  
**taylhis**oh, I'm quite sure I have at least one blog that's longer than this one... But I could've written 2 of these while waiting outside Office Max! :)  
**jamiahsh**Good idea or maybe just S would do the trick :D However, I believe you win the prize for the longest blog ever.... CONGRATS :D  
**derek**Maybe next time send T and S in after a few minutes to jump on daddy until he relents and finishes... :)

# When Technology Attacks

I have a love/hate relationship with electronic technology.Â  I love and appreciate the advances that have been made in the world, and I use lots of technologically savvy stuff every day.Â  But I hate learning the new stuff, and if I procrastinate, it seems that when I finally break down and learn it, something new immediately comes along to replace what I have just learned.Â  And IÂ am married toÂ a technology addict.Â  I know it’s a common thing for men to be into electronics and the latest gadgets and all of that, but I think our house is exceptionally up-to-date on the electronic gadgetry, especially when it comes to computers.Â  My problem with it lies where the technology becomes more of an inconvenience than it is a convenience.Â  I haveÂ a fewÂ examples I will share:

1.Â  Hi-Def Tv – My husband will sit and flip channels in the middle of a show just to try to find the hi-def version of the show.Â  Of course he doesn’t choose to do this during a Chicago Bears game or something **he** is inclined to watch.Â  For those shows, he will actually think about it ahead of the show’s start time.Â Â He’llÂ sit and flip looking for high-defÂ while I’m watching something, during shows like Dr. Phil orÂ pointlessÂ reality shows.Â  I know, these are dumb shows, so I shouldn’t care about missing them.Â  But if I’m going to sit and watch something, then I want to watch it, I don’t want to miss any of it, otherwise I’m wasting my time.Â  So, if I’m watching Dr. Phil, and hubby comes over and tries to find Dr. Phil in hi-def, I might just miss the backround of a guest’s story and not know what is going on for the rest of the show.Â  Like I said, it’s not like we’re talking about high quality tv here, but who needs Dr. Phil in hi-def anyway?!?

2.Â  GPS – Â I cannot tell you how many times our GPS guy has gotten us lost.Â  Yes, we have aÂ GPS system in our car with a male voice – he was on sale.Â  I’ve always thought I was pretty good at navigating; pretty good at being a human compass and learning the layouts of strange cities and towns pretty quickly.Â  In the years before we hadÂ GPS (and kids!) we used to travel by car A LOT, and I was always our navigator.Â  I’d like to think I got us out ofÂ more than a fewÂ scrapes with just my sense of direction and an atlas…Â  But my past experience gets me no where compared to theÂ GPS guy.Â  He has taken over.Â  My husband will insist that we follow Mr. GPS’ directions, even while I’m saying they don’t make sense.Â  For one thing, he’s led us into a lake before, literally.Â Â Well, luckily common sense did prevail there at the last minute…Â  my husband stopped the car before he drove into the lake, but he was tempted to trust Mr. GPS, and drive into the lake,Â I know it.Â  Maybe it sounds like I’m jealous of Mr. GPS, but I’m not, really I’m not.Â  I just suspect that he might have it out for us, or that he is a practical jokester who gleefully directs us into predictaments just to see how we get out of them…Â  Kinda sounds like a dumb sitcom – tune in each week to see how we maneuverÂ our way out ofÂ whatever mess Mr. GPS hasÂ finagled us into this time…

Don’t get me wrong – I do appreciateÂ all the technology most of the time, in a way.Â  If my husband weren’t so into all these things, I wouldn’t have all the cool gadgets that I have, and I would not know how to use anything, including my computer probably!Â  But how ironic is it that this post has been sitting in my drafts for weeks now, not getting finished, just because other things kept coming up that I wanted to write about, so I wasn’t getting a chance to finish it.Â  But how ironic, that today when I went to tangents.org, I got the followingÂ message about learning new technology?!?Â  If you don’t hear from me for awhile, I’m just procrastinating learning the new “back end” of tangents!

*Well my friendly bloggersâ€¦Â  I have some great news that is going to make you all very mad!Â  Yes, you read that right.Â  Tangents will be updated with the latest versions of the blog software by next Friday and as soon as today (whenever it is released).Â  Why will this make you mad?Â  Because the backend you have worked to learn is going to look significantly different.Â  But donâ€™t worry!Â  You have the basics down.Â  Once you take a few minutes to get used to the new layout you will be comfortable again and blogging on Tangents.Org will be better than ever!*

### Comments

**dr. phil show | Google Trends News**[...] was launched. He gained even more 3 Vote(s)dropjack / Published News - http://www.dropjack.com|||When Technology AttacksFor those shows, he will actually think about it ahead of the showâ€™s start time. Heâ€™ll sit and [...]  
**derek**Note to self: never, under any circumstances, mention Dr. Phil in my blog lest my comments fall under the attack of the trackbacks... :o  
**dr. phil show | Inmars**[...] When Technology Attacks8 hours ago by taylhis For those shows, he will actually think about it ahead of the showâ€™s start time. Heâ€™ll sit and flip looking for high-def while Iâ€™m watching something, during shows like Dr. Phil or pointless reality shows. I know, these are dumb shows, …My Food Chain Gang - http://taylhis.tangents.org/ [...]  
**dr. phil show | Wonderful Article**[...] was launched. He gained even more 3 Vote(s)dropjack / Published News - http://www.dropjack.com|||When Technology AttacksFor those shows, he will actually think about it ahead of the showâ€™s start time. Heâ€™ll sit and [...]  
**dr. phil show | Hottags**[...] When Technology AttacksFor those shows, he will actually think about it ahead of the showâ€™s start time. Heâ€™ll sit and flip looking for high-def while Iâ€™m watching something, during shows like Dr. Phil or pointless reality shows. I know, these are dumb shows, …My Food Chain Gang - http://taylhis.tangents.org/ [...]  
**dr. phil show | Lasts information**[...] When Technology AttacksFor those shows, he will actually think about it ahead of the showâ€™s start time. Heâ€™ll sit and flip looking for high-def while Iâ€™m watching something, during shows like Dr. Phil or pointless reality shows. I know, these are dumb shows, …My Food Chain Gang - http://taylhis.tangents.org/ [...]  
**dr. phil show | Care news**[...] was launched. He gained even more 3 Vote(s)dropjack / Published News - http://www.dropjack.com|||When Technology AttacksFor those shows, he will actually think about it ahead of the showâ€™s start time. Heâ€™ll sit and [...]

# I Never Thought About the Crate Being Square and the Turnstile Being Round...

In case you’ve missed my previous posts about animals and Jack Hanna, let me explainÂ that Jack Hanna is my favorite celebrity andÂ how muchÂ I really enjoy following his adventures throughÂ zoo life.Â Â In case you don’t know who Jack is, he is the man who gave Columbus, Ohio a zoo.Â  They did have one before, even though many residents weren’t even aware of it, but with Jack’s brilliance in zoo management and marketing, the [Columbus Zoo](http://www.colszoo.org) has become one of the most reknowned zoos in the world today.Â  These days, Jack spends his time filming tv shows of his own, and also bringing animals around the country for appearances in theaters and on other tv shows, such as David Letterman, Maury Povich, and Good Morning America in order to educate people about respecting animals.Â  Whenever animals are involved, situations can easily become unpredictable.Â  Throw Jack into the mix, andÂ these situations now become hilariously entertaining *and* unpredictable.Things seem to happen to Jack, and if you’d like an example of what I mean, check out the following article detailing an animal mishap Jack encountered at the airport last September:

***COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)*** *— Animal expert Jack Hanna and an 11-month-old flamingo became trapped while trying to squeeze through an airport security turnstile. It took firefighters to finally get the flamingo out.Â  Animal expert Jack Hanna had a close encounter with a flamingo Sunday.Â  Hanna, the director emeritus of the Columbus Zoo and a frequent guest on nationally televised talk shows, was returning from a zoo fundraiser with a mongoose, a small leopard and the flamingo. Three other people were with them.Â  The entourage arrived at the Ohio State University Airport just after midnight Sunday to find the terminal closed. The only way to leave the tarmac was through a 10-foot-tall metal turnstile with several horizontal bars — not the easiest exit to squeeze through when you’re traveling with boxed-up animals, Hanna said.Â* ***“I never thought about the crate being square and the turnstile being round,”*** *he said.Â  Hanna, 60, pushed the flamingo’s 2-foot-by-3-foot compartment into the turnstile, then continued pushing while straddling the crate.Â  “I was stuck like a worm. My eyes were as big as grapefruits,” he said. “I can’t describe the feeling in my stomach. I can’t move up or down. The bars are on your face.”Â  Hanna said he eventually squirmed free, leaving the flamingo still wedged inside and everyone else trapped on the tarmac. He then walked to a nearby fire station for help. It took three firefighters to hoist the flamingo’s crate up and out of the turnstile, he said.Â  Columbus fire department logs show the firefighters arrived at the airport at 12:30 a.m. for a “flamingo rescue,” spokeswoman Kelly McGuire said.Â  Hanna joked that the next time he flies through the airport, the biggest animal he’ll bring is a gerbil.*

If you were entertained by the preceding article, I highly recommend Jack’s book [Monkeys on the Interstate](http://www.amazon.com/Monkeys-Interstate-Americas-Favorite-Zookeeper/dp/0385247311) which details his life before and during his days at the Columbus Zoo – it’s a VERY entertaining and funny read, especially for animal lovers and zoo enthusiasts.Â  I really hope I can schedule some time to catch Jack at one of his appearances soon, but until then, I will keep checking for him on Letterman and will probably check out the book for a fourth time!

### Comments

**jack hanna | Wonderful Article**[...] at an Ohio airport. …The Flight of the Dream - http://theflightofthedream.r-59.com|||I Never Thought About the Crate Being Square and the Turnstile …In case youâ€™ve missed my previous posts about animals and Jack Hanna, let me explain that Jack [...]  
**jack hanna | Garden Ask**[...] I Never Thought About the Crate Being Square and the Turnstile …8 May 2008 by taylhis In case youâ€™ve missed my previous posts about animals and Jack Hanna, let me explain that Jack Hanna is my favorite celebrity and how much I really enjoy following his adventures through zoo life. In case you donâ€™t know who Jack is, … [...]  
**jack hanna | Hottags**[...] I Never Thought About the Crate Being Square and the Turnstile …In case youâ€™ve missed my previous posts about animals and Jack Hanna, let me explain that Jack Hanna is my favorite celebrity and how much I really enjoy following his adventures through zoo life. In case you donâ€™t know who Jack is, …My Food Chain Gang - http://taylhis.tangents.org/ [...]  
**jack hanna | Lasts information**[...] I Never Thought About the Crate Being Square and the Turnstile …In case youâ€™ve missed my previous posts about animals and Jack Hanna, let me explain that Jack Hanna is my favorite celebrity and how much I really enjoy following his adventures through zoo life. In case you donâ€™t know who Jack is, …My Food Chain Gang - http://taylhis.tangents.org/ [...]  
**jamiahsh**JACK HANNA ALERT: David Letterman May 14th.  
**derek**Well, those rescuers have something to talk about for the next week... At least they were able to lift the flamingo out without having to dismantle the entire turnstile. And it sounds like the flamingo is no worse for the ordeal.  
**jamiahsh**That is hilarious.

# The Island of Dr. Moreau

No, I’m not talking about the movie [The Island of Dr. Moreau](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0116654/)…Â  Many people thought it was awful, but I actually liked that movie, last time I saw it anyway over a decade ago.Â  Scared the heck out of me though; I saw it in college and had to walk home from my friends’ dorm all by myself late at night afterwards…Â  I was so freaked out that I ran all the way home, prompting some other college-aged jerks to jeer at me, “Run Forrest, Run!”Â  See what they did there?Â  That’s a reference to the great movie, [Forrest Gump](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0109830/).Â  Clever kids, weren’t they?Â  I will have to try that Dr. MoreauÂ movie again; even though I bet nowadays the special effects would appearÂ outdated and it would just be dumb, but I’m not about to try it any time soonÂ withÂ all the nightmares I’ve been having…

Anyway, I was just looking for a way to tie in my latest activities, that’s why I called the post The Island of Dr. Moreau.Â  I went to the Dr. today, and watched the movie calledÂ [The Island](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0399201/) last night.Â  The Dr. visit was routine…Â  but I do have to mention how I just sat there waiting for the Dr. to come in with nothing to do but stare at the walls because after reading the CNN article called “Don’t Let a Hospital Kill You”, I was too afraid to touch any magazines in the Dr.’s office.Â  See one of my previous posts of that title if you would like toÂ experience the same paranoia.Â  Dr. told me we’re going to induce me a week before my due date because I have large babies…Â  thank goodness for that, except that I’m ready NOW – do we really have to wait until July?!?

Now for the movie…Â  The Island is a sci-fi movie about a factory that manufactures humans.Â  It is set in the future – but not too far in the future, 2015 or something like that – there are monorails, flying motorcycles, and human clones aplenty.Â  It’s funny how in one scene, they thought they were being clever by showing gas prices to be over $4 / gallon, but I guess our 2008 society is a bit ahead of them, not in a good wayÂ eitherÂ 

So anyway, in The Island, the general public is under the impression that their “insurance policies” – as the clones are knownÂ –Â are simply organisms being grown for spare parts and will remain in a vegetative state.Â  The “insurance policies” however, are living, breathing, thinking, feeling humans who areÂ housed in a self-contained facility within the factory.Â  They live from day to day with the hope of winning “the lottery”, which will send them to “the island” – supposedly a place of bliss where they will live happily ever after.Â  [Ewan McGregor](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000191/)‘s character accidently finds out however, that winning the lottery is fatal, and “the island” is really what happens when a customer needs their insurance policy – ie, the clone is killed for its spare parts.Â  I’m not normally a fan of sci-fi, but this movie has a very interesting premise that doesn’t go too over the top, and I enjoyed it.Â  Without giving too much away, I would trade a scene in the middle (too cheesy!) for 2 at the end – scenes I thought should be addedÂ with things I’d like to see in the movie…Â  if you see or have seen the movie, I’ll tell you what I mean.Â  But I did like it, and like I said, I am not normally a fan of sci-fi, so I would recommend this one to sci-fi fans or action movie enthusiasts.

### Comments

**taylhis**That's good :)  
**derek**Ah, here it is: [Ordering Pizza in the Future](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNJl9EEcsoE)  
**derek**I remember the beginning where he wasn't allowed to have the breakfast he wanted because of health issues- of course they would want their "insurance policies" to be of superior health. There was a flash animation I saw about how this may play with a pizza order, as well as all our personal info being at the fingertips of any business. I'll try to dig up the link.  
**jamiahsh**$4 per gallon in 2015.... we are ahead of the future...  
**Gas Prices » The Island of Dr. Moreau**[...] My Food Chain Gang wrote an interesting post today on The Island of Dr. MoreauHere’s a quick excerpt Itâ€™s funny how in one scene, they thought they were being clever by showing gas prices to be over $4 / gallon, but I guess our 2008 society is a bit a… [...]

# The Anti-Alice Wedding

While we’re on the subject of politics, I was reading about Jenna Bush’s upcomingÂ nuptial’s today, and I discovered an interesting article about the parallels of oppositesÂ betweenÂ Bush’s daughter andÂ former President Roosevelt’s daughter Alice, both of whom will be married while their fathers wereÂ Presidents of the United States; Jenna’s weddingÂ taking placeÂ over a centuryÂ after Alice’s.Â

From CNN.com:  
*Doug Wead, a former aide to President George H.W. Bush and author of a book on presidents’ kin, calls Jenna’s ceremony “the anti-Alice Roosevelt wedding.” Former President Theodore Roosevelt’s daughter was married in 1906.*

*“That wedding took place during a time of prosperity and peace; this one at a time of economic struggle and war,” Wead said. “The Roosevelt family was outgoing, flamboyant; this is a private family. That was one of the most popular presidencies in American history. Even John Adams didn’t go on Mount Rushmore, but Teddy Roosevelt went on Mount Rushmore. This is an unpopular presidency. Alice had no bridesmaids. Jenna has 14.”*

And one more little tidbit about Presidential offspring:Â  Jenna is the 22nd child of a United States President to marry while their fathers were in office.Â  Not that money is usually a problem for a president, but I wonder how many of those were daughters whose daddy’s were expected to foot the wedding bills?

### Comments

**derek**CNN=anti-Bush. They are very left.  
**jamiahsh**That is a fascinating tidbit. 22 presidential children were married while their parents were in office.

# Political Mishap

While I am a current events junkie, I am most reluctant to follow politics for some reason. Give me true-crime stories, entertainment news, or natural disaster tales any day – I can’t get enough. But when it comes to politics, I have trouble even forcing myself to follow the news, even though they talk about it on one of my favorite channels (CNN) nonstop lately. You’d think it’d be enough motivation for me to follow politics just to be “in the loop”, but it’s a natural instinct of mine to tune out political news. How interesting then, that my husband is really ONLY interested in current events involving politics… I guess you could say we compliment each other that way. So while he had on CNN following some of the last of the primaries tonight, I heard an interesting story developing… it seems poor Hillary Clinton, who lost horribly in North Carolina today, couldn’t even get a break today at her wrap-up party after the primary… They had 2 confetti machines ready to shoot confetti over the crowd, and they malfunctioned, only to shoot the confetti a pathetic 4 feet from the machine… just not Hillary’s night, I guess…

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Who a dis "jkraft"? Poorr Hi-larry. I a try to see her in In-diana Country but the mans in de black suits and de tings coming out of de ears told Morat to leave. They no like a Morat :( I a not make it to NC Country to see Abadaba or de name is. And people tell me dat Morat Notboratnickov is a strange name?  
**CNN Breaking News » Blog Archive » Political Mishap**[...] jkraft wrote an interesting post today onHere’s a quick excerptBut when it comes to politics, I have trouble even forcing myself to follow the news, even though they talk about it on one of my favorite channels (CNN) nonstop lately. Youâ€™d think itâ€™d be enough motivation for me to follow politics … [...]

# 100!

This is my ***100th*** blog post!Â  What a long way I’ve come from my first blog post, aptly and boringly titled, “First Post” – it was a description of me learning to blog!Â  And what a variety of subjects I’ve covered, from retractable sharpie pens, to kids’ blankies…Â  from movies and tv shows to animals, trips, and family life…Â  It seems like forever ago that I was taking you all through the 11, 572Â snow days we had, and it’s been fun to share all these aspects of my life on the internet while learning things about my friends and family who readÂ and/orÂ comment on my posts.Â  So thanks to all my readers, even if you just read because I make you, thanks anyway…Â  I truly appreciate each and every comment I receive – written and spoken, keep it up!Â  And might I add that I’m the first tangents.org blogger to achieve this milestone…Â  hope to have others join me soon!

### Comments

**taylhis**Six posts today... but I've been slacking off lately, so I had to make-up for that, and today I just made the time to do so.  
**derek**aaaand... There's no way I can ever compete with six posts in one day, so I think your position is safe from me!  
**derek**Nope, it doesn't. I just checked and I'm missing several ID numbers, including a jump from 45 to 57. Congrats L, you are really the first. :)  
**jamiahsh**tomorrow maybe.... unless I decide to post about the second season rerun of a certain show I just watched involving Chili's, a manuscript, and no -Gould. OKOKOK!!!!!! And you are welcome.  
**derek**Wow. How did I surpass you? I just checked the ID of my last post and it's 102. I'll just stop posting and let you catch up... :P Or maybe the ID doesn't tell the whole story. I can't imagine I have really made 100 posts.

# Weird Pregnancy Symptoms

Since this is my fourth pregnancy, I’ve experienced a wide variety of the symptoms that go along with being “with child”.Â  It’s amazing to me how every pregnancy is different, even when they are experienced by the same woman.Â  Pregnancies are as different as the personalities of the children that result.Â  Is it possible then, that a child’s personality can actually be displayed through the symptoms of the mother’s pregnancy?Â  For example, my aunt told me that when she was pregnant with my cousin, she craved spicy food after not really liking it before.Â  My cousin, the result of the spicy food pregnancy, is now 31 years old and has always been a fan of spicy food!

When I was pregnant with my oldest daughter, my husband would blend a huge glass of juice for me every morning with lots of fruits and veggies in it.Â  My oldest daughter now prefers snacks of fruits and vegetables to junk food.Â  I didn’t really crave the fruits and veggies, so that’s a different example, but it’sÂ still an illustration of how womb behavior may affect the child throughout life.Â

My second daughter was, for lack of a better word,Â crazy in the womb.Â  She was the last thing I felt before I fell asleep at night, and the first thing I felt in the morning,Â and let’s not forget all those middle of the night bathroom trips…Â  she was kicking and rollingÂ during those too.Â  I would often joke thatÂ I didn’t know if this baby ever sleeps.Â  Once she was born, I got the answer:Â  she doesn’t ever sleep and never did apparently.Â  It felt like she was tearing me apart from the inside out with her strong movementsÂ in the womb, and to this day, she is our strong-willed, “spirited” child.

My third daughter was very gentle as a fetus.Â  She rarely moved – compared to her older sister at least – and when she did, it was always in one spot.Â  As a toddler, she has a very sweet, patient, and obedient demeanor.Â  So, as for #4…Â  so far she moves a lot.Â  I don’t want to jinx anything here, but her movements remind me of our second daughter – the spirited one.Â  But I’ve also experienced some strange symptoms with this pregnancy that I haven’t felt before.Â  First, I’ve been having nightmares.Â  It’s common in pregnancy to have more vivid dreams, and I’ve experienced that, but lately I’ve had lots of nightmares, ones where I actually wake up tooÂ creeped outÂ to go to the bathroom…Â  Strange.Â  And with this pregnancy, red fruitÂ has been especially tasty.Â  I don’t crave it, but things like tomatoes, strawberries, and especially red grapes (I’ve always preferredÂ green to red until now!) taste extra yummy to me.Â  It’s so weird to meÂ how tastes can change during a pregnancy.Â  I’ve never liked bologna and still don’t, but during my first pregnancy, I liked it and ate it quite often.

There is probably some scientific research out there that speculatesÂ about how much a mother’sÂ pregnancy symptoms impact the resulting child, butÂ rather than research it, I think I will just wait and see what my girls are like when they enter adulthood and we can sit down and read my pregnancy diaries together, compare their personalities with that of their wombÂ behavior, andÂ share someÂ good laughs.

### Comments

**derek**Reese's peanut butter cups!  
**taylhis**That's interesting... pb and chocolate, right? :)  
**justj**Your children are all very well behaved, we just have to keep the cheese shakers away from them... The only thing I remember with the pregnancies of my wife is that for our 3rd daughter, all S wanted was peanut butter. We had a hard time keeping it in the house. I remember buying the BIG buckets for 4 of us, and I didn't eat that much. It would be gone in a week. Now that's all the 3rd kid eats.  
**taylhis**And oh yeah... I forgot to mention that fried chicken never appeals to me anymore... that's kinda weird... what's wrong with fried chicken? Child #2 is sweet, but also Jekyll and Hyde - serious anti-Christ concerns with her sometimes... kidding back of course.  
**derek**You're carrying the anti-Christ! AAAAAHHHH! Kidding of course. :P  
**jamiahsh**I find it hard to believe that child #2 was "crazy in the womb" when she is such a sweet, well behaved child :)

# Brown Recluse Spider Warning!

This is theÂ THIRD time I’ve gotten this emailÂ forward, so I thought it was worth mentioning inÂ my blog.Â  The subject line of the emailÂ reads:Â Â Fwd: Dangerous Spider Bite – Brown Recluse Spider (Graphic pictur…  
The body of the email showsÂ some awful pictures of someone’s infection on their hand that they supposedly got from a spider bite.Â  Since I am a skeptic of ANYTHING I get via email forward, I looked up this warning on snopes.com, the website that investigates possibleÂ urban legendsÂ and their origins.Â  Actually, while I was at it, I looked up snopes on snopes.com, seeing what they’d say about their own site being an urban legend, but that’s another post…

Anyway, back to the spider bite warning.Â  Instead of posting the pictures of the infection here, I will just provide a link to the snopes.com entry about it since the pictures are pretty gross…Â  [Click here](http://www.snopes.com/photos/bugs/brownrecluse.asp) if you have a morbid curiousity and you’d like to see what the inside of someone’s hand looks like.â€Â  So anyway – and I find myself saying anyway again, which means lots of *tangents* in this post :).Â  Â ***Anyway,*** when I looked up the brown recluse spider bite warning on snopes.com, it said that the status of this legend is undetermined, which means that they don’t know if it’s true or not.Â  Evidently, the photos are real, and it’s really an infection in someone’s hand that is pictured, but the origin of the infection is not necessarily the spider bite.Â  Here is a description of the incident by the victim her-(or him) self:

*Â I suspect a spider bite was the cause.Â  I was out in  
the wood at Caddo Lake and noticed a bite on my thumb.Â  The doctor I was  
seeing thought it was a spider bite.Â  Other doctors told me it was a brown  
recluse bite.Â  It was also a MRSA infection.Â  It became so infected  
because the first antibiotic I was on was not doing any good and I tried  
to finish the semester before going in to see the doctor.  
It was a very interesting experience and I no longer wait to go in to the  
doctor.Â  Whether or not it was a brown recluse bite or not I can’t say.Â  I  
saw some very good doctors who specialize in spider bites and they thought  
it was.Â  But you have probably seen the latest info on MRSA infections  
being misdiagnosed as spider bites.*

Umm…Â  this person described this experience as “interesting”?Â  Wow, what a mellow personality one must have to possess a wound that looks like that and describe it as interesting…Â

So, the moral of the story is, be careful with spider bites.Â  Be even more careful with email forwards, and most importantly, (especially if you’ve read my post called, “Don’t Let a Hospital Kill You) take good care of skin infections before they become as serious as the one pictured in the spider warning email, or you will have an “interesting experience” of your own!

### Comments

**justj**the problem with a brown recluse bite is that it numbs the area and starts to kill (digest actually) the tissue. If you try to treat it yourself, you end up with a very bad infection. So the important thing to remember is if you get bit by any insect, if it starts to look worse than a mosquito/fly bite, you should have it checked out.  
**taylhis**Not very concerned about the brown recluse... especially because they don't even know if that's where the infection came from... The concern is not the poison in the animal, it's the infection... can't let an infection get to that!  
**justj**Just so you know, the Brown Recluse Spider is not native to NW Ohio. Any extremely poisonous animals are all hitch hikers, and generally don't last too long up here. No black widows, no scorpions, and only one venomous snake. The snake is extremely rare (endangered I think), and loves the low swampy ground (Massasauga or swamp rattler). So you shouldn't have to worry about the lovely pictures.  
**taylhis**Aren't those lovely pictures? Something for the family album? Jamiahsh - I'm surprised you didn't get this from our favorite forwarding friend, V. She's the first one that sent it to me.  
**jamiahsh**Niiiiice

# Doors to Nowhere

In the town where we live, I’ve noticed a weird phenomena:Â  there are many houses with second floor doors that lead seemingly nowhere.Â  Well, they lead outside, but that’s it – no stairwells, no balconies, no screened-in porches.Â  Just random doors on houses.Â  Perhaps there used to be something there, maybe a staircase, etc.Â  It would be one thing if there were only a few houses like these, but in my town alone, there are at least 10, one being next-door!Â  In a town this small, that is a lot.Â  Actually, they aren’t all second floor doors.Â  The church down the street has one that is about 3-4 feet off the ground – enough to see that it’s a door to nowhere, but not enough to be on the second floor.Â  I wonder what the purpose of these doors are and why there are so many?Â  Maybe it’s something to ask the library historian about, or maybe some of you fellow NW Ohioans who read this blog and have lived here longer than I can enlighten me – people didn’t waste doors in Chicago!

### Comments

**taylhis**also an interesting theory which I agree with, however, the house next door that has one of these doors was built in 1920... which would still allow time for part of it to fall off, I guess, but not hundreds of years old...  
**justj**I'm not sure about the upper level doors. But some of the house in the area are hundreds of years old, it could be that parts of the exterior (porches, landings, or other stuff had been torn down while the rest of the house stayed up. I have two doors on the second floor of my house, I never got around to putting up the deck again. It went, bad, and then I noticed how much sun I was missing on the lower level. Light was good, deck in the woods, not too good with all the bugs.  
**taylhis**Yes... who would have known there was BASKETBALL up there - now I think they SHOULD save it! LOL... interesting article, but a 1926 basketball game? That is kind of lame. Good theory, D. If I ever get back to the library, I will ask the historian. I suppose I could also email her... Maybe I'll start by asking our good friends JO and CC - they know a lot about local stuff... though JO seems to have dropped off this corner of OH :)  
**jamiahsh**That could be.... seriously. I do remember discussing this in school or somewhere but do not recall specifics... YOU got me again. Maybe I can go cause another ruckus to add to "the neverending story" of the village hall. Not to be confused with the classic 80s movie. You must admit that it does make for good front page news when there is nothing better to print.  
**derek**I was just reading a comic (yes, single men are really just overgrown boys) and it had a house like this on a ski-resort mountain. The second-story door was the primary entrance when the snow buried the lower ten feet of the house. Maybe someone saw this design in Colorado or somewhere and decided it would look cool for Ohio.  
**jamiahsh**I noticed the same thing the other night and have often wondered the same thing.

# 21

There’s been lots of talk of this number on my blog lately, but this time I’m referring to the movie [21](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0478087/), not the tv show.Â  I have to admit, I was a little reluctant to see this movie because the previews reminded me of [Ocean’s 11](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0240772/), and I was not a big fan of that movie.Â  I also thought I might have trouble followingÂ the movie 21 because I don’t know how to play many of the popular card games prominent in Las Vegas; like poker, and most importantly Blackjack.Â  But I didn’t have trouble following the movie, and I actually enjoyed it from start to finish.Â  It was a good mix of action, thoughtful dialogue, good acting, and plot twists; all of which add up to a well-balanced and entertaining film.

The movie revolves around a college professor, played by the enjoyable and versatile [Kevin Spacey](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000228/://), who trains a “club” of gifted math students to excel at the game of Blackjack.Â  They develop a system and take trips to Las Vegas to win lots of money.Â  Enter student Ben Campbell, the club’s newest recruit, who only wants enough money to pay for his dream of attending Harvard medical school.Â  He gets caught up in the lifestyle, however, and it’s interesting to see what happens next…Â  I won’t spoil it – it’s a good movie, go see it!

### Comments

**taylhis**didn't even realize he was in Superman Returns... until the Daddy Warbucks incident, that is! :)  
**jamiahsh**My brother took his 12 year old son who is totally captivated by numbers to see this. Not sure if he liked it or not. Mr. Spacey is always good (from what I have seen him in... and no it it's not limited to Superman Returns :)

# Don't Let a Hospital Kill You

What a time for me to stumble across this article on CNN – [Don’t Let a Hospital Kill You](http://www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/05/01/ep.avoiding.infection/index.html)

I visit the doctor’s office monthly, and it’s time for me to start visiting every 2 weeks already!Â  Also, I will be a resident of a hospital in about 2 Â½ months!Â  As I’ve written before, I try really hard to put my faith into theÂ doctors andÂ nursesÂ whoÂ care forÂ me, however, my husband is a born skeptic of the medical community.Â  Sometimes it’s difficult to cast his doubts and concerns aside, especially when I read something like this.Â  Also, since I grew up in a huge metro area, even though I love our small community, I have to be honest and say the small hospital here scares me a at least a little.Â  I haven’t shown my husband this article yet…Â  maybe I’ll wait until the baby and I are home and healthy in July?

### Comments

**taylhis**I agree with you Derek... all this hand-sanitizer stuff and whatnot might be partially to blame. But I did sit at the doctor's office today doing nothing because I was too afraid to touch the magazines! :)  
**derek**It's my uneducated opinion that all this fear of exposing kids to any sort of germ whatsoever is causing things like peanut allergies. That said, I'm sure this article has nothing to do with this at all. Time to have a look-see...  
**taylhis**He looks at the blogs... not sure he reads them all the time... it's not like I'm hiding it from him, just haven't gotten around to showing him yet. It's a tough thing to remember when in the hospital, especially if it's emergency surgery - WAIT! Before you touch me, did you wash your hands? And I've often thought about those books and toys in the doctors office, but let's face it, part of the "fun" of going places for kids - and of course any parent could use extra bribery when it comes to the drs office - is to see what new toys and books they have, not bring the same old ones from home... I just let the kids play and try to have faith in something called "immune systems".  
**jamiahsh**The article itself... YIKES! These things happen? Is the best the nurse can do?  
**jamiahsh**doesn't he generally read your blog.... that would direct him to the article? OOPS

# Take Me Out to the Ballgame - Uecker Style

Well, the Cubs lost their second seriesÂ toÂ the Brewers this season, but equally upsetting is what happenedÂ today during the 7th inning stretch.Â  Taking place at Wrigley Field, today’s gameÂ was the “rubber game” of the series.Â  Someone decided Bob Ueker, aka ‘the voice of the Brewers’ would be a good guest to come and lead the crowd in ‘Take Me Out to the Ballgame’.Â Â Nevermind for a minuteÂ the events that took place during the song today; this decision doesn’t seem very wise to meÂ from the get-go.Â  Bob Uecker was born and raised in Milwaukee.Â  He grew up watching the minor-league Milwaukee Brewers, andÂ theÂ first team he signed with in the major leagues was the Milwaukee Braves.Â  He’s been doing theÂ play-by-play announcements for the Brewers on the radio since 1971, and still holds the job.Â  Why then, did someone deem it a good decision to have him come to Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs, to lead the crowd during theÂ 7th inning stretch?Â  If we pretend theÂ Chicago White Sox don’t exist Â  – the Cubs haveÂ their biggest rivalry with their neighbors to the north, the Milwaukee Brewers.Â  So why invite someone who has obviously been a lifelong Milwaukee fan to do the 7th inning stretch during a Cubs / Brewers game on Cubs turf?Â  I just don’t get it…

Here is a play by play of today’s incident.Â  Bob Ueker comes out to sing the 7th inning stretch.Â  Nothing seemed amiss, until the part in the song that goes, “root, root, root, for the *Brewers”.Â Â*He actually said ‘root for the Brewers’ at Wrigley Field.Â  He was immediately BOOED LOUDLY by the crowd, of course, so thenÂ he sings, “you do the same for the Cubs” to the tune of the song, but by this point, theÂ organist just gives up because now he’s out of tune and has lost the organist in the song.Â  In order to get back on track, he then proceeds to skip ahead, or maybe it’s because he realized it would be an even worse decision to say something like “if they don’t win it’s a shame” about the Brewers in Wrigley Field.Â  Either way, he skips ahead to “for it’s ONE, TWO, THREE (*organist comes back into the song, hardly missing a beat except for the made-up lyrics*) strikes you’re out at the old ball game!”Â  I had kids to tend to, so I didn’t see the entire fallout from the fiasco, but I did get back to the tv just in time to hear Ueker say, “I’m rooting for the Brewers, what do they want me to do, root for the Cubs?”Â  YES!Â  Of course the Cubs fans want you to root for the Cubs, especially at Wrigley Field!Â  And if you can’t do that, pretend!Â  And if you can’t pretend, then stay in Milwaukee!

Well, forget Bob Ueker and whoever invited him to Wrigley today – that person was probably fired before the beginning of the 8th inning anyway.Â  The Cubs are off to a great start this year, and I can only hope I get less busy so I can see more games because they are playing some great baseball, and it’s fun to watch!Â  I can only hope they beat the pants off the Cardinals who are in first place in the Cubs division by only a half game…Â  That series begins tomorrow and I will be watching – in between kid duties, of course!Â  GO CUBS!

### Comments

**derek**And sorry BFL, I may not like Chicago, or baseball, but GO CUBBIES!!!  
**derek**Sure you're a Chicagoan, it's in your blood! Okay, okay, only when it comes to the Cubs. Otherwise you're more like me, a suburbanite who pretty much doesn't like the city. You and C even went so far as to go in the other direction, to the modern rural life. And of course you're lovin' it. I am jealous... :)  
**taylhis**I was not aware that he did that last year - he seemed apologetic, so I just assumed it was a first time thing. Everyone is entitled to follow the team of their choice, after all, that's why there are so many teams in baseball. It remains to be seen who will take the division, but you are wrong about at least one thing - I AM NOT A CHICAGOAN!!!  
**BrewersFoLife**"Harry must be rolling over in his grave." Shut up!!....Harry would of loved it. Uecker did the same thing last year so this is nothing new, and the people at Wrigley knew he was going to that before they even asked him. It's all in good fun so calm the f\*ck down. I guess it's in every Chicagoans blood to be a closed-minded ass so I'm really not suprised at your reaction. Also, the Brew Crew is taking the division this year so enjoy it at the top while you still can cuz it ain't gonna last!!! GO BREWERS!!!  
**jamiahsh**Harry must be rolling over in his grave. That is awful....

# An Afgan Girl on the Other Side of the Sky

I just finished reading a really interesting book about a girl named Farah Ahmedi.Â  She grew up in Afghanistan, and when she was only 7 years old, she stepped on a land mine and was almost killed.Â  She was one of the wounded children chosen to get medical care in Germany, so she had good medical care for 2 years, but it came with the price of lonelinessÂ because her family had to stay behind in Afghanistan, she didn’t speak German, and no one at the hospital spoke her language.Â  Her leg was amputated, and her other leg was rebuilt without a knee, leaving her unable to bend it.Â  When she returned to Afghanistan as a 9-year-old, the Taliban was starting to take over, and a rocket hit her house, killing her father and two sisters.Â  Her brothers were forced to try to flee to Pakistan in fear of being drafted or executed by the Taliban, and she hasn’t heard from them since.Â  Since she and her mother were the only members of her family left, they were forced to flee the Taliban also – we’ve all heard about how the Taliban don’t treat women very well, and women couldn’t even go out in public without men.Â  ThisÂ was difficult for Farah and her mother since they didn’t have any men left in their family.Â  They spent 4 years as refugees in Pakistan until they were finally granted approval into the World Relief’s American Refugee program.Â  After the long process of applying and finally getting approved, they were waiting to leave for America when September 11, 2001 happened, and their trip was cancelled as no foreigners were being allowed into the country.Â  Within 6 months however, the program was reinstated, and they came to America.

The book chronicles all the adventures, trials, and tribulations it took for Farah to become the sucessful American citizen she is today.Â  It was a VERY interesting read; from the details of life in Afghanistan under the Taliban to the struggles of an Afgan widow and her daughter getting used to the American way of life.Â  In fact, they had been through so much, that when they got to America, they were certain that their American hosts were actually slave owners who were trying to imprison them.Â  It’s a wonderful story about the triumph of the human spirit, and I recommend the book to anyone who likes learning about different parts of the world, other cultures, or just likes reading a good non-fiction life story.Â  In fact, her book was published when she entered a Good Morning America contest and became a finalist.Â  I heard about it because Farah attended the rival high school to the one where I went, so for me, it was interesting to readÂ about the area I grew up in as seen through the eyes of someone who had been through as much as Farah and was seeing the area for the first time as an immigrant.Â  [Check it out!](http://www.amazon.com/Story-My-Life-Afghan-Other/dp/B000R4LFQ2/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1209669760&sr=8-1)

### Comments

**derek**Must of us Americans don't know how good we have it. No, we're not slave owners anymore but our country didn't give them up without a nasty fight. Unfortunately in our hearts we are still just as selfish- not just us mind you, but much of Western (including Europe) is this way. As long as Africa, the Middle East, etc. is out of sight it's out of mind. We should at least be praying for the ones of us who go to those so-called third-world countries to serve, and if we can go out there some time to serve ourselves we should. And yes, my finger is pointing at me...

# Letter to the Humane Society

As an animal lover, I am a big believer in getting as many of your pets from a humane society as you can.Â  Sometimes there are reasons why a family might need a “purebred” animal (allergies to certain breeds, professional showmanship, etc.), but for the most part, I don’t really like when pet stores carry dogs and cats for sale, especially when they try to make “breeds” out of dogs that are mutts!Â  Case in point – we visited a Petland this weekend, just something to do to pass the time while we were in Fort Wayne, Indiana visiting the zoo, and I noticed that at least HALF of their puppy stock was mixed breeds!Â  The same animals you could buy (rescue!)Â for a small fraction of the price at a humane society, or even a pound, where they euthanize (KILL) animals just because they have too many!Â  And here these pet storesÂ are creating more, just for profit and to “design” a custom-made dog for somebody that in my opinion, does not have their priorities straightÂ if they’re willing to spendÂ extra moneyÂ just to have a “designer” puppy.Â Â Petland, etc.Â will make up breeds; for example, the store we went toÂ had “puggles” (a pug crossed with a beagle), cock-a-poos (cocker spaniels mixed with poodles), and “borderjacks” (border collie mixed with a jack russell terrier), to name a few.Â  Anyway, I won’t go into the reasons for choosing to adopt your next dog from a shelter vs. a pet store (except to say it will SAVE A LIFE!!!), but I just thought I would post a copy of the letter I’m going to send to my local humane society to thank them for the awesome family pet we adopted a few months ago from their shelter:

Dear Humane Society:  
We just wanted to say thank you for our new family member.Â  We adopted “Sasha” from your facility on March 4, 2008.Â  We renamed her Beesley after a character from our favorite tv show, and not only has she learned her new name and some new tricks, she has become a very much loved part of our family.Â  She gets along with our 2 dogs just like one of the “pack”, and she is an energetic, obedient, and gentle playmate for our 3 young children.Â  She seems really happy in our house, and we couldn’t be happier after choosing any other dog for our new pet.Â  Thanks so much for taking such good care of her while she was a homeless dog and for having patience with us while weÂ got to know her to see if she would fit into our family.Â  She fits like a lost piece of our family puzzle, and weÂ couldn’tÂ imagine a better dog…Â  well, except forÂ our “old lady” of the house, the pack leader named Charity, who Beesley worshipsÂ and spoilsÂ along with theÂ rest of us!Â  Here is a picture of the kids with Charity and Beesley.Â  Thanks again!



### Comments

**taylhis**It's ok - it's obvious. In fact, she doesn't even fit into the animal kingdom.  
**jamiahsh**I did not want to say it :)  
**taylhis**She fits in better than Scooby :)  
**jamiahsh**How sweet. And Beasley does seem to fit right into the Pack. Awesome letter

# Family Update

I haven’t been posting as much as I used to lately.Â  This is because of the surge ofÂ activity in our lives…Â  It’s also led to me making less phone calls to catch up with people, so let me fill you in this way about what’s been going on with us…

Taylor has been needing lots of dental work in Toledo.Â  It’s been treacherous, but we have only ONE appointment left, and her teeth look (and now that the painÂ is gone today –Â feel) great!Â  She’s been handling it all SO well that she is the dentists’ and dental assistants’ favorite patient.Â  I think they will really miss her.Â  After she leaves the office though, she has a really hard time with the bleeding, and today was especially bad for her, and she also had some pain.Â  But she came out of it all ok, and if she takes good care of her teeth from now on, we shouldn’t have to go through anything like this again!

Despite all the bleeding, pain, and the $30 price tag for gas (!), our trips to Toledo have been kind of a fun time for just the 3 of us – Mom, Dad, and biggest sister – to hang out.Â  We’ve been going out to eat, and stopping at the zoo a lot.Â  That zoo membershipÂ they got me for my birthday last year has REALLY paid off!Â  We’ve been watching the family of orangutans they have at the Toledo Zoo – there’s a mom, dad, a 4-year-old, and an almost 2-year-old.Â  Seeing them week-to-week, I’ve gotten to know their personalities and have grown a little attached to them – when our trips to Toledo stop, I will miss them!Â  The patriarch of the family, a VERY large orang named Boomer, is a gentle giant.Â  His hands alone are about the size of my 8-year-old’s leg from hip to knee!Â  While most males of his species are solitary creatures, BoomerÂ enjoys beingÂ with his family, and he even assists with the rearing of the young, something almost unheard of for male orangs!Â  Today, Kutai, the mother, carried her youngest baby with her and sat on the window of her exhibit that positions her directly above the guests.Â  People were looking up at her, and when they took their camera out, she smiled, teeth and all!Â  I of course did not have my camera with me today to capture this awesome zoo momentÂ  Â  The keeper was saying that Kutai enjoys looking at books, and she can recognize pictures of herself vs.Â pics ofÂ other orangs, so is it possible that she understands what a camera is?!?Â  I think the orangs have taken over the gorillas as my favorite zoo animals to watch.Â  They are just so intelligent and their actions are so individual…Â  Last week when we were there, we heard the zookeeper talking about how they escaped from their exhibit after it was first built.Â  Seems they watched the contractors build their new exhibit from an adjacent one, and apparently noticed when they missed caulk in one little spot.Â  As soon as they were let into their new exhibit, they went right over to the spot, pulled the fence from the wall, and out they climbed, leaving the zookeepers to fetch them from the roof!Â  Sounds like something that would have happened to Jack Hanna Â  The orangs were inside on such a nice day todayÂ because the keepers were hooking up their water toy – when they pushÂ a button, it soaks guests who walk by on the outside of the exhibit!Â  That should be lots of fun; I really hope I can make it there at least once this summer to see them activate it, but with the new baby and all, it’s doubtful… Â But anyway, it was a great day at the zoo, and we even saw a wild woodpecker, pecking away high inÂ a tree!

Monday night, the girls had their “sibling class” at the hospital.Â  It was really fun and informative.Â  They saw the room where mom and baby will be staying, then they diapered and swaddled “babies” (fake of course!) and made little t-shirts for their new sister.Â  The one thing I would recommend for the class that they didn’t include however, is an emphasis on how older siblings can even help mom way BEFORE the baby comes by being well behaved, picking up some extra chores, or just doing the chores they are asked to do.Â  We’ve had some difficulties in these areas lately, and they are lucky their wonderful father has picked up all their slack around the house!Â  But other than that, the sibling class was great and they loved it.

Zoo trips aside, just the same business around here as usual…Â  Taylor is still taking her piano lessons, her school will be over for the summer in June (5 or 6 weather days to make up; I’ve lost count!), Sammie really likes her school, especially now that they go outside every day they are able, and Disney is growing by leaps and bounds, totally walking, totally talking, making her way towards two…Â  help us all ðŸ˜‰Â  Seriously, though, Sammie’s terrible two’s had already started by the time she was the age Dis is now, and I wouldn’t say they are over yet!Â  So I am optimistic that Disney’s will seem like a piece of cake comparatively…Â  and hopefully 

### Comments

**derek**Ditto on Jamiahsh's post. As for the camera, just get a phone with camera and then you will always have one! It may not be as good as a regular camera, but it will do in a pinch. That said, I really haven't used mine since I was there. Hm. Oh, well.  
**jamiahsh**glad to hear Taylor is doing well....plus the added trips to the zoo must be fun Sibling class sounds like a cool idea.  
**UpComingCamera.Info » Blog Archive » Family Update**[...] today to capture this awesome zoo moment The keeper was saying that Kutai enjoys looking at … MORE >>Creadit By weight [...]

# Game Days Past

For some reason, the old game show [“Sale of the Century”](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0198224/) from the 1980’s crossed my mind the other day.Â  I enjoyed this show tremendously as a kid, so I looked on youtube to see if I could find any episodes because I don’t really remember what it was all about.Â  They didn’t have any full episodes, but I did see enough bits and pieces to enjoy the nostalgia.Â  And I came across this clip of Simon Cowell’s first tv appearance as a contestant on the British version of this show:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

Watching vintage game shows on youtube got my husband thinking about the movie [Quiz Show](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110932/), which is about the game show scandal of the late 1950’s.Â  It was a time when quiz shows were very popular, and one of the most popular shows of the time called [“Twenty-One”](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0048909/) was exposed for being rigged – in other words, the producers would tell the contestants the correct answers, and when to answer correctly or incorrectly to guarantee or fix the outcome of the show.Â  On youtube, we were able to find the actual episode of “Twenty-One” that was chronicled in the movie and where the scandal broke.Â  [Click here](http://youtube.com/watch?v=Dxwku83PHNs) to see it – it’s in 3 parts, so you can find parts 2 and 3 off to the side where itÂ says ‘related videos’.Â  We also watched a “Time and Again” documentary about the scandal, which included interviews with the contestants involved and was very interesting – [click here](http://youtube.com/watch?v=dcVK8BDZT9Y&feature=related) to see part 1 of 5 of that show; again, the remaining parts can be linked from the right side of youtube.Â  Surprisingly, the movie “Quiz Show” is very true to the real story of the scandal.Â  When watching the episode of “Twenty-One” that started it all, my husband noted that it was very close to how the movie portrayed it.Â  It’s been awhile since I’ve seen the movie, so I will have to see it again because I didn’t remember whether it was close or not.

After watching the interesting “Twenty-One” videos, we moved onto the game show [“Press Your Luck”](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0136655/) from the 1980’s.Â  It’s the one where people get spins on a big game board, and they yell, “No Whammys, no whammys, STOP!”Â  A whammy was like a ‘lose-your-turn’.Â  When a contestant spun one, a cartoon character (the whammy) would come out andÂ do something different on the tv screen, like a dance or something silly, but it meant no money and the end of the contestant’sÂ turn.Â  If you were like me and a kid watching the show when it was on, then you were waiting for people to get the whammys so you could see the little cartoons.Â  For this reason, I would NOT have liked the episodes that aired with a contestant named Michael Larson, an unemployed ice cream truck driver who memorized the pattern of the board, and spun a whopping 47 times!Â  He won the following prizes:

* $104,950 in cash
* 1 sailboat worth $1015
* 1 trip to Kauai worth $1636
* 1 trip to the Bahamas worth $2636

This amount of cash was unheard of for this show, and the host kept making dumb jokes about how the contestant could now *buy* the Bahamas or CBS.Â  After the show, they gave Michael Larson a hard time about collecting his winnings, but in the end, it was found that his memorizing the board’s patterns was not cheating.Â  They reconfigured the game show board, of course, but sadly, Michael Larson’s story did not have a happy ending.Â  He had some struggles over the years, and ended up dying of throat cancer in 1999.Â  His life during and after the “Press Your Luck” appearances makes for a very interesting story though; perhaps they should make a movie about that – [read it here](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Larson).Â  They pulled those episodes of “Press Your Luck” in syndication, but they have shown them in multiple specials that aired on tv, most notably the game show network.Â  They even invited Larson’s brother to compete against the newly configured Press Your Luck whammy board to see if he could beat it, and he could not.Â Â Below are Larson’s appearances on “Press Your Luck”.Â  Note the reactions of his fellow contestants as well as those of the host.Â  A few interesting notes:Â Â  While waiting to be on the show,Â Larson met Ed Long, a Baptist preacher booked forÂ his fourth taping. They struck up a conversation. When it was Ed’s turn to go on, Michael said to him, “I hope we don’t have to face each other on the show.” His wish wouldn’t come true, as Ed had won his previous game with $11,516.Â  Watch for Ed on the clip.Â  Also note the host of the show,Â  Peter Tomarken, who was killed in a plane crash in 2006.Â  He was a private pilot who volunteered for an organization that flewÂ low-income patients for medical needs.Â  His airplane had engine trouble, and he and his wife were killed when their plane crashed into the Santa Monica Bay.

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**Tv Game Shows » Blog Archive » Game Days Past**[...] unknown [...]  
**derek**Yes, and the original Tic-Tac-Dough was on around the same time as Twenty-One as well.  
**jamiahsh**I think the Jeopardy kiddie version was called Jep and lasted about a season on saturday mornings. Of course, most shows nowadays feature kid weeks (Wheel, Jeopardy, those are the only two I can think of). Both Tic-Tac-Dough and Joker's Wild were produced by the same person who produced the original Twenty-One.  
**derek**There was a kid's version of Jeopardy too. I remember at some point in the game they would dump something on the contestants ala You Can't Do That on Television. The best kid's shows of course are those made for the kids, like Double Dare. I know Let's Make a Deal well, and unfortunately that is not the one I'm thinking of, but thanks.  
**taylhis**I didn't realize they had kids versions of those shows, but I'm not surprised... as far as kids game shows, I really liked "I'm Telling!" The show that pitted siblings against each other, often there was a kid celebrity on it. Fun House was cool too, and of course, the ever-classic Double Dare. Wrapped presents / gifts = Let's Make a Deal perhaps? They would offer a mystery prize in exchange for something, along with the classic, "or would you like what's behind door #1 instead?" But they would have large wrapped gifts also contestants could exchange...  
**derek**Ah, game shows. I remember the Michael Larson controversy. There was no rule against memorizing patterns, so he was really in the clear. In Las Vegas that wouldn't fly of course. That would be akin to counting cards, and we all know that *anything* that gives a player even a perceived advantage is against the rules and grounds for confiscation of your winnings. I remember a game show that had a scenery and I guess emphasis on wrapped presents/gifts. For the life of me I can't remember what it was called. I also remember Joker's Wild and another show around the same time and often played right before or after, Tic-Tac-Dough. Both those shows had kid versions, did you know that? Joker's Wild became Joker, Joker, Joker while Tic-Tac-Dough- I can't remember )and I can't find a single mention of it on the internet either!) but I think it had the word "dragon" in it. I believe both were played for points instead of money, as well as kid-geared prizes, though they could also win scholarship money. By the way, here's a site where you can hear some gameshow theme music (in bad real audio format, but hey): <http://www.80stvthemes.com/gameshows/>  
**taylhis**If you're talking about Press Your Luck, it wasn't rigged, it just wasn't random. Personally, I think it's the game show producers' fault for saying it was random when in fact it was patterned. Michael Larson only exploited this fact for his own gain, and I don't think he should feel guilty or have to give up his money. Just my opinion... I can see where one might feel guilty, however, he did go through lots of work to get where he did, and like I said, I see it as the game show people's fault more than his. If you're talking about Twenty-One, yes it was illegal, and everyone involved had to give depositions before Congress and such... not really sure about the details of everything - I'm going to watch the movie again.  
**jamiahsh**Very interesting that rigging was not illegal at the time... I would have flet very guilty if I were involved. I remember watching Joker's Wild (hosted by 21's Jack Berry and produced by the guy who produced 21). I also remember Sale of the Century.

# The Office - Night Out

Just reading the synopsis of last night’s episode even before I saw it made me laugh out loud:

Michael and Dwight decide a trip to the Big Apple is in order.Â  There, they hope to mingle with bigwig Ryan and his colleagues at the nightclubs.Â  Back in Scranton, the staffers must work on Ryan’s pet website project – on a Saturday, no less.

The episode was hilarious, as usual.Â  I won’t give too much away, except that I almost fell off my couch laughingÂ when Earl or Hank (or whatever the security guard’s name ended up being) madeÂ a cameo – priceless!

For my friends who have just started watching the show, I don’t know about you, but I really like to read tvguide’s blog about the show the day after I watch it.Â  Go to tvguide.com, find the tab at the top that says “What’s on TV”, and then go to Tv Show Blogs under that and find The Office.Â  [Here is aÂ quick link](http://community.tvguide.com/blog/Office/800056147) to the tvguide write-up of this week’s episode.

I agree with the tvguide writer – I caught on to Ryan’s drug use pretty early in the episode, just before he ran for the bathroom sniffling, which only confirmed my suspicion.Â  But I think the writer of the episode ([BJ Novak](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1145983/), aka “Ryan” himself) meant for it to be obvious that Ryan was experimenting with the nose candy.Â  And to answer the tvguide blogger’s question, yes, I think it will spell problems for him with corporate in the future.Â  He’s really been on my nerves lately, but in a good way, he is fun to watch and be annoyed with.Â  Now with his drug problem and the fact that his ‘perfect life’ facade is starting to crack, I feel badly for him.Â  It’s been fun to watch his transformation from temp to corporate bigwig, and along the way, he’s always been kind of a jerk, not a very likable person at all.Â  But that’s what is so great about the Office – as the tvguide blogger says, “The OfficeÂ is a terrific show because most of its comedy is rooted in real human behavior (no matter how exaggerated)…” – I couldn’t agree more!

### Comments

**Jamiahsh**thanks for sharing.. I will have to remember to read the blog.

# Parenthood

After all this piÃ±ata talk (found the Ã± symbol!), we had to pop in the movie [Parenthood](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098067/) the other night.Â  Along with the hilarious piÃ±ata scene (ok, now I am over-using the Ã± a little bit), I had actually forgotten how entertaining this movie really is.Â  It’s a really good blend of comedy and drama, and it’s not just another silly comedy – it actually has a valuable life lesson.Â  I highly recommend it to anyone who has kids, but I do not recommend it for the whole family since it’s rated PG13 and can actually be somewhat crude at points.Â  It has *great* directing and acting andÂ 2 academy award nominations to boot.

The movie revolves around the Buckman family – elderly, empty-nesters (sort-of) and their 4 grown children and their families who are all facing regular life problems of their own.Â  [Steve Martin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000188/) plays Gil, a man whose own overused stress responses to everyday life are mirrored in his son, and that situation only stresses him out further!Â  He is such a worry-wart that he has lost all ability to enjoy regular life and its trials and tribulations, and my favorite part of the movie is when he realizes this; thanks to the wise, if confused, words of his very elderly grandmother.Â  This scene is hilarious and heartwarming at the same time, and if you’re anything like me (someone who tends to be a worrywart, sweats theÂ small things), a movie like this really helps to keep the small bumps of life in perspective.

Watching this movie again as a parent made me appreciate it so much more than I appreciated seeing it as a teenager.Â  Again, I’d really recommend it to any parent, and if you’ve seen it already, I’d say try it again if it’s been awhile.Â  That’s what I did, and I would have to say that it’s now one of my favorite movies!

### Comments

**taylhis**I highly recommend seeing it again as an adult if you saw it as a kid and have kids now... not sure if a bachelor like yourself would appreciate all the humor while having to put up with its sometimes crudeness. What movie did you mean to get?  
**derek**It's been a long time since I've seen this one. Not sure I want to see it again though. This reminds me that I saw the title of a movie in the library that I hadn't seen in years and *did* want to see again so I put it on reserve. The problem was I didn't read the description and it turned out to be a different movie with the same title. Sigh.

# Blankie Woes

I think 8 is too old for a blankie.Â  I mean, it’s ok to have one at that age, but only if it doesn’t interfere with daily life.Â Â On February 19, IÂ made a post in my blog about the same subject – the post is called Blankies.Â  It’s funny to read that post now and see how far we’ve come, yet we’ve also gone no where on this issue at the same time.Â Â My 8-year-oldÂ daughterÂ has this raggedy blankie that goes everywhere with her…Â  well, that’s not accurate – it would if it could, but I put the kabosh on that long ago.Â  It got so bad that if we didn’t remember it to go out to eat or walmart or somewhere simple like that, the whole family would pay the price.Â  So, probably about a year ago now, I said, that’s it, blankie stays home.Â  I got tired of the liability involved also.Â  If we brought it to a restaurant or anywhere for that matter and it got dirty, I would have to wash it immediately when we got home or else it wouldn’t be ready for bed time that night, and my daughter would put up a huge fuss.Â  Now it’s gotten to the point where I’m worried it won’t make it through the wash in one piece.Â  Heck, it’s barely in one piece as it is.Â

A few weeks ago, I said, it’s time for the blankie to stay upstairs.Â  It’s only for bed and that’s it.Â  My daughter would bring it down in the morning, then she’d leave for school all day, and I got tired of tripping over it while doing housework.Â  She hasn’t been listening to that rule very well…Â  and old habits die hard, I guess.Â  The other day, she brought it downstairs and left it on the couch where little sister came and sat on it.Â  Problem was, little sister had just wet the bed, so needless to say, blankie needed a wash.Â  Somehow, I did not find out about this until bedtime that night, when a huge fuss was made about blankie not being available for bedtime.Â  I was not about to do a load of laundry at 10 at night, especially on a Sunday, which is technically (though it never works out this way with a family of 5 almost 6 and 3 of them little kids), my day off laundry.Â  Not only that, but the blankie would not have been ready for at least an hour anyway, and it was already bedtime.Â  There was much struggle and lots of tears, but she did finally spend a night without her beloved blankie.Â  And guess what?Â  She survived unscathed!

A few weeks ago, she had a sleepover for girl scouts.Â  The rules were, bring a sleeping bagÂ or a blanket, so she planned on bringing her blankie, which is holey, threadbare, and of no use when it comes to keeping someone warm.Â  Not only that, but she is at a good age for kids to start making fun of her for something like that, and both my husband and I know from experience that kids do not forget things easily!Â  She has a really nice sleeping bag that she’s never actually gotten to use at a sleepover yet, so we convinced her to just bring that…Â  or so we thought.Â  She packed her own overnight bag, and I didn’t think to check for contraband.Â  The next day when I unpacked the overnight bag, I found the stowaway blankie.Â  I felt so duped.

Ironically, as I’m writing this very post, my husband came downstairs and said, “Taylor can’t find her blankie.Â  She is really upset about it and crying.”Â  It was downstairs today, even though it wasn’t supposed to be, so I know I had to add it to my huge load of laundry to bring upstairs…Â  I told him to pass the message to Taylor that if I find it down here again, it will be gone forever because I am so sick of the whole situation.Â  And I haven’t done anything with it yet,Â honest, tempting as it may be.Â  Don’t get me wrong, I’m not mean or cruel, and I don’t have a problem with kids needing a comfort item, even at 8.Â  But when that item interferes with daily life, and one cannot function without it, then I believe it’s time for a change.Â  She should hope Dad orÂ I don’t find the blankie first – we are pretty fed up with the situation and cannot guarantee the safety of the blankie should we come across it!

### Comments

**Jamiahsh**Yeah, Rerun must be the forgotten Van Pelt brother. He has come up in a few of the newer Peanuts specials that are mediocre at best.... nothing like the traditional Charlie Brown Christmas or The Great Pumpkin. Did you know that Snoopy has a brother, Spike who actually was seen in many of Schultz' scripts?  
**taylhis**I was looking at wikipedia to find out how old Linus is, and that's where I found out that Rerun is Lucy and Linus' little brother. Funny, I always thought he was on What's Happening... ;) Oh yeah, and I don't deny that children need security, I just think that it should be found in less tangible ways... especially if the tangible security object is actually upsetting them most of the time!  
**derek**Hmm. Got a point there with Lucy and Linus. There is another character in the strip that I confused for Linus for awhile. His name was Rerun. I still think Linus was older than six though. That's the age Rerun seems to be if not a little older.  
**justj**In some of the comic strips Linus was in school. He started school after Charlie Brown and Lucy, and before Sally. Somehow in the later years, he was in the same class as Charlie Brown. Now I realize that Charlie Brown was a blockhead, and Linus was very intelligent, but I still wonder did Linus move up or Charlie Brown down? So for the blanket, Linus had have been at least 6 at a time he was still carting it around. Don't know what to tell you about your specific problem. I still have one daughter with a Bunny Blanket!!. She does not however, carry it all over. Security is something we need, even as adults.  
**taylhis**Michael Keaton made him give it up cuz he felt he was too old for it, I think. I got the idea somewhere that Linus is supposed to be 3. He is younger than the others cuz he is Lucy's little bro. Pretty wise though. I looked him up on wikipedia and found answers of either 7 or 8 for his age, but being a comic strip character, I don't think it was ever really defined for sure.  
**Jamiahsh**Or... if you count a recent production of YAGMCB.... 30 (actor playing Linus).... just kidding. Not sure.... Started watching Mr. Mom the other night on TV with the little boy and his "Woobie." I forget what made him give it up.  
**derek**We can just call her Linus, as in the Peanuts (Schultz **hated** that title). Those characters were around what? 11 or 12? Old enough for Charlie to be in love with that Little Red-Haired Girl...

# Here He Is!!!

My new nephew looks totally adorable, so I had to share his picture:

Ryan Timothy



### Comments

**jamiahsh**Awwww.... he's adorable and looks healthy.

# Spring is in the Air = BABIES!!!

CONGRATULATIONS to my sister in Illinois, who gave birth to a healthy 8 lb. 15 oz. baby boy today!!!Â  I can’t wait to see pictures of the little darling, and I will post them when I get them (HINT HINT – no, just kidding, I know you have much more important things to do right now then to worry about sending pictures)Â  I just wish I could hold him!Â  And Congratulations to Austin on becoming a big brother – it’s an important job buddy; I know you’ll be a great one!Â  Welcome, Ryan Timothy!

Other baby news – our kids’ babysitter’s cat had kittens the other day.Â  Look how unbelievably cute they are:

See if you can count ’em – makes a good picture puzzle, doesn’t it?Â  There are 6 – the little orange one kinda blends in with the towel – he’s unique!

My daughter’s teacher had her baby, and my two cousins also had their babies, which means 3 of my grandmother’s 4 expected great-grandchildren for this year are here already!Â  I am the last one standing 

Seriously, I feel left out, being the only one left pregnant out of all the women I knew who were expecting.Â  I am ecstatic that all the babies are healthy and thriving though – that is truly something to be thankful for!Â  For the most part, I love being pregnant, though I have to say this one is the most difficult pregnancy yet in some ways.Â  Also the easiest in some ways too, so it’s not all bad…Â  But my feet are killing me constantly…Â  I feel like I can’t stand for more than 10-15 minutes at a time, and with a toddler and 2 other little kids to care for, that is a tough feeling to have.Â  Plus I’m exhausted much of the time, and have terrible heartburn a lot…Â  all this and 3 months to go, not to mention the fact that the weather is only getting nicer, then it will get really hot and then I’ll just be miserable.Â  I hate not having the energy or the desire to go outside to enjoy these nice days…Â  it makes me feel guilty, especiallyÂ becauseÂ it means my toddler can’t enjoy them with me.Â Â Is it mean for her to be couped up in the house with me on gorgeous daysÂ like today?Â  She doesn’t seem to mind though, and we do play together lots while I’m sitting down, so it can’t be all bad…Â  I just tell myself that in August I will have much more energy and time to enjoy the weather.Â  It’s hard to imagine now, but some of the fatigue and aches and pains will lift, I HOPE!

### Comments

**derek**Just have one shipped out here- UPS ground will do fine. :P Just kidding. No pets allowed here where I live. Eventually I would like to have a couple of cats again.  
**taylhis**Absolutely not. Would you like one?  
**Pregnant Celebrities » Spring is in the Air = BABIES!!!**[...] unknown wrote an interesting post today onHere’s a quick excerpt15 oz. baby boy today!!! I canâ€™t wait to see pictures of the little darling, and I will post them when I get them (HINT HINT - no, just kidding, I know you have much more important things to do right now then to worry about sending … [...]  
**jamiahsh**Will you be in line for one of the kittens?

# Holy Regrettable Cooking Show, Batman!

For our date night tonight, we decided to attend the much hyped cooking show sponsered by our local newspaper.Â  Maybe that explains why it was so hyped right there – being sponsered by the newspaper = lots of free advertising, and since I read the paper every day, maybe it was drilled into my head that this thing would be fun.Â  Was I ever wrong.

It began when we arrived only 10 minutes before the show started, and every seat was full.Â  It was held in the high school gym, which means we now had to find seats in the bleachers and squeeze past everyone else – pregnancy bump and all.Â  I was so close to turning around and leaving right then and there; the fact that I didn’t was my second mistake after buying the tickets to attend the thing in the first place.Â  Apparently our local high school has no air conditioning, because the 1500 or so people who were crammed into the gym were all fanning themselves with their free cookbooks.Â  Which brings me to another reason why I thought this thing would be such great fun.Â  The tickets were $10 / person, then there were coupons in the paper for $3 off, which brings each ticket to $7.Â  They advertised a “bag full of samples, goodies, and free cookbooks” to every attendee, along with a chance to win lots of pretty cool door prizes.Â  The sample bag was alright – no complaints there.Â  The “choosing which wine with dinner” wheel made a great fan to combat the heat, I must say, and I’m not the only one who thought so – most of the 1500 sardines in attendence were using it as such.Â  But on the way into the show, apparently that’s when they handed out the doorprize entry blank and the free can of chili sauce, and somehow (maybe it was my panic when I saw the crowd we’d have to conquer to find a seat) I missed getting either handout.Â  So, here we were, sitting on the bleachers packed in like sardines in 100Â°+ heat, and I’ve just found a way to cut our chances of winning a doorprize *in half*.Â  Even though we were a little on the late side, that actually turned out to be a good thing because by the time we bumped and stumbled into our seats (ie, the square foot of space each person was allowed for their person, legs, knees, pregnancy bumps etc.), the “show” was ready to begin, thank goodness.Â  Except it became clear that once the show began, it was not going to pick up pace.Â  It was a woman on a stage making recipes (she was there to do 8 of them she said!) so far away that you couldn’t see anything she was doing.Â  Her “jokes” were lame, and she barely had a personality.Â  So now, this was hot, boring, uncomfortable for my aching body, and my chances of winning a cool grill are like 1 in 1500 instead of 2 in 1500?Â  Forget being polite or wasting money.Â  Our time is so much more important; especially with 3.5 kids.Â  We bumped and stumbled our way out of there, same way we got in, mumbled our apologies for stepping on people, and didn’t look back.Â  We fled the cooking show.

So that brings me to the Batman reference in the title of this post.Â  When we went to pick up the kids at the babysitter’s after the cooking show debacle, we went in her laundry room to check out the 2-day-old kittens…Â  all of a sudden, screams erupted.Â  I’m normally not a screamer, really more of a gasper when I get startled, but the babysitter and her daughter and my daughters were ahead of me in the laundry room and saw a bat.Â  Their screams made me scream – I’m not afraid of a little Ohio brown bat, I swear, but apparently screaming is contagious.Â  So both of our husbands come running, and hers goes for a broom.Â  Mine respects how sensitive I am about animals, so he asked for a bowl and was going to capture it.Â  So they open the door, only to find the mommy cat had beaten the babysitter’s husband to the murder of the bat.Â  She devoured it whole, and there was really nothing left for me to be sad about, so I pretended it didn’t happen, took pictures of the really cute kittens, and left.Â  What a night!

### Comments

**derek**Meh. I don't need no cooking tips. Instant meals, frozen pizzas, hamburgers and hot dogs for me! What do you mean I just burned the water? :D  
**taylhis**jj - I don't think it would have been fun even if it were free. Picture Pampered Chef x 1000. No interactive cooking, no tasting, and really hot and crowded. Something I will stay away from in the future... jam - Did your sister make it out of the cooking show unscathed? Did she win anything? Ask her if Chris won anything! I know I didn't, since I wasn't even entered. We too had a bat in our house. Got it out alive. My cat wasn't very quick to get it - Charity wanted a piece of it though! The babysitter's cat had kittens to protect, plus she must have been hungry.  
**justj**Bats and cats don't get along too well. Cats make better pets though. I'm glad I didn't take time out of my day to go to the cooking show. I thought about it, but would only have gone if it had been free.  
**jamiahsh**WOW!!!!! My sister also went to the cooking show. I had a bat fly in my bedroom years ago... woke up, opened my door, let it fly out, and let someone else deal with it. Never saw it again.

# Shaken Gang Syndrome

I am a current events junkie, so of course I’ve been following the recent story of the earthquake in southern Illinois.Â  This earthquake was pretty strong; so strong, that tremors were felt as far away as large cities like Chicago, Indianapolis, and even Atlanta, Georgia.

Another recent headline in the news lately is the rash of gun violence in the city of Chicago.Â  Seems the previous weekend saw 36 people shot in the city,Â 9 of them fatally.Â  [Click here](http://www.cnn.com/2008/CRIME/04/21/chicago.shootings.ap/index.html) for that story.Â  Since they’re saying that the midwest basically has not stopped shaking since the the earthquake last Friday, let me offer up a possible explanation for this phenomena:Â  Shaken Gang Syndrome.

Sure, the gangs in Los Angeles can handle earthquakes without batting an eye, but it’s not something that people in the midwest have had to adjust to.Â  Maybe the instability of the earth’s crust contributes to people feeling emotionally unstable, and this is illustrated with rising violence and civil unrest.

All jokes aside, let’s hope this weekend’s skyrocketing violent crime rate was an isolated incident in Chicago.Â  The Chicago PD would like you to note that for the month of March, the violent crime rate was down by a whopping 1% compared to March 2007, so that is promising news!

### Comments

# A Day of Mini

Finally the snow has stopped (quick, where is some wood for knocking?!?Â  Our snowblower has been put away, which is enough of a jinx, but add a comment like the above, and I’m asking for trouble!), and the weather is finally being cooperative enough for some outdoor fun.Â  So this weekend had us taking in the first mini-golf game of the season with friends.Â  Unless, of course, you count the mini-golfing we did in Florida in January, but I don’t count that since in Florida the mini-golf is more like a distraction to the lizards hopping around the course and the captive alligators you can feed at ourÂ favorite mini-golf place inÂ Orlando.

I did not do very well this weekend.Â  Of the four of us actually playing (the kids futzed about the course), I came in last.Â  I will blame it on my pregnancy bump – it’s getting quite large lately and is throwing off my balance, not to mention my stamina.Â  I was distracted by looking for a bench to sit on after every hole.Â Â Yeah, that’s it, I can’t mini-golf while pregnant.Â  Nevermind all the practice I got on my computer this winter (see previous mini-golf posts of mine where I have links toÂ (mostly) cool computer versions of mini-golf), I justÂ can’t mini-golf while pregnant.Â  Oh, just kidding, I’ve done it before, it’s no big deal and not that much different, just gotta swing around the bump.Â  I just lost becauseÂ I was rusty, and I didn’t take my time putting.Â  Besides that, my husband did extra well this time, and he usually comes in last, so last place had to go to someone.Â  I don’t really care if I win or lose, for me, it’s just aboutÂ learningÂ what the ball does in various situations, gaining that experience, and most importantly, havingÂ fun!Â  I did win the mini-bowling we played afterwardsÂ though…Â  I really want to get one of those for my basement.Â  I’ve always liked bowling, and here is a way the physically impaired (as I am for a few months here) canÂ still enjoy participating in the sport.Â  Pipe dreams, of course…Â  if I had that kind of money or space in my basement, I could think of a dozen better things to put down there…Â  mostly animals…

ButÂ anyway, IÂ looked for cool mini-golf shots on youtube, and I actually didn’t see any…Â  just a lot more people worse at mini-golf than I am who don’t even realize it.Â  But I did come across this pretty cool contraption at a mini-golf course in Colorado, check it out:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Who a dis Tara person? Is she a married womans who a like Wife Swap trading on TV box?  
**weather » Blog Archive » A Day of Mini**[...] Tara wrote an interesting post today onHere’s a quick excerptand the weather is finally being cooperative enough for some outdoor fun. So this weekend had us taking in the first mini-golf game of the season with friends. Unless, of course, you count the mini-golfing we did in Florida in January, … [...]  
**taylhis**Didn't find any blue glass stones... yet. :) I really did want to do a theater bowling league... I was thinking in the fall after we have the baby... still thinking about it, though it's more expensive than I thought. It would be x2 for us + babysitting = ugh. Can't put a price on fun though... we'll see come Aug - the bowling alley is supposed to contact me.  
**justj**Or was it the keeping half an eye on the small one in the group? How many blue stones did you find in pockets after you got home? For some reason they really are taken by those pieces of glass. Had lots of fun, even though I didn't win at mini-golf or mini-bowling.  
**You Can Golf » Blog Archive » A Day of Mini**[...] unknown wrote an interesting post today onHere’s a quick excerptSo this weekend had us taking in the first mini-golf game of the season with friends. Unless, of course, you count the mini-golfing we did in Florida in January, but I donâ€™t count that since in Florida the mini-golf is more like a … [...]  
**jamiahsh**I love to bowl.... I still think your league idea would be terrific

# No Country For Old Men... When There's Yet ANOTHER Fog Day!!!

We stayed up late watching the Oscar winning movie, [“No Country for Old Men”](http://imdb.com/title/tt0477348/) last night, so when the phone rang at 6 am this morning, my husband was overjoyed about the fog delay.Â  I did not hear the phone at 6, nor did I hear the follow-up call at 8 saying school was cancelled for the day.Â  I was up by 8:30, since that is the time we have our alarm set and my biological clock won’t let me sleep past then for fear the alarm won’t work and we’ll be late for school.Â  My husband was shutting off the alarm when I said, “We can’t sleep too long cuz Disney has a doctor appointment at 9:30.Â  Look at all those delays on the tv for Toledo.Â  Wonder how we got spared?”Â  Turns out, we did not, I just didn’t hear the phone ringing and Hubby was wondering why I was taking it so well that we couldn’t sleep in after all.Â  I don’t understand why it is that every time we have a doctor appointment scheduled for the morning, we have either a school delay or cancellation, meaning we can’t sleep in even if we wanted to.Â  And of course on these days, the kids always sleep in, whereas on the weekends, they’re up at their usual 7am wake-up-for-school time.Â  So now, they have yet ANOTHER day they have to make up in the summer, which brings them to July by now?Â  Dunno, I’ve lost track.

And today’s fog cancellation means we had to drag the entire family into the doctor’s office for our 18 month-old’s checkup – which did not go well.Â  Remember how I said the kids were going to sleep in today?Â  That means our 3-year-old, who is a stinker anyway, was not ready to get up, so she screamed from the time she was dragged out of bed until we got called into the doctor’s office.Â  So of course, the chain reaction was set into motion.Â  Seeing big sis so upset made Disney upset, and now she was screaming about everything the poor nurse and doctor were doing to her.Â  All painless stuff too that normally would not have been a problem – SCREAM, measure her head (46.7 cm), SCREAM, measure her length (32.5 in. – tall for her age), SCREAM, weigh her (22 lbs. 14 oz. – normal for her age, but a little on the skinny side because she is long), SCREAM, look into her ears, SCREAM, have her walk across the room to Mom and Dad…Â  well, actually, walk to big sis Taylor since she was upset with Mom and Dad for being accomplices to all the other horrors in the doctor’s office.Â  When it was finally over, she was better, and in the end, she didn’t want to leave because she was really happy with a toy they had in the waiting room she was playing with while I was making her next torture date, err appointment.Â  The good news is that Disney is exhaused from being so upset all morning, so I should get my nap today while she takes one…Â  hopefully.

Also, staying up late last night to watch the Oscar winning movie was regrettable.Â  I just didn’t get it.Â  I think I understood the movie, but not why it won 4 academy awards and got nominated for a bunch more.Â  I liked other Coen Brothers movies too –[Fargo](http://imdb.com/title/tt0116282/) isÂ really good,Â but this one was not very good in my opinion, and my husband agreed.Â  Just a story about a man who stumbles upon a crime scene and finds a ton of money, then he spends the rest of the movie trying to outrun the psychopathÂ who is chasing him down for theÂ money.Â  I was pleasantly surprised to see [Tommy Lee Jones](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000169/) in this movie, because I didn’t know he was going to Â be in it and I always enjoy his work – from Two-Face in the 3rd Batman movie, [Batman Forever](http://imdb.com/title/tt0112462/)Â to [Men in Black](http://imdb.com/title/tt0119654/), to [Volcano](http://imdb.com/title/tt0120461/) and [The Fugitive](http://imdb.com/title/tt0106977/), he’s a pretty good actor and always fun to watch – even in this movie, which I would officially classify as a waste of time.Â  Sure, it wasn’t nearly as bad as the other stinkers I’ve seen lately, like [the Night Listener](http://imdb.com/title/tt0448075/) or [Doomsday](http://imdb.com/title/tt0483607/), the standard bad movies that I judge all bad movies by, but that’s only because it wasn’t as boring as the former and not as gory as the latter.Â  Academy award winning movies are always a hit-or-miss as far as I’m concerned.Â  I used to write them off, but when I started giving them a chance, I’ve actuallyÂ enjoyed some, such as the aforementioned Fargo and[As Good as it Gets](http://imdb.com/title/tt0119822/), to name a few.Â  Now that I think of it, Coen brothers’ movies are kind of hit and miss also.Â [Ladykillers](http://imdb.com/title/tt0335245/) was just ok, Fargo was very good,[Big Lebowski](http://imdb.com/title/tt0118715/) was average,Â I didn’t care much for [O Brother Where Art Thou](http://imdb.com/title/tt0190590/), and I’ll have to see [Raising Arizona](http://imdb.com/title/tt0093822/) again since it’s been awhile, and I didn’t realize it was a Coen brothers movie.

I think I will skip the other Oscar winners from 2007 – seemed like a slow year.Â  I might be more open to nominees from other years past though…Â  a friend borrowed us [Walk the Line](http://imdb.com/title/tt0358273/), the Johnny Cash biopic.Â  I’m not a huge [Reese Witherspoon](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000702/) fan, but I do like Johnny Cash.Â  Been trying to get Hubby to watch it with me, though I’m as yet unsuccessful even though he admittedÂ we should have watched it last night instead of No Country for Old Men.Â  Oh, well, now we have some Oscar-winning-film watching experience under our belt forÂ future reference.Â  YES – the baby is down for a nap, think I’ll join her…Â  and a side effect of the fog day, actually a GOOD one – no need to wake from my nap by 3:30 to pick up kids!Â  Now if only the older 2 can settle down for an hour or more to give me peace and quiet…

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Walk the Line is pretty good...and I believe Joaquin Phoenix did his own singing. He was also good in Ladder 49... kind of a downer.

# Retractable Sharpie Update!

RECAP:Â  My favorite kitchen tool (can you tell I’m not a gourmet cook?), my retractable permanent marker aka Sharpie, went missing.

UPDATE:Â  Just when I had given up and assumed that my toddler had thrown it in the garbage, it turned up in the unlikliest of places (of course).Â  It was in the laundry room, in the cabinet next to the parrot’s cage where we keep all his toys and stuff – go figure.Â  Wonder how it got there?Â  Sadly, it was left un-retracted, so it is of no use to me anymore.Â  But at least we have closure and it had a proper burial.Â  No more wondering which kid was going to turn up with permanent markings all over them.Â  And, a thoughtful reader of my blog was kind enough to surprise me with a 2-pack of replacement *COLOR* retractable Sharpies – thanks Mom ðŸ˜‰

### Comments

**taylhis**No, I didn't - that was hilarious though!!!!! :)  
**derek**Did you check to see what the parrot may have written about you with it? :P

# Back in the Office

Well, friends, our favorite show The OfficeÂ is back on tv after the awful hiatus that was the Hollywood writer’s strike.Â  The first new episode in months actually aired last Thursday, but since it was our anniversary, I was busy and also had other things to write about.Â  Last week’s episode was funny as usual, but probably the least funny Office episode in my opinion.Â  But put it in perspective; I’m such a huge fan of the show that that is not really a put-down, more of a note, really.Â  Either the writers were a bit rusty last week, or maybe moving the action from the office and into Michael’s home subtracted some hilarity.Â  Either way, have no fear, after last night’sÂ uproarious episode, our favorite show is back on track!

First things first – addressing the rumors.Â  I had heard that Michael and Jan’s relationship was going to get rocky, but I was surprised to hear that they had already broken up by last night’s episode.Â  No long, drawn-out sit-com drama, barely a word about it…Â  which is something I really like about this show.Â  It’s less of a soap opera than many sit-coms let themselves evolve into.Â  Even with its continuing plot story lines from week to week, The Office is still all about the comedy, of which it has plenty.Â  So, if the rumors of an Office spin-off are true, is it possible it will revolve around GodZillary herself – the ice-queen Jan Levinson ~~Gould~~ ?Â  I would rather see it involve someone who is not on the regular show since I can’t think of anyone I’d like to see leave Dunder Mifflin.Â  Jan will be missed, but if she is leaving the show anyway because she and Michael broke up, then they might as well make the spin-off about her.Â  And on to rumor #2 – something ‘big’ was going to happen between Pam and Jim; one of four things – they would get engaged, start sleeping together, break-up, or elope.Â  Well, the big thing (asÂ predicted fromÂ the beginning of the episode by my hubby – way to go honey!) was none of the above, but let’s just say it is a positive step in their relationship, and for that we are glad.Â  No one wants to see these 2 break-up.Â  They are the cutest tv couple since Ross and Rachael of Friends fame, and the writers beat that relationship into the ground with all the back and forth nonsense, so thank goodness that isn’t happening to Pam and Jim.

Now on to the plot synopsis of last night’s episode.Â  After finding out that the catalog model who was supposed toÂ be Michael’s soulmateÂ met an untimely demise, Michael demands and makes it a work order that everyone in the office suggests a woman for him to date.Â  Pam sets him up with her landlord, and in pure Michael Scott fashion, he is obliviously (and hilariously) rude to her on their date.Â  Meanwhile, Kevin and Andy spear-head a meeting with the CEOs of the Scranton Office Park in order to get their parking spots back, which have been stolen by the construction crew.Â  I hope you caught one of the best lines of the show, delivered so quickly by Andy it might have been easy to miss:Â  when asked where Michael was at the office park meeting, Andy replies, “He had an unforseen prior commitment.”Â  Such is an example of the subtle yet sidesplitting humor that has come to be the backbone of the show.

Last night’s episdoe did not disappoint – the show is back, and I have my Office fix…Â  at least until May when we have to deal with the summer tv hiatus   
Until next week…

### Comments

**jamiahsh**YES.... very good episode. I liked the Wendy's jab. I say the writers skip the hiatus... but presumably not.

# Life Nonetheless

I got to do something so cool today – it really made my day.Â  It’s so nice outside, so I was looking for a place to walk with my youngest-for-now, and we decided upon the pet store.Â  Not that we need a specific place to walk, but I always like to have a mission.Â  So anyway, we walked up to the pet store, and they had little baby gerbils.Â  I am talking newborn pinkie gerbils even smallerÂ than a person’s pinkie.Â  I asked the worker how old they were, and she said about a week, I couldn’t believe how small they were.Â Â Some were just beginning to get fur but still had their eyes closed.Â  It was amazing to me how the Mommy gerbils in the cage just ran around, business as usual, kicking up the shavings in the cage right onto the pinkies.Â  I noted this to the worker, and she said yes, they aren’t really as fragile as they look.Â  She came over to see them, and she goes, “wait, there are new ones in there that weren’t there last night!”Â  So then she took one of the less than 24-hours-old gerbils out and let me hold it!

It was SO cute – well, cute isn’t even the right word because it was so teeny.Â  It flipped over onto its side in my hand and just laid there, too exhausted to try to right itself.Â  I loved holding it, but it was SO teeny and fragile-seeming, that I was afraid it was just going to up and die in my hand so I gave it back.Â  But it was amazing to me that life begins so small.Â  Something so small and still so precious – it is life, nonetheless.

### Comments

# I Passed!!!

Yesterday I did something I’ve never done before – I passed a 3 hour glucose challenge!Â  I haven’t had a gestational diabetes-free pregnancy since my first-born 8 Â½ years ago!Â  It feels really good to know that I can eat whatever I want for the next few months without having to worry about pairing proteins with carbs and cutting out desserts; I can hardly believe it.Â  I don’t have to go andÂ speak with the endocrinologist orÂ the dietician, and I won’t be taking non-stress tests at the hospital.Â  Most importantly, I won’t have to inject my body with insulin – something with which my husband and I were not very comfortable anyway.Â  And since gestational diabetes often leads to large babies, I am curious to see what this one will weigh.Â  The previous 2 babies were both 8 lbs. 12 oz, and my first baby (no diabetes) was only 7 lbs. 2 oz.Â  Of course, she was a little bit early and is still pretty small for her age to this day.Â  But, I just wanted to share the news because I’m very excited that I have a few less things to worry about, and I know I had people waiting to hear the results of my test.

### Comments

**derek**There is still the chance that the doctors were wrong and a boy will pop out instead! :) I read a story about that recently. It's cool that it went well.  
**jamiahsh**AWWWWW....:)  
**taylhis**You are the sweetest... don't think it has to do with me though. Maybe it's a sign the baby will be sweet, gentle, and nice since she is not wreaking havoc from the inside out like Sammie did! :)  
**Chris**Congratulations BESTY! This just proves that you keep getting more and more perfect! xoxoxo

# Alpha Dog

Saw the movie [Alpha Dog](http://imdb.com/title/tt0426883/) last night.Â  It wasn’t really my kind of movie, and the only reason I really enjoyed it is because it’s based on a true story…Â  and unlike manyÂ  movies which claim to be based upon true stories, this one was actually pretty accurate.

It’s about a spoiled rich kid named Johnny Truelove (based upon the real-life story of Jesse James Hollywood which is his real name, believe it or not) who is a drug dealer but because of his small size and tremendous influence, entices his friends to do his bidding for him.Â  A former childhood friend of his owes him money for drugs, and they are now enemies because of this and some other incidents.Â  So, Johnny happens across his nemesis’ younger brother, and he kidnaps him for ransom of the drug money owed.Â  Something goes awry, and the innocent teenager ends up dead, and after four years on the run and a few appearances on [America’s Most Wanted](http://www.amw.com/), Truelove/Hollywood is captured and now awaiting trial.

So-soÂ action movie, lots of violence and graphicÂ language, especially from the mouth of Justin Timberlake who isÂ surprisingly not a bad actor.Â  But I cringe for the little girls and their parents if there are any who watched this movie just because he was in it because some of the things that came out of his mouth…Â  whew!

And both my husband and I found it hard to believe that there is this kind of culture going on, whether in California or elsewhere, where entire families are caught up in the drug culture, parents and kids alike.Â  At one point in the movie, aÂ teenage girl goes to her mom for help because she is upset about the kidnapped “stolen boy” as they call him, and the mother turns her away, saying that she is x-ing (on the drug ecstasy) right now and can’t even understand what she’s saying if she wanted to.Â  Does this really happen?Â  Probably…Â  but it’s probably not as widespread or as well-masked as this film would have you believe.

Hubby and I agreed that the movie was entertaining, but it wouldn’t be a re-watcher for us.Â  And the only reason either one of us really enjoyed it is because it was so closely based on the true crime story what happened to the innocent 15-year-old victim Nick Markowitz.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**The Aristocats? I did not know Bob Saget was in that.... I thought it was a Disney cartoon about a bunch of cats.... Sorry, you are talking about The Aristocrats.... entirely different movie obviously.  
**Chris**Yes -- a movie like The Aristocrats. Which is an award winning critically acclaimed movie where you actually get to hear Bob Saget talk about... Ugh. I cannot even discuss it here. Yuck. Bob Saget? Ohh... Bob Saget.  
**taylhis**Check out what I found on the parental advisory on imdb: "Extreme profanity. The film holds the fourth highest total of most uses of the "f" word (369) in a feature length film, with the "f" word being used most times in a movie." That actually surprises me - it was very profane, but there have been movies that have actually offended me. There have been movies we've turned off because of the language, yet me made it through this one, supposedly the most f-bombs ever. Guess it just depends on the mood I was in, because I wouldn't have guessed it was the most ever... maybe one grows deaf to it after awhile - like a high school bus driver in the Chicago suburbs ;)  
**Chris**Yes. Sad story. A real look into how the world of drugs can quickly spiral out of control. I just cannot believe anyone talks like these people. Constantly calling each other F\*ING this and that. Referring to their girlfriends as B\*TCHES as if it is there name. Crazy.

# Hunger and Boredom

Took my 3-hour glucose “challenge” today, and since it was SO fun for me (sarcasm adundant), I thought I would spread some of the ‘cheer’ by giving you a run-down of what this medical test entails.

First, why do they call it a glucose challenge?Â  To provide extra motivation, maybe?Â  Whatever the reason, I think they should change the name because glucose challenge makes it sound like I was there to run a relay or something.Â  But the glucose challenge is quite the opposite.Â  It requires that you sit at the medical office for 3 hours and do nothing.Â  Literally.Â  Sure, you can read or sew or Sudoku, but you are not supposed to get out of your chair with the exception of donating a vial of blood every hour.Â  The test is given to pregnant women to determine whether or not they have gestational diabetes, which is when the pregnancy hormones block the body’s production of insulin, which will make blood sugar skyrocket and potentially lead to a large baby.Â  Since I’ve had the condition for 2 of my previous pregnancies, I just might be a glucose challenge expert by now.Â  My husband wanted to know why couldn’t I just skip the one hour test and go right for the 3 hour test since we both knew that I would fail it since I am craving sweets and I’ve failed my last twoÂ 1-hour tests.Â  (MAJOR chocolate malt craving the other night, by the way.Â  If I do have the diabetes, it will stink to have to fend off one of those cravings with sugar-free chocolate…Â  somehow it’s just not the same.)Â  The Dr. wasn’t down with skipping right to the 3 hour test though, so lucky me, I’ve had to do them both.

Sure enough, I failed my 1 hour, which is why I got to spend my whole day at the doctor’s office waiting to get poked with a needle today.Â  And that’s not even the funnest part.Â  They make you fast from 10pm the night before until whenever your test is over, which for me wasn’t until 1:30 this afternoon!Â  They were a little late on my last blood draw, and I was on the verge of wreaking havoc in the office when they finally called me in.Â  Luckily, my daughter had gone to school with the nurse’s daughter a few years ago, so she recognized me and noticed the desperate look in my eyes, otherwise I think they might have forgotten about me.Â  One more minute, and IÂ was going to carry out my plan to go to my car and scavenge for crumbs my kids left behind on the road trip to Illinois.Â  Luckily, it didn’t come to that, but asking a pregnant lady toÂ go without food for over 12 hours is a pretty brave thing to do!

I forgot to mention that for 3 days prior to the test, they put you onÂ a special diet.Â  I was like, oh great, here we go, but when I got the diet paperÂ home and looked at it, the dietÂ actually turned out to be the best part!Â  For 3 days, I wasÂ under *doctor’s orders* to load up on carbs, eat anything I wanted, and to *make sure* that I ate dessert with both lunch and dinner.Â  No problem, mission accomplished!

And a final note, before I take a nap, since they literally drained the energy from my body today in 3 separate installments…Â  they have a new flavor of the glucose drink you have to drink.Â  It used to be just orange, which tasted like orange pop, but today I was offered a cola flavored one also.Â  So I chose the new one because, what the heck, you only live once, and I’ve had the orange one more than a few times by now.Â  Which brings me to a question I have:Â  if there is 50g of dextrose in these little drinks, why don’t they taste better?Â  It’s not like they taste bad (the orange ones anyway), but shouldn’t something that is basically liquid sugar taste a little better?Â  I can think of probably about 50 things that would taste much better and have lots of sugar in them.Â  Why don’t they let me binge on candy and desserts before the glucose test instead of downing that drink?Â  And if I do have gestational diabetes, is it really the best thing for my body to be ingesting all this sugar just for them to test me?Â  And what do they need a whole vial of blood for every hour?Â  I am beginning to feel like someone’s science project!Â  I guess doctors know best, even though sometimes it’s hard (downright impossible for people like my husband!) to put your trust in them.Â  But back to my point…Â  if you ever have to take this test, I would stay away from the cola flavored glucose drink.Â  It’sÂ not very good, and every time I think about drinking it, I feel nauseous!Â  It reminds me of the ‘flat cola’ remedy myÂ mom recommended one time when I was sick as a kid.Â  I felt like I was going to throw up, even though I hadn’t, so she had heard somewhere that I should drink flat cola.Â  We just happened to have some in the house,Â so I tried it, promptly vomited everything up, and couldn’t look at cola for months.Â  And I still remember it.Â  SorryÂ Mom…Â  that one just didn’t work ðŸ˜‰Â

### Comments

**sugar free chocolate**the sugar free chocolates is more tasteful as compared with the other chocolates,it is used to provide making with the milk and other calories.  
**Diabetes » Blog Archive » Hunger and Boredom**[...] Continue Reading  Posted on: Thursday, April 17, 2008 at 2:43 pm  Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site. [...]  
**derek**They just love to torture people, don't they? :) Few know how to do it better than hospital personnel! :P I wonder if they just want it to be dextrose? Regular pop uses fructose (high-fructose corn syrup), a different sugar. 39g of it typically, though Jones Soda uses 48g of "inverted cane sugar" instead, whatever that is. Do they put the sugar in upside down? :o  
**justj**It sounds like they changed that test in 16+ years. I remember Sarah downing orange juice with sugar added before the blood test. Plus 2 slice of white toast with 2 tablespoons of grape jelly. I tried it once, just to be a good husband, and I couldn't get through that much jelly.  
**Hunger and Boredom by diabetes.MEDtrials.info**[...] continues at taylhis brought to you by diabetes.medtrials.info and [...]

# Fun With Animals

Came across a few really cute animal-themed emails lately, so I thought I’d share.Â  The first one is for people who don’t have a dog or just have a very disobedient one.Â  Enter a command in the text box and the cute doggie will do it.Â  Try ‘kiss’.

Â [swf]http://www.idodogtricks.com/site\_template\_v10.swf[/swf]

Then there’s this video, which features the winning combo ofÂ a babyÂ and a dog, awww…Â  [Click here](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/04/childproofdrawer.wmv)Â to see “Childproof Drawer”.

Finally, I got these really cute pictures in an email a few weeks ago…Â  Seems a mommy tiger lost her cubs and “adopted” these piglets to take care of.Â  See the ‘pork chops':

[Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/04/pork-chops.jpg) [](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/04/pork-chops1.jpg)

### Comments

**derek**Nice interactive video. No ham in this tiger's diet apparently... It's cool that the tiger could "adopt" the piglets.

# Pinata Pilgrimage

I didn’t blog allÂ weekend because we made a few-hundred-miles trek to the Chicago suburbs for my nephew’sÂ 5th birthday party.Â  We stuffed ourselves silly over there because as much as we love where we live, the restaurant choice can grow kind of boring.Â  So, being in a different area had us stopping for food every chance we got, but by the end of the weekend,Â we were a wee bit regretful…Â  I think that midnight case of White Castles are what did us in.Â  Since there aren’t any White Castles near us, we had to stock up and buy aÂ whole case since they reheat pretty well.Â  We stopped there on the way out of the area, and then we had to smell them all the way home – yuck.Â  They taste good but don’t smell so great, especially when it’s time for bed…Â  So, as you can see, we did fit in a bit of culture on our trip.Â  For those who aren’t familiar with White Castle, it’s a fast food chain found in the midwest that specializes in mini-hamburgers, also known as “sliders”.Â  They aren’t just mini-hamburgers, though, they’re steam-grilled, and they have a very unique taste…Â  not to mention an, ahem, interesting side effect when you feed them to pets and small children.Â  I will not elaborate; let’s just say that my kids really like them, but the next day our noses were paying for it.

We also found time to stop at an ethnic grocery store for something my husband has been looking for called *Halva,* which is aÂ Middle EasternÂ dessert.Â  I had never tried it before, and I really like to try ethnic foods, so we picked some up.Â  It is pretty good!Â  The halva we got was actually from Macedonia, and though it tastes nothing like it, I would best describe its texture as that of the ‘astronaut’ ice cream.Â  You know, the freeze dried ice cream that they sell at space museums?

And to round out our cultural experience, my nephew had a pinataÂ at his birthday party.Â  Pardon my spelling it wrong, I can’t find the special nÂ with the tilday over it they use in the spanish alphabet.Â  So in my blog, it will be known as a pinata.Â  Just in case you are not familiar withÂ what a pinata entails, check out Wikipedia’s explanation:Â Â

*A succession of blindfolded, stick-wielding children try to break the piÃ±ata in order to collect the sweets (traditionally fruit, such as sugarcane) and/or toys inside of it. It has been used for hundreds of years to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas and Easter.*

Seems that Wikipedia figured out how to do the tilday…Â  but anyway, yes you read that right – **blindfolded, stick-wielding** **children!Â** Actually, it’s customary to use a baseball bat instead of a stick, yet oddly enough, I don’t think I’ve ever been part of a pinata party where a parent didn’t have to step in and break it open themselves – this one being no exception.Â  It went pretty well, though we did almost have a casualty – my nephew took his first whack at the pinata, and his dad had not cleared the area, so CRACK went the bat against the cell phone he was wearing…Â  but I guess all was well, especially since someone had talked them out of their original plan: giving a bunch of 5-year-olds an *aluminum* bat with which to whack at the pinata.Â  Thank goodness for the insight!Â  If you get a chance, you should check out the pinata scene in the movie [Parenthood](http://imdb.com/title/tt0098067/), it’s hilarious…Â  the kids at the party lose interest after not being able to get itÂ open, so the scene cuts to [Steve Martin](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000188/) beating the heck out of the thing as it lays on the floor.Â  Nothing like that at my nephew’s party, in fact, his pinata opened rather easily.Â  And when it did break open, there wasn’t the usual melee either…Â  the kids were actually quite orderly in picking up the pinata “guts”.Â  I was a little worried because the last time I was at a birthday party with a pinata, the kids allÂ piled in a heap on top of each other, and the kid at the bottom ended up with a bloody lip.

So, overall, great weekend, even if it lacked sleep – lots of driving and we didn’t get home until 3:30 in the morning!Â  And I have a few weeks to decide whether or not we will be brave enough to attempt a pinata at my daughter’s 4th birthday party…Â  maybe that will be enough time for her to forget that her cousin had one…

One thing is for sure, if we have a pinata, we will *not* have an aluminum bat on the premises!

### Comments

**derek**Bleah. Typos. I typed "two" when I meant to type "too"  
**jamiahsh**I will ask and find out and share.... it is HILARIOUS!!!!  
**derek**Do you know the user name it was posted under J? We could view all videos for that user to find it. L, the lower case Ã± is there two. It shows all the capital letters first and then all the lower case, so the Ã± is about two rows below the upper case Ã‘. I don't think I've been involved with a piÃ±ata since I was a kid!  
**taylhis**Hmmm, 'experience' eh? Was it good or bad? If you find the youtube, link me!  
**jamiahsh**We had a pinata experience last year for Alex's birthday. It was posted on you-tube and I do not know what it is under.  
**taylhis**It seems there is a function in wordpress that will allow us to write an N with the tilday - but only a capital one... oh well. On the toolbar you click for advanced toolbar, and then it's under the omega sign. Thanks for the pinata tips, justj. I am mulling doing one at Sammie's party, but I'm also hoping she'll forget she wants one. We just don't have an open space for it... My sister did it in her basement.  
**justj**Oh yes, I forgot to mention how I got the piÃ±ata to come out with the tilde on it. Well I cut and pasted the word from the Wiki site.  
**justj**Ok, on the piÃ±ata, this is what you need to do to avoid the parental involvement in breaking the thing at the party. You will need a sharp knife. Carefully punch perforations around the middle of the piÃ±ata before hanging it up. This should weaken it enough for the first hit or two to break it wide open. Also, the best stick to use is a wiffle ball bat. The original "wiffle" ball bat is made thin and of good plastic. It will break a piÃ±ata and not damage the little kids too much. Broom handles, baseball bats, and other sticks are much more dangerous. Good luck with that.

# Ernie the Klepto Take II

A couple of quick updates I have to post:

1.Â  After just one episode, yourÂ favorite new show and mine, “Secret Talents of the Stars” was CANCELLED!!!Â Â Just kidding.Â  At least about the favorite show part – this awful show *was* actually cancelled afterÂ airing just one episode, and we will never find out whoÂ wins.Â  Boo-hoo.Â  Probably would have been aÂ bigger disappointmentÂ to waste more time watching it than it will be not knowing which celebrity won.

2.Â  I did some research, and didn’t find anything about the Starburst commercial (see my Mediocrity post)Â and whether or not itÂ stars Steve Buscemi – just LOTS of speculation on the internet, no definite answers – but I watched the commercial again, and I no longer think it’s him.Â  Unless he’s found a way to age in reverse, that is.Â  But the actor in question definitely seems to be imitating him, and should probably look into getting a paid gig as a Buscemi impersonator, if he hasn’t already.Â  Sorry for the misinformation.

### Comments

**Busted Daily**He isn't Steve. This is who he is. http://busteddaily.com/categories/graham-funke/  
**jamiahsh**I swear, I did not read your post before I wrote mine about "Talents." :)

# Awesome Day

It may be cold and rainy outside, but the weather has not affected my emotional state inside!Â  I’ve had an awesome day!Â  It isÂ our ninth wedding anniversary today, and so far, the day has been just short of perfect.Â  The only thing that could make it better is if we could be together all day, but of course with 3.5 kids to support, it’s unrealistic on a weekday to take off work.Â  Besides, we were able to have a fun family day together yesterday in between the dental work and the tantrums of our 3-year-old.

Today, my husband has left love-note post-its all around the house for me to find.Â  He sent me a sweet e-card, and I really love the church sign he put on tangents.org of our wedding day.Â  My almost 18-month-old daughter even let me have a peaceful lunch today – I didn’t even have to interrupt my own lunch once to get her anything and usually I have to get up between 5-15 times!Â  Oh, wait, I did have 1 lunch “interruption”, but I wouldn’t even call it that.Â  The doorbell rang with the delivery of a gorgeous vase of flowers my husband sent me for our anniversary!Â  And lately, the smell of fresh flowers has been completely relaxing for me…Â  it must be the pregnancy.Â  I’ve always loved flowers, but lately they’re almost like a drug when I smell them!Â  So, walking past the eye and nose candy on the dining room table is also keeping my spirits high.Â  We were going to celebrate with a nice dinner and a night out, then come home and watch the first new Office episode in MONTHS,Â but the other day, we found out tonight is the monthly meeting for the board of a community agency with which we volunteer – wouldn’t you know April’s meeting had to be tonight!Â  But no matter…Â  we can still go out around the meeting, go to the meeting together, and in the age of VCR’s, computers, and all of that, we will find a way to catch the Office later.Â  So thanks to all the well-wishers who’ve written and called – we’ve had a wonderful day and we will see you next year at the big 10-year anniversary BASH!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Congrats L&C. Can't wait until the party next year. I did enjoy The Office. I too am watching reruns but did not have a hard time keeping up.... hilarious office party.  
**derek**Congrats from me too! To put up with C for all those years... :P Kidding! I'll skip The Office- I'm still watching season 2 (copied remaining DVDs to computer before returning) and I must say it's nice watching it with all the deleted scenes. Hopefully I can find season 3 to check out or rent.  
**justj**Congrats again. Too bad about the meeting. I know how much the two of you like "The Office". I'm glad your having a good day. And your husband a romantic. Who'd a thunk?

# Taylor, Teeth, and Toledo

Our poor little 8-year-old daughter, Taylor, was born on the short side of the genetic crapshoot when it comes to teeth.Â  The poor kid has cavities, teeth that are fused together, and other dental problems.Â  They wanted to do so much dental work on her that ourÂ small town dentist referredÂ us to the big city of Toledo to get it taken care of.Â  So, yesterday saw an all day excursion to Toledo so the poor kid could undergo some major dental work.Â  It actually went quite well; she handled everything like a trooper.Â  I’m sure the laughing gas and novacaine somewhat helped the pain, but when it was all said and done, she did freak out a little about all the blood.Â  After that whole ordeal, we wanted to make the day special for her, so we made a quick stop at the zoo between dental appointments.Â  We only had about an hour, so we didn’t get to see our favorite animals, but we did have time to check out the reptile house, which, crazily enough after all of our visits to the Toledo Zoo, we had never been in.Â  It was a typical reptile house, full of snakes, lizards, and frogs (even though they’re not reptiles, zoos always put them in the reptile house I’ve noticed), but what I really enjoyed was the crocodile.Â  I can’t tell you the last time I saw one of those, especially indoors.Â  It was huge, and unlike their cousins the alligators, crocodiles are not friendly nor docile.Â  They are very agressive animals, and you can almost see it on their faces.Â  The Toledo Zoo also has a Chinese alligator, and I was wondering if Chinese alligators are similair to American alligators in temperment.Â  I know the Chinese alligator is smaller and much more rare, but I wonder if that is where the differences end…Â  I’ll have to do some research.

After the second dental appointment, we made a stop at Chuck E. Cheese, gauze packed mouth and all.Â  The kids had a blast, although it wasn’t very crowded, so Chuck E. didn’t venture off the stage for a visit, much to my 3-year-old’s disappointment.Â  But I came to a realization that it was our youngest-for-now’s first visit to a Chuck E. Cheese, at least her first one where she was old enough to enjoy it.Â  Since we live in the boondocks, we just don’t find ourselves at Chuck E. Cheese nearly as often as when we lived in the Chicago suburbs like when our oldest was a toddler.Â  But that’s quite alright, the place is expensive, and going infrequently really teaches the kids to appreciate the times we do make it there.Â  Over the years, not much has changed there…Â  when I was a kid, they called it Show Biz Pizza, and I was able to find pics of the old characters for others my age who like nostalgia.



The main character for the chain, a bear named Billy Bob (top right picture), really scared me as a kid…Â  for some reason, he had long claws, which can be really scary for a kid.Â  In Kindergarten, we got to go on a field trip to Show Biz; they took us behind the scenes and “undressed” one of the robots and took us back into the room where they have all the control panels for everything.Â  Why they wanted to show a bunch of 6-year-olds that the characters were actually robots is still beyond me, but it was a very cool field trip and something I still remember.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**YEAH.... I remember both CEC and Showbiz. I actually believe they had both in Ft. Wayne at one time. I remember my 10th birthday in Texas celebrated at Showbiz (of course, we had to have my name announced and ice cream cake... delivered to our table by Billy Bob and crew). I remember it was a very hot and muggy vacation. Who would a thunk.... Texas in July, right?  
**taylhis**Yes, they were competitors until... see below: In 1984, the company purchased the assets of Chuck E. Cheese's, after that company declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy. They then proceeded to change the name of the company to Showbiz Pizza Time, Inc. Both restaurants were kept operating as separate entities. After disagreements over a period of years with Creative, Showbiz management decided to go ahead with a restructuring of the restaurants called "Concept Unification". This would consist of renovating all Showbiz animation into Chuck E. Cheese characters, as well as renaming all stores to "Chuck E. Cheese's Pizza". This would be the end for the concept known as "Showbiz Pizza Place", although the company is still in business, as the current management of the "Chuck E. Cheese's" concept is a direct line from the "Showbiz Pizza Time, Inc." era, with little connection to the original "Pizza Time Theatre" ownership. They are now known as CEC Entertainment Concepts, L.P. The majority of former ShowBiz Pizza Place locations were converted into Chuck E. Cheese's. At the current time, there are around 83 converted "Rock-afire Explosion" shows still in use as "3-Stage" Chuck E. Cheese shows. Some stores were also closed at this time, while others converted to independent concepts, such as "Circus Pizza" and "Billy Bob's Wonderland". There are less than a handful of these stores still operational. There are a few restaurants still using the Showbiz Pizza Place name and animation. All are located outside the United States, and have no connection to the original company. Known locations are in Lebanon; Dubai, UAE; and Kuwait. So next time I'm in Kuwait, I know where to take the kids ;) And my grandparents took me to that Little Caesar's in Schaumburg one time when I went to visit them... seemed so exotic and far away, much cooler than the Show Biz I was used to in Naperville for some reason! I still have the teddy bear I got with my tickets!  
**derek**So she had to go through with it after all... :( Well, her teeth will look better than mine, that's for sure! BTW, weren't Showbiz Pizza and Chuck E Cheese two different entities? CEC may have bought out Showbiz tho, I'm not sure. I remember the Little Caesar's Family Fun that used to be in Schaumburg too, same kind of deal.

# Mediocrity

Two things I was looking forward to watching today turned out to be disappointing.Â  The first, aÂ new horror movie in theaters called “[The Ruins](http://imdb.com/title/tt0963794/)“,Â I wouldn’t classify as a bad movie.Â  It wasÂ entertaining, at least…Â  I say that a lot about movies, I know.Â  But if they hold my attention, aren’t boring (like [The Night Listener](http://imdb.com/title/tt0448075/)),Â and don’t disgust me too much (like [Doomsday](http://imdb.com/title/tt0483607/)), then I generally don’t consider the movie a waste of my time because I really likeÂ watching movies, spending time with my husband, and I just overall enjoy the movie theater going experience.

But as far as horror movies go, “The Ruins” is not my idea of a good one.Â  I won’t even go into the acting skills; it’s so unimportant when talking about this kind of movie.Â  No one stood out as horrible or unwatchable, and that’s all that matters in a movie like this.Â  I did lose a side bet with Hubby about whether or not one of the actors was also in the [Texas Chainsaw](http://imdb.com/title/tt0324216/) remake – he was – but no matter, I really wasn’t too sure about it anyway.Â  The premise was interesting; 4 twentsters (people in their early twenties.Â  Hey, I just made that up because as far as I’m concerned, many of them still act like teens, might as well give them a goofy name to go with their attitudes.Â  Maybe it’ll catch on…) on vacation in Mexico follow this German guy (actor with a fake accent.Â  Why they couldn’t just find a German actor is beyond me, but whatever) they just met on a trek miles into the jungle to see some ancient ruins.Â  When they get there, they end up trapped on top of the pyramid thing by the natives who believe the ruins are cursed.Â  That’s basically it.Â  The movie was pretty fast-paced, however, once I realized that the “monster” of this horror movie was plant life, somehow it wasn’t very scary…Â  Also, everything creepy was already shown in the previews – I HATE when they do that to movies!Â  None of the characters were very likable, so when some met their demise, it wasn’t all that shocking nor disappointing.Â  I don’t know why the movie was rated R – I’ve seen much scarier PG13 movies, they could have cut out the nude scene, and the gore in this movie was all (POTENTIAL SPOILER ALERT – IF YOU CARE) mercy limb cutting.Â  I was thinking the movie could redeem itself with a good resolution, but that was not to be.Â  I can’t see any replay value of this movie.Â  Worth seeing once but not again.Â  One good thing though, it didn’t have you leaving the theater feeling like crap about humanity, like Doomsday or some other movies I’ve seen – that’s always a plus.

On to disappointment #2 – Secret Talents of the Stars.Â  A show about “celebrities” – and some people who call themselves celebrities who I’ve never heard of – who try their hand at other talents than what they’ve become famous doing.Â  What was I thinking you ask?Â  What would *this* shameless attempt at yet another celebrity reality show have that made me want to watch it?Â  The answer – hype.Â  It was hyped so much that I actually fell for it.Â  And I really wanted to see [Clint Black](http://www.clintblack.com/) (I’ll forgive you this once if you don’t know he’s a major country music star) attempt stand-up comedy.Â  That was until I actually saw Clint Black attempt stand-up comedy.Â  Not very funny.Â  And the show seems fixed too…Â  ok, what show like this isn’t, but still….Â  the “judges” all *loved* Clint Black’s comedy…Â  probably because he was the most hyped star of the show, and they wanted to make sure he’d be in the semi-finals.Â  And then there was [George Takei,](http://imdb.com/name/nm0001786/) of former [Star Trek](http://imdb.com/title/tt0060028/) fame, now most famous for coming out of the closet,Â sad to say that has overshadowed his years on Star Trek, but I for oneÂ had never heard of him before he came out…Â  So,Â in betweenÂ several obvious and Clint Black-ish (meaning not very good)Â type gay jokes,Â George sang “On the Road Again”, originally by Willie Nelson.Â  And if you don’t know who that is,Â you’re on your own, I’m not going to spell it out for you!Â  Needless to say, he butchered it and got kicked out of the show – big surprise.Â  The other 2 contestants tonight – Sasha Cohen and a singer called just Mya, were trying for talents that were somewhat related to their profession anyway – something I did not think was fair.Â  Figure skater Cohen was being an acrobat, while singer/entertainer Mya was tap-dancing!Â  The show is stupid, the format is obvious, the judgesÂ lines are scripted…Â  butÂ why will I be watching next week?Â  Another country music star, [Jo dee Mesina](http://www.jodeemessina.com/) will be trying her hand at something other than country music and rehab.Â  Low blow there, and IÂ apologize…Â Â it’s late, and I seem a wee bit crabby, maybe I should have gone to bed instead of stayingÂ up until 11 to watch this dumb show…Â

### Comments

**taylhis**I thought it was Sasha Baron Cohen also until I watched the show. Poor girl, getting mixed up with a guy who made such a vile movie...  
**derek**Takei has been on the TV show Heroes too. I also remember him guest starring in a show called Psych, about a fake psychic who fools almost everybody because he's actually extremely observant, trained by his detective dad). Anyway, Psych being a campy show, Takei played himself at a sci-fi convention as someone extremely picky about blueberries- only eats blueberries from a particular state (which in reality doesn't even produce blueberries IIRC). In Heroes he plays the father of one of the "heroes" (person with superhuman ability).  
**jamiahsh**And Sasha Cohen (almost thought it was Morat... er, Borat) until I saw he missing Baron.  
**jamiahsh**ALAS... Poor Sulu.... I watched the ads for the show and KNEW that he was in trouble.  
**Media Districts Entertainment Blog » Mediocrity**[...] My Food Chain Gang added an interesting post today on MediocrityHere’s a small reading [...]

# Ernie the Klepto

If you’ve been toÂ a movie in the theaterÂ lately, you may have noticedÂ a very clever and funny Starburst commercial they play during the previews with [Steve Buscemi](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000114/)Â called Ernie the Klepto.Â  If not, see it here, but watch carefully, the humor is subtle at first and happens quickly!

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**derek**I don't seem to be getting trackbacks anymore though the option is still checked as far as I know. Are they getting marked as spam since I marked the one as spam before I knew what it was?  
**taylhis**Hmmm, can't believe we haven't discussed this. I think it's him, that's why I posted it as a fact that it was him. I did some research and didn't find any real answers, only that I'm not the only one who thinks it's him: http://forum.teamxbox.com/showthread.php?t=413459 care to make a friendly wager ;)  
**Chris**Is that really Buscemi? Looks kinda like him but doesn't sound like him. I do not think it is him.  
**Dr. Riekeyword - Child Abuse Avoidance Suggestion Tool   
We like your blog!** [...]Mabuhay, my colleagues and I heard of your blog over at McBrides, so we thought we would take a look. We've read several of your posts and we all agree that you have a fine writing style[...]   
**taylhis**yes - a hero fixed it for me ;)  
**derek**Guess you worked on it. :)  
**taylhis**I know, it's not working! Will have to work on that later... for now, it's way past my bedtime!

# APB On My Retractable Sharpie!

If I had to name my most useful kitchen tool, I think I would probably choose my retractable Sharpie.Â  Sharpies are those permanent markers with the thin tip – they’re very useful, and you can use them without making a mess of everything unlike regular permanent markers.Â  Well, some genius invented a retractable Sharpie – no cap to mess with, just click the end and it’s ready to use – a brilliant invention, really.Â  I used mine inÂ my kitchen multiple times daily for various things – until it up and disappeared!Â  I used itÂ mostly for labeling the date on leftovers, among other things, and I had even grown to love the clicking noise it made…Â  how I miss that!

I have a few suspects; namely threeÂ little girlsÂ who have been trying to get their hands on my retractable Sharpie since I got it!Â  But I have no real leads, and no idea where to look for it.Â  All I know is that I miss it!Â  Like I said, I used it several times per day, and it’s just not the same to have to open the cap on a regular Sharpie.Â  Actually, last night I was physically unable to open the cap on the regular Sharpie – had to have my husband do it – because it was on too tight and I injured my finger.Â  Since I only had one free hand at the time, the retractable Sharpie would have come in handy yet again!Â  In fact, this will have to be a short post since it hurts to type everything with my left pointer finger ever since I sliced the tip off the other night.Â  I told you I was terribly uncoordinated – see my previous post if you don’t believe it.Â  Which is why I NEED my retractable Sharpie back!Â  If you’ve seen it, please contact me ASAP!Â  Tipsters will remain annonymous!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**POOR Sharpie..... I remember it well  
**taylhis**That would normally be quite possible I suppose, except that I've been so busy so far this season that I've hardly been able to watch any games - just seen bits and pieces! I have developed a theory that maybe Dis threw it in the garbage as she sometimes likes to do with things and it got inadvertently thrown out. Most things are heavy in the garbage so I usually catch them before I take the garbage out, but not the Sharpie :( RIP Retractable Sharpie  
**jamiahsh**Or the youngest may have Sharpie all over HER. As a Cubs fan it maybe that it may gotte thrown in a momentary emotional outburst? Or, perhaps one of our four-legged chums found it and is holding it for ransom?  
**derek**Ouch! You win. My fine motor skills may be fair to poor, but I can't say I've ever sliced off the tip of my finger!  
**justj**You should check with your kids as soon as possible. Once the youngest finds out how to click it, you may have permanent sharpie marks all over the place.

# Veining Victory

All my life I’ve had to deal with a less than optimal anatomy.Â  In Kindergarten, my teacher wrote on my report card, “lacks hand-eye coordination.”Â  Not *lacking in* hand-eye coordination, she definitely wrote LACKS – as if I didn’t have any at all.Â  My vision hasn’t been the best and neither has my hearing for that matter; due to the multiple ear infections I suffered as a toddler.Â  The LACK of hand-eye coordination followed me all throughout school.Â  There were all those skill tests we would have to take every year in gym class…Â  you know, the mile run, flexed arm hang, shuttle run, 50 yard dash, long jump (the long jump was only a clever name for when people like me tried to take that test and could barely get off the ground, much less produceÂ a long jump), etc.Â  The weeks we did those tests were the most dreaded weeks of the year for me.Â  Not only would I look pretty stupid trying to do them, but I would always fail miserably.Â  They actually based your grades for those tests upon your scores and not upon how hard you tried.Â  Mine were always off the scale F’s.Â  Luckily, they weren’t enough to bring my gym grade down too low because I was always a pretty good student and to have that ruined because IÂ LACKED hand-eye coordination, now that just wouldn’t be right.

Now, as an adult, it doesn’t really matter how fast I can run back and forth between 2 lines on the floor while stopping to stoop and touch them.Â  Not that I’ve tried, which only proves how unimportant something like that is…Â  but it seems that all those years of falling physically behind my peers has been made up for me byÂ a “gift” my adult body has bestowed upon me: huge, viable veins!Â  Every time theÂ lab people at the Dr.’s officeÂ have to draw my blood, they are **extremely** impressed by my veins.Â  In fact, I am often the talk of the lab – *hey, Karen, come over here, look what I’ve got to work with!*Â

Today I had a student drawing my blood (oh, great, just what I wanted to see, someone about to pierce my skin with a needle who is **in training to do so**!Â  I realize they have to learn somewhere, but why do they have to learn on me?), and the nurse jokingly told her, wow, you could draw that one in the dark!Â  Haha, hehe, but please, let’s not try that!

Anyway, I don’t mean to brag to anyone who is less endowed in the vein department, but it’s just nice to finally get my due after falling so far behind physically in every other way for so long.Â  And it may seem unimportant to you, but I make a lot of friends at the lab this way, and also, my veinly gifts are very useful in my life.Â  Having had four pregnancies and 2 cases (hopefully only 2; I will find out soon if there will be 3) of gestational diabetes, that means there is lots of blood being drawn from me!Â  I get poked and prodded so often that I’m starting to thinkÂ that my veins are actually *fun* forÂ the lab peopleÂ to draw from…Â  or maybeÂ it was no coincidence that theÂ student lab technicianÂ had me as a patientÂ to draw from today – maybeÂ they’ve secretly made me theÂ lab student assignment for the hospital!

### Comments

**derek**Yes, they are really soft balls. Softer even than Nerf balls, but can still be thrown or even used (the larger ones) as a kickball for younger kids.  
**taylhis**gator skin balls? never heard of them... is that what they use in gym class nowadays?  
**derek**I hear ya on the athletic abilities department! I don't think the tests were that bad for me, but when it came to sports my abilities were such that the chair I was sitting on was likely to get picked before me. I remember a game of dodge-ball (we called it bombardment back then) in high school. The last two left standing were such anti-jocks that they couldn't even hit each other. The game was over when one claimed to have hit the other's sweat pants as it flew by. Yep, I was one of them. And by the way, there were no gator skin balls back then- we used volleyballs!

# Ellen's Friend Gladys

I used to really enjoy watching The Ellen DeGeneres Show.Â  It’s on tv in my area at 4pm, so I used to watch it all the time while I was feeding my youngest daughter.Â  Since that is no longer a job that requires sitting down for a good 30-60 minutes – quite the opposite nowadays actually! – I haven’t caught Ellen in ages.Â  But the other day, I was reminded of a viewer of Ellen’s who she made a few phone calls to on the show…Â Â An 88-year-oldÂ named Gladys who was as matter-of-fact as can be and just hysterical.Â  Check out the clip from her first sound byte on the show below.Â  Gladys first calls Ellen’s show and leaves a message, which is funny enough by itself, but when Ellen calls her back, hilarity ensues!Â  Check it out:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

And here Gladys gives a glowing review of American Idol, specifically Sanjaya’s hair:  
If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

I wonder if Ellen still talks to Gladys or how she’s doing?Â  Wish I had time to catch Ellen’s show, it was really funny and fun to watch.Â  Well, I will have a newborn to sit and feed in a matter of months, so maybe then I can turn on the tv and enjoy some comedy once again…

### Comments

**taylhis**you should see Glady's take on Sanjaya - she is so funny!  
**jamiahsh**AH.... Yes. my a friend Sanjaya who was a on America Idol last year. He was a very good, but he was not the next America Idol, too.

# I am Legend

I betcha you’re thinking, wow, she thinks highly of herself…Â  I am Legend, geez…Â  but no, I was just realizing how it’s been a REALLY long time since I’ve reviewed a movie!Â  Part of it is because we aren’t watching nearly as many, just been pretty busy lately.Â  With the time change, it stays light out until 8, so we like to take family walks after dinner.Â  By the time the kids get settled after that though, there hasn’t been any time for movies, so we’ve been watching old episodes of [The Office](http://imdb.com/title/tt0386676/) instead…Â  not that there’s anything wrong with that, it’s been fun, but I just haven’t seen many movies lately.Â  The other night, we did manage to pop in “[I am Legend](http://imdb.com/title/tt0480249/)“, an end-of-the-world movie starring [Will Smith](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000226/).Â  It chronicles the story of the very last man on Earth (well, kinda) as he strives to find a cure for the virus that is responsible forÂ exterminating mankind.Â  I said he’s *kinda* the last man on Earth because he co-exists with these creatures who used to be humans, until the virus turned them into creepy, maniacal, flesh-devouring beasts.Â  Luckily for Smith, they can only come out at night because light proves fatal to them, so he spends his days collecting samples and information to study and do experiments in his lab at night, hoping to find a cure for the virus, a virus that interestingly mutated from what humans originally believed was a cure for cancer.

The movie was entertaining, though I have to admit when I first starting watching it, I had a bit of “[Doomsday](http://imdb.com/title/tt0483607/)” dread – see my previous post of the same name aboutÂ one horrible movie – if you dare.Â  However, “I am Legend” ended up only sharing generic end-of-civilization-as-we-know-it characteristics with the movie “Doomsday”, thank goodness for that.Â  Speaking of end-of-the-world movies, the creatures in “I am Legend” also reminded me a bit of the ravaging monsters in “[28Â Weeks Later](http://imdb.com/title/tt0463854/)“, but in a genre like this, I guess it’s difficult to be entirely unique.

It might seem lonely being the last man on Earth, but Will Smith’s character does have a faithful companion, a dog named Sam.Â  I’m going to risk a minor spoiler here so I can tell you what I really liked about their relationship.Â  In a moment of weakness, Will Smith is cradling his strong dog buddy Sam, and we learn that the dog’s name is actually Samantha.Â  The symbolism here is very well done and notably appreciated – you’ll have to see the movie to get it, even though I probably just spoiled that part for you – oops.

Overall, as I said, it was entertaining to watch, and pretty creepy at times.Â  The overuse of computer animation was annoying to say the least.Â  There were lots of animals in the film – beasts roam the deserted shell of what’s left of New York City – but they were all computer animated.Â  I agree with the person who reviewed the movie on imdb.com, I can live with the animals being computer generated, but the virus-addled humanesque beasts, now THAT was BEYOND annoying!Â  They could be pretty scary at times, but it was probably due to the snarling noises more than the way they looked.Â  During most of the action scenes involving the creatures, the computer animation was horribly fake-looking and even laughable, which of course takes away from the mood of a film such as this.

If you like the mankind-is-extinctÂ type of movies or are a Will Smith fan, I think you should see this movie.Â  The best parts were the scenes of him roaming a deserted New York City – those were pretty cool to see.Â  But if you’re the type of person who doesn’t like the hopelessness or loneliness one might feel when imagining the end of the world, not to mention watching frightening creatures unleash terror and violence, skip “I am Legend” and go for “[The Fresh Prince of Bel Air](http://imdb.com/title/tt0098800/)” instead – classic Will Smith the whole family can enjoy!

### Comments

**computer animation » Blog Archive » I am Legend**[...] Read the rest of this great post here [...]

# Food Chain Gang

I should probably explain where the title of my blog comes from.Â  It’s actually a title I picked out years ago as I was musing while doing housework one day.Â  I thought, a story about our household should be called, “The Food Chain Gang”.Â  At the time, we had a few more pets than we have now, completing the chain.Â  Back then, we were the happy owners of 2 dogs, a cat, a parrot, and a little marsupial (animal with a pouch, like a kangaroo) called a sugar glider.Â  The sugar glider and the cat have since crossed the “Rainbow Bridge” which some people call pet heaven.Â  And, if you’re a regular reader, you’ve read that we’ve added a new dog to our family in the last month.Â  But the new dog doesn’t exactly complete a food chain, so I just felt the need to explain why my blog is called “My Food Chain Gang” even though we are down to 3 dogs and a parrot.

As an animal lover, I would love to add even more pets to our menagerie, however, it’s just not practical right now.Â  We have 1 dog with some terrier (terror!) in her, Jack Russell to be exact, and she will “hunt” any kind of small animal we bring into the house.Â  So, my dreams of owning a rat or 2 or 3 will have to wait at least a few years, hopefully more, since the “Jerk” Russell mix is only calledÂ that in jest – she is our baby.Â  My husband and I adopted her before we were married and before the kids were born.Â  And before you judge me, do the research – rats actually make very good pets!Â  Unlike many of their rodent cousins; hamsters, gerbils and the like, rats are actually pretty clean, very smart, and they are even friendly and cuddly!

Since I already mentioned wanting a rat, which many people think is a crazy pet, it should be no surprise when I say with sincerity that if I didn’t have small children, I would have a pet alligator.Â  Again, a little bit of research will tell you that alligators are almost nothing like (in behavior) their fellow crocodilians.Â  They are actually quite docile and easier to handle than you would think ***if you know what you’re doing of course*** – stress that point.Â  IÂ know some about handling alligators, though I’ve only held small to medium sizedÂ ones,Â and I have never evenÂ owned a reptile, so needless to say, this is not an option for me right now…Â  but maybe someday!

I would also like a tortoise, but with 4 kids, 3 of which will be under the age of 5, I do enough cleaning up around the house as it is – don’t need a tank to clean!Â  Plus, we are very lucky to be able to afford some mini-vacations now and then, and any more responsibilities for the pet sitter might put her over the edge ðŸ˜‰Â

I have always wanted a goat, and now that we live in the country, I can see how easy it is to get one – you can just open up the paper, call a number and buy a goat.Â  But I don’t think the neighbors would appreciate what our lawn would look like.Â  Something tells me our quiet residential neighborhood near the heart of the downtown of the city would not be a good place to house a goat.

I would love another cat someday, but I’m allergic.Â  And it all but broke my heart when I lost my beloved cat earlier this year…Â  I felt very guilty that I couldn’t really pet her or spend time with her as much as I (and she) wanted because of my allergies.

And talking about cheap farm animals reminds me of another realization I hadÂ after moving to the country – baby chicks and ducks are really cute AND very cheep, err inexpensive!Â  But again, our Jerk Russell would just try to eat any kind of animal like that.Â  She STILL likes to hunt the parrot when he flies in the house, even though he’s taken a nip at her more than once with his huge beak!

And I would LOVE my own parrot – I’ve always wanted an African Grey, ever since I was really little and read a wonderful book by the same guy who wrote the movie, “The Water Horse”.Â  The author is Dick King-Smith, and his book, “Harry’s Mad” is just a wonderful story for kids about a boy and his pet parrot.Â  But while I’m on the subject of parrots, let me talk for a minute about pets NOT suitable for families.Â Â Parrots sure are beautiful animals, and they’re lots of fun when they talk, laugh, and imitate,Â but they are also very moody and unpredictable.Â  Most are not cuddly, and if they are, it’s usually only with one person in the household, and they will resent every other person who gets in their way.Â  Which is what happened with ourÂ parrot – he has bonded to Daddy, that’s his “mate”, and the rest of us cannot touch him, OR ELSE we have to deal with the rath of a beak that is strong enough to snap a broomstick inÂ HALF!Â Â Parrots are VERY loud – and there is no relief from their noise.Â  Their scream can rattle your eardrum, and is almost always guaranteed to make a small child cry.Â  And, they scream to have fun!Â  It’s not just when they are upset or want something, so if you think you’ll be able to quiet a screaming parrot, guess again!Â  Luckily, ours is about to celebrate his 7th year with us, so through lots of growing pains, we’ve learned how to make it work in our house.Â  Parrots can also be very dangerous, so just like any other animal, kids need to have constant supervision around parrots.Â  Overall, as the owner of a parrot, I would HIGHLY recommend another pet choice to anyone with kids in the house.

I wouldn’t recommend a sugar glider as a pet either.Â  Ours was “used” – we actually f0und her at a garage sale – and that is a testament to how often people think it’d be cool to have one of these only to decide later they’re too much work.Â  They are intelligent, social animals, so they require lots of attention.Â  However, they are also nocturnal, so you have to be available at night to take them out of their cage to play.Â  Light will actually damage their eyes, so taking them out at night in a specially under-lit room is required.Â  They can be nippy, smelly (they excrete an odor to mark their territory), and can even make loud noises all night that keep you awake.Â  And they require a special diet of fresh fruits and vegetables also, which can be inconvenient and expensive.

So anyway, now that I’ve recommended all the pets that AREN’T good for families, I would say that the standard dog or cat IS great for families.Â  Obviously, there is a lot to take into consideration when shopping for one of these, and I won’t go into that this time…Â  if you really need some good advice about why humane societies are a better choice than pet stores and what to look for while choosing a pet,Â see my previous post called, “3’s a Crowd?”.

So, now you know where the title “My Food Chain Gang” came from.Â  Maybe someday, I will add to the chain and have a real zoo to call my own.Â  But for now, I will stick with theÂ gang we have – everybody knows their place in the chain and gets along great!

### Comments

**taylhis**I would love to start a zoo... maybe that's what I'll do when the kids grow up and are off at school all day...  
**derek**I can almost see you running an actual zoo now... The Bryan Zoo. Well, a petting zoo maybe.

# Trouble spelled C-U-T-E

Â Disney, our youngest-for-now, got into some trouble today.Â  She went “missing” for about 10 minutes while I was making lunch, so I started thinking to myself, hmmm, she must have fallen asleep somewhere.Â  So, I went to search for her and found this:



Â I went to the store and bought some toilet paper today.Â  I had it on the stairs waiting to go up, and apparently she found it and thought it would be fun to play with.Â  It was no big deal, as far as how much trouble toddlers usually get into.Â  And, when I think about it now, the fact that I thought she was sleeping whenshe was “missing” really says a lot about what kind of baby, err, toddler she is.Â  When my middle child was that age, if she went “missing” and the house was actually quiet, we knew there was going to be REAL trouble – and there always was.Â  Our middle child went through a – how to put this eloquently – a ‘playing with poop’ phase.Â  She would wake up in her crib, take off her diaper, and paint with the contents of her diaper, all while we thought she was still asleep so there was little we could do to intervene before it happened.Â  We even had to postphone opening Christmas presents one year because we had a huge poopie painted mess to clean up before we could see what Santa brought.Â  Good thing big sis was really patient about that one.Â Â OurÂ oldest child, Taylor,Â was kind of like Disney as a baby – never any real trouble.Â  In fact, she also had a toilet paper incident – see flashback photo below, note the stream of toilet paper behind her:



So anyway, Disney is a very sweet and mild-mannered child.Â  InÂ fact, she really likes to play with my glasses and my Chicago Cubs hat, but she will only ask (yes, that’s right, she asks) to play with them when I’m not wearing them.Â Â AndÂ unrolling toilet paperÂ is her idea of trouble – for now anyway.Â  She is nearing 2, so I am anticipating more trouble from her, but so far, this is it.Â  I just hope kids don’t come in any sort of behavior pattern.Â  Meaning, our first and third have been exceptionally good, our second is a HANDFUL (putting it mildly), so the fourth would be…

I’m not going to jinx us…Â  we’re hoping for the best.Â  I don’t know if I can handle another poop player!

### Comments

**taylhis**After cleaning up, I would estimate loss at only about 1/2 a roll... no big deal at all, and worth it for the cute picture :)  
**derek**Just roll 'em back up! :D  
**justj**Could be worse. Looks like you still have a roll or two you can still use.

# Important Car Shopping Tip

We bought a new car back in November, and we’re very happy with it.Â  But I have to admit, there is a feature I forgot to check when car shopping – howÂ is the reception forÂ WGN radio AM 720?Â  Translation:Â will I be able to catch the Cubs games being broadcast all the way from Chicago?!?

Luckily for me, the answer is yes!Â  Since baseball season was over when we bought the car, it didn’t occur to me to check for this very essential feature in a vehicle.Â  But today, the radio’s ability was tested because as the family errand-runner, the only way for me to be able to catch any of the Cubs game was in the car between picking up kids from school, taking them to and from piano lessons, the library, etc.Â  Not only did the Cubs game come in, but it was even better than the lousy reception our old Ford mini-van picked up last year.

So BOOLYAH!Â  Now I am even happier with the new car and also ecstatic that I got to hear the Cubbies avoid a series sweep by the Milwaukee Brewers today.Â  To quote Harry Caray, CUBS WIN!Â  And to quote a friend namedÂ Morat, Everyone Wins!Â  Ok, everyone winsÂ who doesn’tÂ drive a Ford that is…  
ðŸ˜‰

### Comments

**Important Car Shopping Tip**[...] taylhis had a pretty good blog post. Definitely worth your time. Here is a small excerpt:Not only did the Cubs game come in, but it was even better than the lousy reception our old Ford mini-van picked up last year. So BOOLYAH! Now I am even happier with the new car and also ecstatic that I got to hear the Cubbies avoid a … [...]

# Forehand to Forehead - And Then Some

And now for some youtube fun:

VIDEO 1:Â [Bloody Tennis Tantrum](http://youtube.com/watch?v=0AEfCQxVmxM)  
If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.  
  
WHO: Mikhail Youzhny, a professional tennis player  
WHAT: Tennis racket vs. forehead  
WHEN: Monday, March 31, 2008  
WHERE: Sony Ericsson Open – Key Biscayne, FL  
WHY:Â ?????  
COMMENTS: If you are bored by tennis, the real fun starts about 30 seconds into the video.Â  Make sure you listen to the announcers’ commentary on the incident – hilarious!

VIDEO 2:Â [Drunk Hamster](http://youtube.com/watch?v=lpHCamZB3KA)If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.  
  
WHO: Someone’s poor (?) hamster  
WHAT: repeatedly doing flips  
WHEN: Not important  
WHERE: The Hamster’s cage  
WHY: Is he really drunk?  
COMMENTS: I don’t condone cruelty to animals, of course, but this is so funny…Â  And he seems to be doing it because he really LIKES doing it.Â  He doesn’t seem to be getting hurt.Â  The theme song works well with the action.

Video 3: [The Price is Right April Fool’s Day Joke](http://youtube.com/watch?v=PkWMH6CuV1w)  
If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.  
  
WHO: Drew Carey and Rich Fields vs. a contestant named Lisa  
WHAT:Â A contestant bids on a fake showcase  
WHEN: April Fool’s Day 2008  
WHERE: Los Angeles, CA  
WHY: April Fool’s Day prank  
COMMENTS: I can’t believe the contestant didn’t get the joke earlier…Â  guess she was distracted by being on tv, that happens.Â  Wish I could hear what the audience was saying during the prank!Â  Were they giving her bids, telling her it was a joke, what?

### Comments

**taylhis**strange... I had 3 or 4 hamsters and they never did that. When I saw the title on youtube, I just assumed it meant the owners were slipping him some bubbly, but now I guess it's "normal" hamster behavior!  
**justj**We had dwarf hamsters that did that all the time. They did get dizzy after doing it awhile. I don't know if they had fermented seeds or not. We never tried to give that to them.

# When "Good" Towns Go Bad

I guess it depends on what you would call a good town.Â  A place we used to live called Naperville Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago, was once considered a good town.Â  It had lots of fun things to do, relatively low crime, good schools, and lots of money.Â  It was never my ideal place to live, however, because it was always way too crowded and had way too much traffic for my tastes.Â  But I never considered it a *dangerous* place to live…Â  until yesterday.Â  Being from the Chicago area and having friends and family who still reside there means I maintain an interest in keeping up with their local news.Â  Yesterday I came across the following newspaper article about a murder that was committed in the neighborhood where we used to live:Â  [Man Shot, Killed in Naperville](http://dailyherald.com/story/?id=163989)

In a city the size of Naperville (about 10 square miles, with a population of over 140,000 people), this incident might not appear to be as shocking to the normal readerÂ as it was to me.Â  However, having lived in this neighborhood only about 7 years ago, I can’t believe how much it has changed.Â  We lived in a small townhome; it was very nice and backed up to a school.Â  It seemed like the perfect picture of suburbia at the time.Â  It wasÂ VERY over-priced for what I would expect to pay for a 1.5 bedroom where I live now, (we paid $1380 rent a month, and our place was not more than 650 square feet), however at the time I thought it was worth it because it was a “nice” area andÂ close to family in a place I thought would be safe to raise kids.Â  Needless to say, I was wrong onÂ that account.Â  In the article about the crime, the newspaper drewÂ a nice little map.Â  Turns out the victim (who had an arrest record himself – not that I’m judging, just noting)Â lived not more than 2 blocks from our old home.Â  The victim’s body was found 5 blocks from our old home.Â  We used to take our daughter for walks around the area all the time; there was a Walgreens we used to walk toÂ right near where the body was found.Â  Readers who posted in the comments section of the story say how the area has become “seedy”, and in the article itself, they state that the victim’s home was a “high traffic area”.Â  All of this adds up to a placeÂ where I would NOT want to raise kids, let alone pay through the nose for a small place to live, only to have to worry about protecting my familyÂ from the violent crime that seems to have invaded the area.Â  Some might say this is an isolated incident; they can say “this can happen anywhere.”Â  ThatÂ IS true.Â  Anything can happen anywhere.Â  However, one can now say that it can happen anywhere, but it DOES happen there.

It truly makes me thankful every day that we’ve now found such a wonderful place to call home; away from the city and its crime, pollution, and expenses, not to mention how superficial and just downrightÂ unfriendly the residents of a town like Naperville can be.Â  It’s baffling to me that they charge EXTRA to live in a place like that!Â  It makes me feel really good knowing that when my kids grow up and want to raise children of their own, they will have the option to stay in the wonderful town where they grew up.Â  I did not have that option, since I grew up in a town next to Naperville, and it is no longer a good place to raise children.Â  If my kids want to spread their wings and fly away to explore the world and see what else is out there, that is fine.Â  I will miss them of course, butÂ I am quite confident that if all else fails out there, Â they will always have the option to return to the place where they grew up to live safely and prosperously.Â  Country living is not for everyone, I guess, but I don’t think I’ll ever understand those who choose to pass up utopia for city life 

### Comments

**taylhis**What are those taxes for? And here is more "good" news about the Naperville area (dripping with sarcasm) - the title of the article says it all: You're Going to Want to Avoid It http://dailyherald.com/story/?id=164917 Won't even be able to use my IPASS!  
**derek**Some of us Cook County folk will be driven to the country soon when that 1% tax hikes kicks in. The 0.25% one started this month.  
**taylhis**and DOES happen in some places - like Naperville! ;) In reading the update of the story today, I see that the victim was actually shot at his home, then jumped in his car and fled to where he was found. That info was not available yesterday, but only makes it worse... we probably went trick-or-treating at his house since it was 1.5 blocks away... and also with the new updates about what the neighbors said, it does sound like drug activity is rampant there now - nice neighborhood.  
**Chris**That stuff can happen anywhere. ;-)

# April Fool's - Not Over Yet!

Yet another April Fool’s Day surprise awaited us when we got home tonight…Â  seems the newest addition to the family is a little jokester.Â  Our dog Beesley, who we’ve had for almost a month now, is an escape artist.Â  We have a little mud room in the back of the house that leads to the garage, and if we don’t lock the dogs out of it, Beesley can push open the door leading to the garage and escape.Â  Apparently, tonight was one of those nights when we forgot to make sure the dogs were locked out of the mud room because when we got home and opened the garage to pull the car in, out runs Beesley.Â  We corralled her into the car, and that’s when we saw it – a HUGE mountain of garbage in the middle of the garage, along with several smaller hills of doggie-doo.Â  Seems during her great escape into the garage, she decided to tear apart the garbage that was in there waiting for garbage day.Â  Of course, being a family of 5, we have lots of garbage, including lots of dirty diapers.Â  Seems little Beesley had herself such a feast that she immediately had to add doggie-doo to the mess without waiting for us to come home and let her outside to do her business.Â  Compounding our luck had this happening on a Tuesday, which is only 2 days before garbage day, so we hadÂ just aboutÂ as much garbage out there as was possible.Â  I’ve been trying to convince Hubby that we need to buy one of those mega garbage cans just to store our garbage in until garbage day ever since the local squirrels discovered we have a parrot who discards nuts into our garbage.Â  They sneak into the garage constantly and tear little holes in the garbage bags to get at the nuts.Â  But at least they’re dainty about it, which is more than I can say for Beesley.Â  It’s just difficult to justify spending money on something that you’re going to put garbage into – it’s like literally throwing money away…Â  or the reverse actually, but still…Â  maybe now we’ll be able to justify that expense a little better.Â  April Fool’s – Beesley style – YUCK!

And a side note about April Fool’s Day from our local paper.Â  No one knows how April Fool’s Day came about.Â  There’s a theory that it originated when the Gregorian Calender was adopted in the 1500’s.Â  Seems there were a few folks stubborn about adopting the change of New Year’s Day from April 1 to January 1, so others made fun of them, pranked them, and sent them on fool’s errands, hence theÂ origin of April Fool’s Day.Â  That is just a theory however, but equally amusing and NOT just a theory is how the country of Scotland celebrates April 1st.Â  Apparently Scottish April Fool’s Day jokes often focus on the buttocks and the day is known as Taily Day.Â  According to our local paper, the “butts” of the Taily Day jokes are known as April “Gowk” which is another name for Cuckoo bird, and it’s believed the ole “kick me” sign gag originated with these Scottish customs.Â  I think I’ll stick with good old April Fool’s Day, thanks, though this year in our house, I guess you could call it Taily Day!

### Comments

**taylhis**Never tried stuffed pig intestines... have you? They make a greek version, wonder if I'd like them?  
**derek**Since I've got a wee bit 'o Scotsman in me, next time I see you I'll have to whack all of ye on the bottom with a set of bagpipes, err- as soon as I get some! Here, have some haggis...

# April Fool's!

Another April Fool’s Day is upon us unfortunately.Â  I usually escape the day unscathed, but this year, that is not the case.Â  Seems some clever “hacker” decided to “get” usÂ tangents.org bloggersÂ with false threats of blog erasures…

I did not think it was funny.Â  Maybe I’m not a good sport, but the joke hit where it hurt – how many valuable documents; including pictures, diaries, even my oldest daughter’s electronic baby book, have I lost due to computer malfunctions?Â  I’m not saying my blogs are valuable, but I have spent lots of time on them.Â  They’ve also essentially replaced my family diary I was keeping since I now put most of my kids milestones in my blogs…

But I guess most people get a kick out of the day.Â  Drew Carey even got into the spirit today on The Price is Right.Â  They put in a joke showcase and were going to make some poor lady bid on a trip to Lebanon or someplace!Â  I was half-watching, wish I had seen the whole thing, it seemed hilarious.Â  But anyway, I hope others are better sports than I, and they findÂ the blog prankÂ funny.Â  And I’m sorry to the gleeful jokester who really wanted to have some fun at my expense before I spoiled it.Â  Maybe I’m just a spoiled sport because I can’t think of any good pranks myself.Â  But now that I know the playing field is wide open and I have a whole year to think about it, stay away from me this year and WATCH OUT for me next year ðŸ˜‰

### Comments

**derek**Well, it's past 8:30EST, or rather EDT and our blogs are still here! What did we do to anger you so, mad hacker? :D  
**taylhis**Like I said on Morat's blog, TPIR gag will be up on youtube in a matter of days... don't think the hacker cared if they were discovered... Did you get anybody today, justj?  
**justj**The hacker forgot some of the other small blogs here. When only a known few got "hacked", it pointed to a known person as the hacker. We know who you are.... Thanks!  
**jamiahsh**The TPIR gag was hilarious. I tried to find it on youtube but only found the climax. Who was that mad hacker.... sounds like a Batman villain : The Mad Hacker.....EVIL.

# Better Late Than Never?

Came across this news story after linking to the one about the hugely tall spire they’re going to build in the Middle East:

[First Wedding Dress Shop for Pregnant Brides ONLY Opens](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=552908&in_page_id=1770)

I agree with the people who posted comments at the end of the article – what is the world coming to when maternityÂ wedding dressesÂ are seen as a normal need to fulfill in the buyer’s market?Â  Should we be happy that these women are getting married rather than staying single?Â  What about the fact that they might be rushing into marriage just for the sake of getting to buy a pretty dress, or more likely, because it’s becoming extremely socially acceptable, which will surely raise the already obscenely high divorce rate?Â  And why are they bothering to make theseÂ maternity bridal gowns WHITE?

All I can say is, thank goodness this article isn’tÂ about the good old USA – but then again, we probably have an AmericanÂ maternity bridal store chain or two or three already.

### Comments

**taylhis**Call me old-fashioned, but a pregnant bride wearing a white wedding dress just doesn't look right.  
**derek**White is the only color these days. It long ago ceased to represent purity.

# Defunct TV Part II

Since myÂ first post about defunct tv was SO lengthy, I had to omit some of my favorite tvÂ shows from yester-year which were so great theyÂ warrant a mention and another post.

[The Bozo Show](http://imdb.com/title/tt0254009/) – If you grew up in Chicagoland, this show was an icon.Â  Some people in Ohio have told me it was on tv here too, but I know it just wasn’t the same as growing up with Bozo next door.Â  First of all, EVERYONE you knew went to see the Bozo show live.Â  The girl I went with was put on the waiting list when she was in utero, and we were 9 or 10 years old before her mother finally got the tickets that allowed us entry into the show.Â  But I’m just glad I got the experience, and I’m even more glad that I was old enough to remember seeing Bozo live – it was really neat.Â  I was really scared of a character named Wizzo though, and I hoped he wouldn’t be there on the day I was…Â  Ironically, I don’t remember if he was in that episode or not.Â  My husband wentÂ to a Bozo show taping of course, since he was also a Chicagoland kid, but neither of us were on the Grand Prize Game.Â  There were other characters on the show, mainly Bozo’s clown sidekick, Cookie, and also a puppet dog named Cuddly Duddly.Â  I think I’m going to have to dig out the tape of the show I was on, just for memories…Â  So was Bozo aired nationally?Â  Since it was so hugely popular in our area, it’s hard to say; it’s not like there was an internet back then or like I traveled a lot or had pen pals as a kid to ask.Â  I would guess so, since lots of people have heard of it, but I’m sure it wasÂ nothing likeÂ the phenomena it reached in Chicagoland.

[Land of the Lost](http://imdb.com/title/tt0071005/) – Saturday morning tv at its finest.Â  This was a live show about a family who was transported back in time to contend with all kinds of prehistoric creatures like dinosaurs, etc.Â  While looking up the show on imdb, I learned that there were 2 versions.Â  One that aired from 1974-76, and one from 1991-92.Â  I will dismiss the 90’s remake since I wasn’t a big fan.Â  But as for the original, I barely remember it but I know that I LOVED it!Â  I must have watched it in syndication however, because I was not around to see it from ’74-’76.Â  But, when I saw the photos and synopsis of the episodes, I know that’s the show I watched and loved.Â  Interesting note – they are currently make a [movie version](http://imdb.com/title/tt0457400/) due out next year starring [Will Ferrell](http://imdb.com/name/nm0002071/) as the dad!Â  I am a big fan of Will Ferrell’s.Â  I think he is great in almost everything I’ve seen him in; he’s always funny and surprisingly versatile.Â  He stars in one of my favorite Christmas movies of all time,Â [Elf.](http://imdb.com/title/tt0319343/)Â  So I am anxious to see what they do with this remake of a classic tv showÂ for our generation.Â  I think the movie is slated to be a comedy, but with Will Ferrell as its star, that’s no surprise.Â  I wonder if they’ll do what they did with the [Brady Bunch](http://imdb.com/title/tt0112572/) movies and make it a satire of the tv show?Â  It was very effective and funny when they did it in the Brady Bunch movies, but it would seem difficult to pull off for many tv showsÂ without being too over the top.Â  With the cheesy sets and special effects and costumes of the ’70’s Land of the Lost,Â satire might be a good avenue to explore for the movie remake.Â  It’d be cool to see the movie set in the 70’s – well, the family gets sent back in time, but if the family were still from the ’70’s…Â  Guess we’ll just have to wait until 2009 to see!

[The Littles](http://imdb.com/title/tt0320055/) – A catchy theme song which began, “We are the Littles…”Â  It was an awesome Saturday morning cartoon (which of course spawned into toys, lunchboxes, books, and even a few movies) about a family of small people with pointy ears and tails who lived within the walls of a Bigg (literally, this was the surname of the family!) family’s house.Â  The plots revolved around Tom and Lucy Little, a brother and sister who tried to keep their dopey aviator cousin Dinky out of troubleÂ along with their Grandpa Little.Â  TheÂ Littles had rigged up their own little world within the walls of the Bigg’s homeÂ which they entered through a light socket, and it was neat to see how they usedÂ normal size objects to make things they needed.Â  They would often enlist the help of Henry Bigg, theÂ human regular-size kid who lived in the house, since he was the only human to know about the Littles.Â  Cute show – I could probably find it on [youtube](http://youtube.com/) or somewhere like that if I looked.Â

[Shirt Tales](http://imdb.com/title/tt0085090/) – Adorable little animal characters who began as a line of greeting cards were turned into a cartoon.Â  Their shirts would display different sayings to express their feelings; such as HugÂ Me, Cuddly, or Dig Me (worn by a mole).Â  Â A really cute cartoon which aired on the USA network as part of its Cartoon Express, of which Pac Man the cartoon was also a part; see below.

[Pac Man](http://imdb.com/title/tt0083461/) – A cartoon based upon the popular video game.Â  I don’t remember much about it, but I know I liked it, and it didn’t last long.Â  I think if I were to see this cartoon today as an adult, it would be dumb, whereas Shirt Tales might be cute.Â  I haven’t checked youtube, but they both just might be there; it seems likely.

### Comments

**Movies and Film Blog » Defunct TV Part II**[...] My Food Chain Gang placed an interesting blog post on Defunct TV Part IIHere’s a brief overview [...]

# HACKED!!

# THIS BLOG HAS BE HACKED BY

# THE MAD HACKER!

## All of your posts will be erased at 8:30PM EST!

### Comments

**taylhis   
  
taylhis**

# Fever Pitch

Originally this post was called “CUBS WIN!!!”Â  And I followed it up with: gee, I sure hope I’m not jinxing anything by posting this.Â  And as I was typing that, the dang Brewers scored 3 runs!Â  Now that I’ve changed the title of the post, the awful half-inning ended and the Cubs are now up with a chance to save the game and have one man on base.Â  Unfortunately for me, I will have to miss the finale and seeing if the Cubs pull it off because I can’t suspend my entire life for baseball, as much as I’d like to.Â  I already rearranged my schedule around this game today, and wouldn’t you know it, there were not one, but TWO rain delays, which is why the Cubs are still playing and why I have to miss the end of the game because my poor family has gone without dinner long enough!Â  So, hope for me and for the Cubs that they pull this off – I must say it’s starting to look good with 2 men on now and NO OUTS – this game has reached a fever pitch as their pitcher is starting to choke and walk Cubs out the wazoo….Â  OH MY GOSH – FUKUDOME JUST HIT A 3-RUN HOMER TO TIE THE GAME!!!Â  My daughter can stand in the rain waiting for me to pick her up, can’t she?Â  It’s opening day!Â  Is there an emoticon for fingers crossed?!?!?

### Comments

# Baby Names - Part II

Well, we have narrowed down our choices for baby names!Â  *(Insert drum roll here)* They are:  
FIRST NAMES:  
Mallory  
Lindsay  
Evangeline  
MIDDLE NAMES:  
Autumn  
Athina (or Athena as it’s usually spelled; I like the first one better)  
Alexandra

We know we want a middle name that starts with an “A” because all of our girls have one.Â  We’re just not sure which name we like with which middle name.Â  If you’ve read my previous posts, especially the one called Baby Names, you can seeÂ that I’ve given up my ideal name of Frances.Â  Ok, it’s not my ideal name, that’s why I gave up on it, but I did want to name the baby after my late grandmother.Â  I just wish she had a name that was a little easier to convince my husband to name our baby and for me to WANT to name the baby.Â  Anyway, these are the final three so we’ll see how it turns out.Â  I am the one who signs the birth certificate in the hospital, so I can always sneak whatever I want on there, including Frances if I so desire…Â  JUST KIDDING!Â  I wouldn’t do that…Â  unless they pump me full of some crazy drugs to get through the labor…Â  then I can’t be held accountable for my actions.Â  But nothing is set in stone yet; we’re still a few months awayÂ – I will site the example of my youngest-for-now.Â  Her name was going to be Sydney until I was about 7 months pregnant…Â  then all of a sudden I said to my husband, I don’t think I like that name anymore!Â  I thought it was the hormones causing my sudden change of heart, but to my surprise, my husband agreed that HE didn’t like the name anymore either!Â  We think it might have had something to do with our other daughters calling her Cindy – they could not grasp the concept of reversing the sounds.Â  So anyway, these are the finalists in the name race for now, I will keep you posted on any changes!

### Comments

**taylhis**I've thought of this. Tempting... ;)  
**justj**Just remember the Mom gets to fill out the birth certificate. That is why I don't have a Rachel or Rebeca for any of my daughter's names.

# There's An Awful Lot You Can Tell About a Person By Their Shoes...

Where they’re going. Where they’ve been.Â  I’ve worn lots of shoes. Â I bet if I think about it real hard I could remember my first pair of shoes…Â Â  – FORREST GUMP

The preceding quote comes to mind because Disney, our youngest-for-now, got her first pair of shoes yesterday!Â  She loves them!Â  She always asks to wear them, even if it’s just for around the house.Â  But she always ends up just wearing one somehow and losing the other, so I wonder what Forrest Gump would think of that?Â  At first when she got them on, she just stood there, as if locked in cement.Â  Her big sister Taylor helped her learn to walk in them – it was adorable.Â  She was so patient with her without doing too much for her and giving in by picking her up.Â  Finally, Disney learned to walk in her new shoes and loves them.Â  Pretty soon she’ll be running around in her new shoes with me waddling behind her trying to keep up!

Seeing her “stuck” there when she thought she couldn’t walk reminded me of my other daughter Samantha, who is now almost 4.Â  When Sammie was learning to walk, it was summertime, and she was wearing sandals, so she’d be walking, walking, then as soon as she hit the grass – STOP!Â  And she’d be stuck there too, just like Disney was in her new shoes.Â  It’s strange how learning to walk is such a huge new experience, yet I’ve never met anyone who remembers going through it…Â  I think it’s much more fun being on the parent side, this time around, but then again, I can’t really name an experience that isn’t!

### Comments

# As Plain As the Nose on Your Face

Took the kids to see the movie [Penelope](http://imdb.com/title/tt0472160/) this weekend.Â  Unusual choice for kids, I guess, but they watched the trailers for that one and for [College Road Trip](http://imdb.com/title/tt0997047/), and they chose Penelope, a movie about a princess named Penelope (played by [Christina Ricci](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000207/)) who is born with a pig nose because of a generations-old curse that is put upon her family.Â  I wasn’t expecting much from the movie, mainly because I hadn’t heard much about it, but also because let’s face it, the premise isn’t exactly one based in reality.Â  I had read one little article about Christina Ricci, and how this is her first movie in awhile, yada, yada, but I didn’t think much of a movie about a girl with a pig’s nose – until it was in our local theater and it was only rated PG.Â  I did not doze off during this one, and it did not bore the kids like I was expecting.Â  Our 8-year-old liked it, our 3-year-old fell asleep; not fromÂ boredom, she just does that a lot in the movie theater, takes after Mom, I guess ðŸ˜‰ and our 17-month-old was rambunctious as can be.Â  I think she is getting too old for movies.Â  You know what I mean – there is a window where kids should not be taken to movies, I guess, say between walking age and an age they can sit still and actually enjoy the movie.Â  Our youngest-for-now is reaching that age quickly!

So anyway, Penelope is actually quite entertaining, and it wasn’t entirely predictable like I thought.Â  Overall, a cute movie that kinda throws a lesson in for the kids – don’t judge a person on looks alone.Â  Christina Ricci is pretty good, barely recognizable, and I had trouble figuring out if it was because of her acting or her pig nose.Â  [Catherine O’Hara](http://imdb.com/name/nm0001573/) was wonderful and fun to watch as always, and [Reese Witherspoon](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000702/) was alsoÂ fun to watch (surprisingly so for me, because I’m not a big fan of hers)Â in her equally surprisingly small role as Penelope’s newfound biker-chick friend.Â  Fun to watch,Â ok for kids…Â  I’d see it again.Â

### Comments

# Defunct TV

I received another email forward that isÂ worth mentioning today.Â  It was a list of people’s first names followed by a tv show.Â  The idea is that you are supposed to add your name to the list along with a tv show you used to watch that’s not on tv anymore.Â  I was a huge fan of tv as a kid, and I watched it a lot, so it was fun to sit and think about shows that I enjoyed that aren’t on tv anymore.Â  Since you were only supposed to add one show after your name on the email forward, I’m going to share the other shows I was going to put in it, along with imdb links so you can learn about them if you wish:

[Dolphin Cove](http://imdb.com/title/tt0096568) – This is the show I included with my name in the forward.Â  It was originally an Australian show, but they tried it in the US, and it only aired for one season, if that.Â  I think there were 8 episodes.Â  It was about an AmericanÂ widower who moves to Australia with his 2 children to work with dolphins.Â  His daughter is mute because she is in shock after witnessing the accident that took her mother’s life.Â  SheÂ develops special communication skills with the dolphins.Â Â Since I was only 10 when the show aired, I don’t remember much, I just know that I really liked it and that I was extremely disappointed when it didn’t come back on tv.Â  Since it was cancelled abruptly, there were some open-ended plot lines, and I waited for months hoping the show would be back.Â  Of course it was not.Â  If anyone knows how to get itÂ tape or the internet or anything, let me know, I’d love to see it again!Â  Oh, and something interesting I learned from imdb – apparently the show was written by [Peter Benchley](http://imdb.com/name/nm0001940/), the author who wrote [Jaws](http://imdb.com/title/tt0073195/).Â  I read a book by him once called The Beast, and it was pretty scary.Â  Not that Dolphin Cove was scary or anything like that, it’s just a note.Â  I’m not sure if he wrote the concept for the show or all the episodes or both, but it doesn’t reallyÂ matterÂ muchÂ now anyway.

[The Charmings](http://imdb.com/title/tt0092332/) – I was 9 years old when this show was on and I thought it looked stupid then, if that tells you anything.Â  Still, as aÂ pre-tween girl, the intrigue of a sitcom based on a fairy tale was irresistable, so I gave it a try, and I still found it dumb.Â  The tagline says it all:Â  “*Snow White and Prince Charming fell asleep in the Enchanted Forest… they woke up in Burbank!”Â* Unbelievably, this show actually WON a primetime Emmy and was nominated forÂ 3 others.Â  True, it won the Emmy for Outstanding Lighting Direction (Electronic) for a Comedy Series, (does that one even still exist?) but still…Â  I guess that magic mirror was truly something to behold.Â  The writing and acting apparently were not however, since the show only lasted for 2 seasons, and they switched Snow Whites after only 6 episodes.

[The Carol Burnett Show](http://imdb.com/title/tt0101058/) – I’m not talking about the well-known show that ran from 1967-1978 since I wasn’t around for that; I’m talking about the hour-long show that aired in the early ’90’s.Â  Each show featured a series of sketches with an awesome cast of supporting actors, and this is where I was introduced to an actor named [Richard Kind](http://imdb.com/name/nm0454236/), who went on to do shows such as [MadÂ About You](http://imdb.com/title/tt0103484/) and [Spin City](http://imdb.com/title/tt0115369/).Â  I loved every skit he was in on The Carol Burnett Show of the ’90’s – they were my favorites.Â  I don’t know how longÂ the showÂ lasted because I was very young at this time and there is not much info on it at imdb.com, but I know that it should have lasted longer because it was true family entertainment – very funny for all ages.

[Silver Spoons](http://imdb.com/title/tt0083479/) – Hardly anyone in my generation has forgotten this show.Â  Airing for 5 seasons, it made a star of a young [Rick Schroder](http://imdb.com/name/nm0005401/) (then he was known as Ricky Schroder, a heart-throb for teen girls everywhere!) as a spoiled rich kid who lived in a mansion but faced many of the problems normal teenagers face.Â  His father (played by [Joel Higgins](http://imdb.com/name/nm0383415/), whatever happened to him?) was a toy inventor, so needless to say, their house and the gadgets inside were pretty cool and fun to watch.Â  It’s hard to believe this show only lasted for 5 seasons, but then again, it was rerun on so many networks in syndication, and that’s where I saw the majority of the episodes I watched.Â  I still remember the theme song, and no, I didn’t have to look it up first, which I guess is a little sad, but anyway: *“Here we are, face to face, a couple of Silver Spoons.Â  Hopin to find, we’re two of a kind, making a go, making it grow, together…”Â* I could go on, but you get the idea.

As an avid tv watcher, of course I watched many more shows than the ones I’ve listed here.Â  These are just the ones thatÂ came to my mind todayÂ which I thought would make interesting conversation.Â  And, for extra fun, here is a copy of the forward:

How many shows can we come up with that we USED to watch that are no  
> longer on TV? Add one and keep going.  
> This should be fun and jog our memories. No repeats on the shows please.  
> Send to all your friends and back to me.  
>Lisa…………………………..Dolphin Cove  
> Jamy………………….Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman  
> Barb…………………..Little House on the Prairie  
> Dutch…………………Dragnet  
> Marilyn……………….Friday night fights!!  
> Dutch…………………Dynasty  
>  
> Carol………………….Streets of Sanfrancisco  
>  
> Cheryl………………..St. Elsewhere  
>  
> Lisa……………………Here Comes the Brides  
>  
> Toni……………………Peyton Place  
>  
> Mary…………………..Topper  
>  
> Madeline……………..Friday Nite Videos  
>  
> Sheila…………………China Beach  
>  
> Twyla………………….I Remember Mama  
>  
> Sandy…………………Dallas  
>  
> Melanie……………….The Adventures Of Brisco County  
>  
> Ellen…………………. Sports Night  
>  
> Karen…………………Hawaii 5-0  
>  
> Pat…………………….Lucy’s Toy Shop  
>  
> Karma………………..Happy Days  
>  
> Shari…………………That Girl  
>  
> Bill…………………….Checkmate  
>  
> Judy………………….Amos ‘N Andy  
>  
> Peg ………………….Mickey Mouse Club  
>  
> Ron —————– Lucky Strike Hit Parade  
>  
> Paula…………………My Three Sons  
>  
> Cindy………………..Mary Heart Line  
>  
> Barb………………….I Love Lucy  
>  
> Glenda……………….Phil Donahue Show  
>  
> MARLENE…………..MY LITTLE MARGIE  
>  
> AJ…………………….Saturday Night Hit Parade  
>  
> June………………….The Naked City  
>  
> Jeanie………………..Danny Thomas Show  
>  
> Pam…………………..Bozo The Clown  
>  
> Kim ……………………Andy Griffith Show  
>  
> Cassie………………..30 something  
>  
> Kay……………………Saturday Night FRIGHTS (good ol scary movie night)  
>  
> Kaye…………………..Dick Van Dyke  
>  
> Karen Rust ………….Father Knows Best (way back)  
>  
> Kat D………………….Mama’s Family  
>  
> Janna…………………The Love Boat  
>  
> Dan……………………Night Court  
>  
> Maureen……………….Once and Again  
>  
> Michele ………………Bosom Buddies  
>  
> Jennifer………………..The Lawrence Welk Show  
>  
> Marilyn………………..Dr. Kildare  
>  
> Diane………………….Have Gun Will Travel  
>  
>Phyllis…………………Bonanza

>Sharon………………..Winky Dink

### Comments

**taylhis**Yes - it was an awesome show... I could have sworn it was on for more than one season, but who knows, I was very young to remember details like that. Max Headroom was short-lived? I wouldn't have guessed that, based on all the marketing... there were so many MH products, and even a cartoon I believe.  
**jamiahsh**OOPS.... follow the blue light link.... Christopher Reeve was in an episode...TOO COOL  
**jamiahsh**Was there actually a Carol Burnett SHOW in the 90's? I remember a series of specials.  
**jamiahsh**The New Zoo Review, Punky Brewster, Great Space Coaster (of course you knew that), Ewoks. Droids, and Max Headroom (VERY short lived, too)

# Toddler Talk

WHEW!Â  IÂ didn’t mean to take a weeklong blog hiatus, but due to the kids being on spring break, that’s what happened!Â  We wereÂ SO busy, I haven’t really been in front of my computer…Â  I hope this isn’t what summer break is going to be like!Â  It was fun and all, but SO busy!Â  During the week, we did haveÂ LOTS of fun, and we got to spend lots of family time together, which gave me time to put together theÂ following translation list of Toddler Talk.Â  Our youngest (until July, anyway!) is currently at one of the cutest ages there is: 17 months.Â  She walks around (finally!) babbling about all kinds of stuff, and she answersÂ almost every question with a definitive “no”.Â  Sometimes she means it, sometimes she doesn’t.Â Â Here is a guide to help you communicate better with Disney or any 17 month old:Â

ooveÂ = move, you’re in MY way!

downÂ = means up or down, just depends on where she is at the moment.Â

yum-yum-yum-yum = can sound like mom, mom, mom, mom – is usually used very loudly to “ask” for a food she wants.

no = self-explanatory.Â  At this age, it’s used constantly.

DOP = STOP.Â  Because she has 2 older sisters, this was one of her first words.

oovie = movie.Â  Usually used to request a dvd in the car.

mama = actually means Grandma.Â  She calls Mommy “Mom”.

gink = drink.Â  I’m thirsty!

baa = bottle.Â  I know, she should not be using these anymore…Â  But it’s so hard to take them away when she loves them so much!

cookie? = give me a cookie or I will cry.

candy = see above.Â  She learned this word around the Easter holiday.

Â cake you = thank you.Â  She says this almost every time you give her something – it’s SO cute!Â  I hope it doesn’t lead to her being spoiled…

ack = snack

ankeyÂ = blankie

mere = come here.Â  She uses this to call the dogs, or she holds out her arms and says it when she wants to be picked up.Â  A favorite sentence is “Mom mere.”

She says lots of things, and her vocabulary grows every day!Â  These are just some of the cutest things right now…Â  I love this age; the calm before the storm of the terrible two’s!

### Comments

**taylhis**Oh, yes, I didn't include baby... She's got that word down - it means "kid".  
**justj**I recall being fluent in toddler... It has been a few years since I needed to use it.  
**jamiahsh**baby= two year old niece calls her 4 year old sister.

# A Family Easter

With 3 wonderful kids, how could we not have a good Easter?Â  We started by coloring eggs on Saturday afternoon, and it went so well that I even bought a spare coloring kit at the easter clearance sales today, figuring we can do it again in a few weeks.Â  If colored eggs will entice the kids to eat them, then coloring eggs doesn’t only have to be for Easter, I say!Â  Actually, we started our Easter celebration with a visit to the Easter Bunny at the mall on Friday.Â  There was no line, but at those prices, I can see why!Â  But I begged Hubby to buy me a picture of the girls with the Easter BunnyÂ and said it could be my Mother’s Day present this year because when we went to do our community egg hunt (candy clean-up), the batteries on the camera died before we could get a picture with the Easter Bunny.Â  It’s just something I like to do every year along with taking pictures with Santa because it’s a good way to get them all to sit down together and track how they grow from year to year.

So anyway, back to hiding eggs…Â  I got so tired on Saturday night that I forgot to play Easter Bunny and hide the eggs (can hard-boiled eggs even stay out of the fridge overnight?), but I woke up a little on the way up to bed and did remember to set the alarm.Â  Except that when it went off Sunday morning,Â we heard the kids were already up, so Hubby and I scrambled downstairs and hid everything in a hurry so we wouldn’t get caught.Â  And we had to leave our dogs outside during the hunt, otherwise they would do some easter egg hunting of their own!Â  And of course – every year this happens somehow – there was the one egg that slipped away somehow only to be lost until weeks later when its rotten smell gives away its hiding place.Â  But, learning from the past, we counted how many eggs we had hidden and didn’t give up until the lost egg was found!Â  Overall, it was a GREAT Easter.Â  The kids did have some candy comedown, but that is to be expected.Â  Disney – she is 17 mos. – woke up today by asking for candy for breakfast.Â  I think they’ll get back to normal soon…Â  just in time to get candy at the summer parades coming up!Â  Hope everyone had a wonderful Easter and were able to share in the love of family and friends!

### Comments

**derek**With two, I mean three dogs and a child in diapers that smell probably isn't necessarily a rotten egg... Did you have a great Resurrection Day too? :D  
**jamiahsh**OF COOURSE I got to share in the love of both family and the best of friends. :). AHHHH... the ol' egg left hidden. Or was that the aroma of another mishap from years past. Not sure that it was weeks after we located the last egg.... but that would be nasty..

# Still More Mini-Golf

In case you haven’t read the comments at the end of my Mini-Golf – The Sequel! post, I talked about how much I didn’t like the new version I had posted because it was obscenely difficult.Â  The first version was simplistic and easy to play after some practice.Â  The second version I got (which was evidently the 3rd version of the game) turned out to be way too difficult, and the added complications (sandtraps, water) made the game lose part of its charm.Â  Unfortunately, I did not play the game before I posted the link, so that’s why I had to comment on it.Â  I suggest you give it a try if you like these computer mini-golf games though, I did appreciate the “bounciness” of the ball off the walls.Â  But, if you’re like me, and you think the second game (3rd version) I posted was way too difficult to enjoy, then give this one a try also:

Â <http://www.gigarcade.com/full-744-Forest-Challenge-2.html>

[swf]http://www.gigarcade.com/swf/20754.swf[/swf]

It has some sand and water traps, but it also has the “bounce-back” reaction of the ball, and the slope grades are dipicted in such a way that you can actually tell the difference between them.Â  I think I may have noticed a scoring glitch in the game though.Â  If there’s no glitch, then I am very good at this and scored a 3 ðŸ˜‰

Watch out for hole #18 – it’s a par 8, so that should tell you something!

### Comments

# Betcha I've Seen Shutter More Than You!

Not that it’s anything to brag about, but I saw the new movie [Shutter](http://imdb.com/title/tt0482599/) not once, but twice this weekend!Â  It was pretty good, if you like movies like [The Ring](http://imdb.com/title/tt0298130/) and [The Grudge](http://imdb.com/title/tt0391198/).Â  There are a few other moviesÂ people say Shutter is like, but I haven’t seen them.Â  It did remind me a lot of The Ring – they were both super-natural ghost stories.Â  I should have known I’d like it, at least that I’d like it better than [Doomsday](http://imdb.com/title/tt0483607/), because the guy who gave Doomsday an “A” rating on [movies.com](http://movies.go.com/shutter/d933636/horror) gave Shutter a “D”!Â  I’m starting to think he’s a moron.Â  I gave you the quote he made about Doomsday in a previous post of mine; he talked about how great all the violence was, yada, yada, so just to prove his idiocy, here is a snippet of what he thought of Shutter:

*“As unfrightening PG-13 horror films go, this unfrightening PG-13 horror film is the most unfrightening of the year. It’s even more unfrightening than [The Eye](http://imdb.com/title/tt0406759/), which featured such unfrightening scenes as [Jessica Alba](http://imdb.com/name/nm0004695/) yelling into an oven. This one has unfrightening scenes of [Joshua Jackson](http://imdb.com/name/nm0005045/) sitting in a chair. Okay, there is one jumpy moment. That happens when Joshua Jackson turns around really fast in that chair. All the 11 year-olds in the audience went, “AUUGGH!” when that part happened. So if you’re 11, then that part is really going to freak you out.”*

So according to the movies.com review guy, a movie is not good or scary if it doesn’t have at least 3 decapitations, exploding animals, and some cannibalism.Â  Whatever.Â  He does have a point though – the 11-year-old in the theater with us was scared sillyÂ – which brings me to the reason we saw it twice in one day…

Grandma was in town for a visit.Â  Despite the impending snow storm (again), she was able to travel the 200+ miles to see her grandchildren, thank goodness.Â  Who would have believed that we’d have to deal with Grandma almost having to cancel her spring break trip to Ohio because of still more SNOW!Â  Thank you, Grandma, for taking the time and energy it took to come early to ensure the special time you were able to spend with the girls wasn’t ruined by yet another snow storm.Â  So anyway, with Grandma being in town, that left Hubby and I with a whole afternoon and evening to ourselves!Â  Snowstorm or not, we were going to make the most of it…Â  So we saw a matinee of Shutter, which we enjoyed.Â  It wasn’t scary, comes no where close to the creepiness of The Ring, but it was entertaining, and it saved itself from getting unbearably cheesy several times…Â  A lot of the reviewers didn’t like it, but I think they’re just sick of the whole PG13-Asian-horror-movie-remake genre.Â  As a side effect of the PG13 rating, during our matinee, there were obnoxious teenagers in the theater.Â  Their laughing and running up and down the aisles wasn’t totally obscene, but it did take away from some of the enjoyment of a horror movie.Â  When they left the movie at the end, they had a younger boy with them who looked scared beyond belief.Â  I think maybe all the laughing and whatnot was because they were actually really nervous and scared.Â  So, when we explained their antics to the movie theater manager, they were completely understanding and told us we could go ahead and see it again.Â  I didn’t really catch anything that I missed the first time (except for one itty bitty scene where I dozed yet again), but it was fun to watch a horror movie again that no one else in the theater had seen yet because it was its first day out in the theaters – you knew when the scary parts were coming and could watch the whole theater jump and gasp.

If you are a fan of the PG13-Asian-horror-movie-remake genre, I think you’ll like Shutter.Â  If not, it might not be what you’re looking for in a movie, unless you’re between the ages of 14-23.

### Comments

**taylhis**Hmmm... I am curious about what pg13 movie they'd feel needed to be shown to 6th graders. There's already some questionable "curriculum" in the school system that we are thinking of pulling our kids out of... I don't want them to stick out for that and be made fun of, but there are some things that should be left to the parents to teach, I think.  
**derek**You know, mentioning kids seeing this PG-13 movie reminds me of the other day when I was subbing for an eighth grade class. We were meeting in the LMC because they were working on a project, and during one period a sixth-grader came in by himself with some work. Since he knew me some subbing in his 5th grade class last year, I was able to ask him why he was in the LMC (ordinarily I would have just ignored him since he wasn't a part of my class and was being taken care of by the librarians). Apparently his science class was watching a PG-13 movie and his parents wouldn't let him see it. I never asked what movie it was though.

# Mini-Golf - The Sequel!

Thanks to my awesome husband for finding this…Â  I haven’t had a chance to try it yet but I am about to, so I will post my best score…Â  which will probably be at least twice the score of you “experts” out there!Â  Oh well, they are fun…Â  let’s see how this one compares: <http://www.gigarcade.com/full-960-MiniPutt-3.html>

### Comments

**derek**Too many ramps. And I just lost the last game because I accidentally clicked on "restart"- when I clicked to hit the ball after aiming I failed to realize it was right on top of the restart button.  
**jamiahsh**i agree.... version 3 was terrible.  
**taylhis**Ok - this one sucks! Not nearly as addicting as the first one, probably because the first one was so easy, that's what made it fun. I'm not even going to share my score on this one... true it was my first time playing, but let's just say it was in the triple digits ;( Maybe we will see if there is a version 2 since this was 3 - we skipped from 1 to 3... back to 1 for me!

# Big Money Splits

…is the title of an AP article I read the other day about the price of celebrity divorces, inspired by, of course, the McCartney-Mills divorce that’s beenÂ dominating the headlines lately.Â  I took note of this article becauseÂ I was surprised that the McCartney-MillsÂ settlement was not in the top 5 most expensive divorce settlements.Â  In fact, the top 5 were surprising to me; just people I would not have guessed that would have had that much money orÂ who would have not been able to protect themselves and their assets any better.Â  Actually, theÂ McCartney-Mills divorce settlement at $48.6 million equaled a little overÂ half of # 5 on the list.Â  Here it is:

1.Â  Michael and Juanita Jordan – possibly more than $150 million settlement pending, 2006.

2.Â  Neil Diamond and Marcia Murphey – $150 million, 1994.

3.Â  Steven Spielberg and Amy Irving – $100 million, 1989.

4.Â  Harrison Ford and Melissa Mathison – $85 million, 2004.

5.Â  Kevin Costner and Cindy Silva – $80 million, 1994.

I wonder what some of these amounts would be if adjusted for inflation also.Â  This article would have been a little more interesting if they had included theÂ wedding date or how long the couple was together before the divorce.Â  I am often amused when I look in the local newspaper and see divorces between couples who were only married a few years, some only a few months!Â  My dear friendsÂ are wedding photographers, and they’veÂ shared at least one story of a couple who was no longer together by theÂ time their wedding photos were ready to be picked up!Â  It’s amusing, yet sad at the same time, especially of courseÂ any time there are children involved.Â  I wish people would think a little bit harder about the commitment and sacrifice involved in marriage, and I wish that more people would treat marriage like the institution it was meant to be.Â

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Totally agree.... many people enter into marriage way too frivolously or feel obligated to for one reason or another. I've seen what happens when the commitment is not taken seriously and children are involved (which is the worst part). Really sad.

# Doomsday - Not Just a Clever Title

The movie [Doomsday](http://imdb.com/title/tt0483607/) is about a virus that wipes out all of Scotland.Â  I’m not really inspired to write much about it because I didn’t like the movie.Â  I can’t even think of anyone I know who would.Â  I wasn’t bored at the theater, but you couldn’t pay me to watch this movie again.Â  First of all, it wasn’t my type of movie.Â  It was sci-fi and took place in the future, which is already 2 strikes against it as far as I’m concerned.Â Â And then there was the violence.Â  The never-ending, non-stop, constantly gruesome and always bloody violence.Â  People died in any and every way you can imagine and some hopefully you can’t.Â  I lost count after 5 decapitations, all very graphic, and there were also scenes of people getting squished, burned alive, smashed by cars…Â  like I said, you name a method of torture, it was in this movie.Â  I was not expecting this.Â  I thought the movie was going be more like Outbreak, where people try to combat the virus together – I would classify that as more of a drama from what I can remember.Â  After seeing Doomsday, I even had a dream involving severed limbs last night…Â  thank goodness it wasn’t nearly as graphic or bloody as the movie…Â  I wouldn’t even classify it as a nightmare.Â  And don’t go thinking I’m some kind of weirdo – if you were exposed to almost 2 hrs. of that kind of violence, you would understand why it came across in my sleep!Â  But anyway, Doomsday definitely goes on my *Worst Movies I’ve Seen*Â list.Â  So far the list consists of:

1.Â  [The Night Listener](http://imdb.com/title/tt0448075/)

2.Â  [The Producers](http://imdb.com/title/tt0395251/) (2005)

3.Â  [Doomsday](http://imdb.com/title/tt0483607/)

4.Â  [The Devil’s Rejects](http://imdb.com/title/tt0395584/)

5.Â  [Meet the Spartans](http://imdb.com/title/tt1073498/) – I’m actually going to remove this one – it doesn’t really qualify as a movie, plus I didn’t see the whole thing.Â  I KNEW it was going to be horrible, but my husband wanted to try it for some reason…Â Â we lasted for about 10 mins, if that.

This list is in no particular order.Â  It’s really difficult to do that because they were all horrible in their own unique ways.Â  I liked the original[Producers](http://imdb.com/title/tt0063462/)Â (1968), but I never even saw the whole remake with [Nathan Lane](http://imdb.com/name/nm0001447/) and [Matthew Broderick](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000111/) because I couldn’t get past the first scene, which is rare for me, usually I will stick it out.Â  The Night Listener was horrible because it was predictable and dumb, but I would much rather sit thru that movie again than be subjected to Doomsday and all the violence again…Â  But when I saw each of them for the first time, I was more entertained by Doomsday than by The Night Listener…Â  so it just depends on the movie and what you mean by worst.Â  But they are all worthy of being classified as the worst movies I’ve ever seen, for one reason or another, some more than others.

I was totally surprised that Doomsday ended up being so bad after seeingÂ that [movies.com](http://movies.go.com/doomsday/r935856/scifi" \l "critics) gave it an “A” as a rating!Â  I used to have this theory that I would go opposite whatever the critics said about a movie, and I think I will have to continue that trend.Â  If I remember correctly, Ebert and Roeper gave Devil’s Rejects “2 Thumbs Up”.Â  As I said, movies.com liked Doomsday, but I thinkÂ the followingÂ excerptÂ of their critic’s review just about says it all – I say, see this movie at your own risk, on a dare, or if for some reason you are getting paid.Â  Otherwise, don’t botherÂ with it, don’t know why we did!

From movies.com:

Â “*Name something you want in an ultraviolent action thriller and this movie delivers it. Impalement, decapitation, decapitated heads being affixed back onto bodies only to then take arrows through the skull and fall off again, motorcycles decorated with human skeletons, cannibalism, exploding bunnies, insane car chases, wacky costumes, incomprehensible editing, an indestructible a hot chick heroine (Rhona Mitra, who looks like what would happen if Kate Beckinsale and Victoria Beckham had a baby that was the Terminator) whose hotness grows in tandem with the number of people she mows down in the name of truth. Does it suck? Sorta. Is that awesome? Absolutely. In terms of sheer excitement, it’s the best movie of 2008.”*

NOTE FROM ME – Best movie of 2008?Â  I don’t think it’s a coincidence that we’re only in the 3rd month!

### Comments

**jamiah**Excuse please Jeoberg, you a not sure if you a trust Morat's movies? Once a Who always a Who... even Cindy Lou Who who was no more than two. And every who in Whoville liked Christmas a lot.  
**Jeoberg**Well, I don't know and can't find anywhere that Dr. Seuss said that the Whos were the same. In the Grinch Movie, and in the musical "Seussical" the conection is made. Both towns were named Whoville, so I guess it is up to you to decide.  
**taylhis**That reminds me, are the Who's from Horton the same as the Who's from the Grinch? In my defense, I saw Horton in the afternoon, which is when I get sleepy, saw Doomsday at night, after the 2nd wind kicked in - besides, there was too much noise to sleep... Like I said, I don't mind seeing bad movies, didn't feel like I wasted my time or anything... I see lots of movies so I'm bound to get a bad one in there somewhere... did see a preview for the new Hulk movie though. What's that about? Related to the other one - competing or sequel? The comp animation looked terrible. Hopefully they just rushed it for the preview. And DEREK: Do stay FAR away from this one - thanks for reminding me though - this movie REEKED of video game! It reminded me of Lara Croft, not that I've played it, but the main character looked like her, and it just totally seemed like a violent adventure / action game.  
**derek**Needless to say, I will be staying far, far away from this one... Sounds like Resident Evil Extreme if you ask me, and I don't even bother with the ordinary Resident Evil games/movies.  
**Jeoberg**HOO was AWAKE during DOOMSDAY. You should get some help in choosing your movies... ;) That Borat blog thing seems to review movies, maybe you could check with him?? I'm not so sure I'd trust his movies either. I can help on Action/Adventure movies, Movies based on comic book characters, comedies, and animated. Just ask, maybe I can suggest something you haven't seen.  
**jamiahsh**Meet the Spartans = this year's Epic Movie and coming soon... Superhero Movie. We are going spoof happy in Hollywood.

# Lions and Tigers and Bears Oh My

I am greatly anticipating our scheduled visit to the Toledo Zoo next week.Â  My daughter needs a specialty dentist in the big city, so we’ve decided to throw some fun in there as well with a trip to the zoo.Â  It will probably be my last one until after I have the baby, unless they have a wagon available for rental that’s big enough for very pregnant me AND the 3 kids.Â  Since it’s only March and I’m not due until July, I think IÂ can stillÂ handle the large amount of walking it takes to get around the zoo – we’ll see anyway.Â  I naively thought that pregnancies would get easier with experience, but it seems that I forgot to factor in my increasing age – I am almost 10 years older than I was the first time I was with child – and I feel it!

Toledo Zoo is very large.Â  It’s a very nice zoo, but there is lots of walking.Â  It remains one of my favorite zoos in the country however, and I’ve visited at least 20.Â  Toledo has lots of animals, but they are pretty spread out.Â  Also, because the zoo straddles a major road, you have to trek up and down a ramp and across a long pedestrian bridge; all of which is not so much fun if pregnant or in the heat of the summer.Â  But overall, it is one of my favorite zoos.Â  Even though the gorilla’s indoor exhibit is pretty small, I really enjoy how close you can see them, and they don’t seem unhappy being in a small exhibit…Â  unlike a gorilla at the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, Nebraska.Â  He had a really small indoor enclosure, and we witnessed him charge at a little boy – it was very scary and thank goodness that glass was thick!Â  This was years ago, and I think Henry Doorly has since re-built their gorilla exhibit.Â  Another zoo with a lot of walking is the Brookfield Zoo near Chicago, Illinois.Â  Brookfield has lots of walking, but unlike Toledo, the animals are spaced further apart, so much of the walking is without seeing animals.Â  It’s been a few years since I’ve been there, so maybe they’ve changed this, but it’s not one of my favorite zoos, unless we’re talking about sentimental reasons – it was the site of my husband’s and my first “unofficial” date.Â  One zoo that sticks out in my memory as one of my favorites is the Folsom Children’s Zoo in Lincoln, Nebraska.Â  The name is misleading, they had quite an array of animals there; including red pandas, camels, reindeer, leopards, monkeys, a variety of reptiles, seals, sloths, emus that like to be pet, and there are still many more I haven’t named.Â  All in only 19 acres, nestled right in the city.Â  Which sounds large, but once you get in there, it was really the perfect size.Â  Not much walking at all, lots of animals who all had lots of room in their environments, and it was very nicely landscaped with mature trees and such so that you forgot you were in the middle of the city.Â  We used to live close enough to walk there, but the only problem with this great little zoo is that it was only open from April – October.Â  If you are ever in Nebraska, the Folsom Children’s Zoo is a must-see.Â  Being a native Chicagoan, it’s strange that I’ve never visited the Lincoln Park Zoo, which is also in the middle of a city, albeit a much larger one than Lincoln.Â  But I’ve heard good things about it, and maybe one of these days, during one of our bi-yearly visits to the area, we will give Lincoln Park a whirl so I can add it to my zoo resume.

Before our trips to the zoo, I like to visit a really cool website to brush up on my animal facts.Â  It really makes zoo trips more interesting if you know a little more about what you’re looking at.Â  Check out this online database that is maintained by the University of Michigan: Â <http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/index.html>

And finally, if you are still reading this, you must be an animal lover like me.Â  If you also like to read, I highly recommend my favorite book written by my favorite celebrity: Jack Hanna, called “Monkeys on the Interstate”.Â  If you ever watch The Late Show with David Letterman, you know that poor Jack often comes across as a bumbling fool when he’s on the show.Â  He is an animal expert however, and he is much more entertaining to watch than most animal experts.Â  He and Letterman tease each other mercilessly, and there is almost always some sort of animal mishap that occurs when Jack is involved, always with hilarious results.Â  His book is a narrative of the same sort of episodes, all taken from his life as he was growing up andÂ also fromÂ when he went onÂ to become the director of the Columbus Zoo.Â  By the way, being an Ohioan, I’ve had the opportunity to visit the Columbus Zoo, and I will say that it did not disappoint.Â  If you read Jack’s book, you will read about how he brought the zoo from anonymity (he notes in his book that when he first arrived in Ohio, people would always ask him,”there’s a zoo in Columbus?!?”) to one of the most renowned facilities in the world.Â  There was a lot of trial and error involved in acheiving this, and again, many hilarious hijinks, all of which are detailed in the book – it is really entertaining reading.Â  And it’s not just a clever title – there really *were* Monkeys on the Interstate, thanks to Jack and one of his hare-brained ideas!Â  Maybe I will take another look at it on the long ride to Toledo next week…

### Comments

**Britteny Evancho**Every time I watch Letterman, I can laugh, cry, be shocked and so many other emotions. Thank you for true entertainment!  
**Jeoberg**Of course more zoo people. I've been going to zoos for the past 25+ years, and I will agree that the Toledo Zoo is one of the best. I've enjoyed all the Ohio Zoos that I know about (Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, and of course Toledo), some southern MI Zoos, and the Ft Wayne Zoo. We are really blessed in this area by having 3 good zoos within 1 1/2 hour drive and many more that could be done in a day trip (stretching it with younger children, but as they get older...) If I'm ever in Nebraska, I'll check the Folsom zoo out.  
**taylhis**Cool - Toledo is about an hour from Bryan - not too bad, especially with plenty of Veggie Tales in the backround :)  
**derek**Toledo Zoo, eh? I'll have to look it up on the 'net since I will probably be joining you. :)

# When Forwards Are Addicting...

I’m talking about email forwards.Â  And just about everyone knows someone or is someone (even if they won’t admit it) who just can’t seem to resist forwarding EVERY forward they get toÂ EVERYONE in their address book.Â  I’ve mentioned before that my mom’s neighbor from about 5 years ago *still* forwards me stuff…Â  and it’s not like I knew them all that well to begin with.Â  They just got my email address from a forward list one time (I think), and just forward every forward to everyone they know – and some people they don’t know, apparently.Â  I get about 3-5 forwards in my email per day from various people.Â  I don’t read them all – who has time for that?Â  Some of them I pass along, and others I don’t.Â  I always feel a little guilty when I do pass them on though because there is a slight chance they could contain viruses or just be incredibly annoying to those poor people I do send them to…Â  So, with my apologies ahead of time to those who don’t like it, here is a link that I got as a forward the other day.Â  It links to this reallyÂ fun and addictingÂ mini golf game that my husband and I have had lots of fun with.Â  So far, my top score – well it’s golf, so my low score is a 42…Â  holes #14 and #18 kill me every time.Â  See what you think:Â <http://www.ibogleif.dk/spil/flashspil/minigolf/minigolf.swf>

[swf]http://www.ibogleif.dk/spil/flashspil/minigolf/minigolf.swf[/swf]

Oh, yeah, and DO NOT open this at work – I do not want to be responsible for getting anyone into trouble on the job!Â  I know I can’t put the game down…Â  enough of this posting, the baby needs a diaper change…Â  I’ll change her after one more game, just gotta play while holding my nose…

### Comments

**derek**Yes. Next week is spring break. How far is Toledo from Bryan?  
**taylhis**Derek, are you talking about finally visiting? And by next week, you mean Wed the 26th - Fri the 28th? Let us know ASAP so we can clear schedules... Chris holds down regular hours now you know :) He will need to get his work done early... but no problem, we are looking forward to it. And T has a dental appt in Toledo on Thurs, so we were just going to make a day of it, but you can just come along, we still have an extra spot left in the van!  
**derek**Sure, next week. Looks like probably Wed-Fri. I looked at my schedule and I have church drama on the 29th.  
**jamiahsh**I will keep practicing... BRING ON THE REAL THING :)  
**taylhis**18?!? Holy cow... I thought my 42 was good... I think I'd do better if I could memorize what works on each hole, but my memory stinks, so I usually aim for under par when I play! You guys are cut-throat!  
**Jeoberg**You are just nasty. Forwarding me a mini-golf game. Now I'm addicted to something else on the computer. I can't stop until I beat this game. Must score 18, must score 18.... Really, thanks for send that. I used to play that about 2 years ago, but the sight it was on went to bit heaven. At one time I did have that game down, and scored quite a few 18's, but usually in the low to mid 20's. I forgot how to play holes 14 and 18 so this time I got a 28.  
**derek**38 for me :) Thank for the game. The only real issue I have with the game is that the first time you play, you have no idea if a slope is a paltry 15Â°, a nasty 60Â°, or more likely somewhere in between. They only seem to show the direction of the slope. At least they didn't have a full ant hill, and the software is just a touch buggy as to allow the ball to stop on a slope!

# Horton Hears a ZZZzzzz...

Took the kids to see [Horton Hears a Who](http://imdb.com/title/tt0451079/) today.Â  Ok, so the title of the blog is a bit misleading…Â  it wasn’t really boring.Â  I am just so tired that I’m 2 for 2 in the falling asleep in the movie theater tally this week.Â  I actually liked what I saw of the movie.Â Â With the exceptionÂ of my 3-year-old running up and down the aisle, I enjoyed the experience.Â  It wasn’t totally her fault though; we went to an Easter egg hunt this morning, so she hadÂ LOTS of sugar coursing through her veins, which is why she wasÂ extra-hyperÂ and running around the movie theater.Â  Once we flushed the sugar with plenty of non-sugary fluids, I was able to relax and enjoy the show – after a trip to the bathroom, of course.Â  It should actually be called a candy clean-up since they pick candy up off the floor; it has nothing to do with Easter eggs or hunting.Â  Still fun though, I’m just saying.

Before the movie started, I found myself wishing I had read the book, just to see how close the movie is to the book because now I have no idea.Â  But as far as Dr. Suess movies go, this is the best one I’ve seen.Â  Then again, I HATED [The Cat in the Hat](http://imdb.com/title/tt0312528/), and never saw the live-action version ofÂ [How theÂ Grinch Stole Christmas](http://imdb.com/title/tt0170016/), so there’s not much to compare it to in that respect.

The movie is about an elephant named Horton who lives in a jungle in what must be a fictional place because to my knowledge, there aren’t any jungles that have both kangaroos and elephants as indigenous species.Â  I know, it’s just a Dr. Suess movie and I’m probably reading too far into it, but I can’t help but think of that sort of thing.Â  And judging by Horton’s ears, he is an African elephant, not an Asian elephant…Â  ok, I’ll stop.Â  So anyway, Horton hears a Who.Â  A Who is actually a type of teeny-tiny person that lives in Whoville, all of which is located on a speck on a clover.Â  The rest of the story is about how Horton tries to save Whoville from a conniving kangaroo (played by the brilliant [Carol Burnett](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000993/))Â intent on destroying it.Â  I don’t usually like when I know the big-name actors voicing roles in an animated movie – it kind of distracts me, which is what happened when I heard [Jim Carrey](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000120/) as the voice of Horton.Â  His voice also made the Horton character seem less cuteÂ to me, but I did like Carol Burnett as that scheming kangaroo.Â  And, hearing [Steve Carell](http://imdb.com/name/nm0136797/)Â as the mayor of Whoville was not distracting atÂ all – he is even good at voice-over acting – is there ever a roleÂ he’ll butcher?Â  Watching theÂ opening credits,Â I noticed a plethora of recognizable actorsÂ lending voicework forÂ this movie; among them:Â Â Jim Carrey, Steve Carell, Carol Burnett, [Will Arnett](http://imdb.com/name/nm0004715/) (from Arrested Development), [Seth Rogan](http://imdb.com/name/nm0736622/), [Isla Fisher](http://imdb.com/name/nm0279545/) (from Wedding Crashers – she was surprisinglyÂ good as a cartoon voice), [Jonah Hill](http://imdb.com/name/nm1706767/),Â and [Amy Poehler](http://imdb.com/name/nm0688132/).

It’s a cute movie that’sÂ perfect for the whole family, even though my 3-year-old asked about where the princesses were until the last 10 minutes of the movie.Â  When it was over, she did say she liked it, sans princesses and all.Â  There are some jokes for the parents that will go over the kids’ heads, and that’s always enjoyable in a kids’ movie – although I could have done without the kangaroo saying, “This is the jungle; we can’t behave like wild animals.” – just WAY too cheesy, think I’ve even heard that joke before somewhere else!Â  I loved how the Mayor of Whoville has 96 daughters and 1 son – someday I might know what that is like!Â  Is that in the book I wonder?Â  It seems almost too clever to be an add-in for the movie…Â  Either way, I will have to go borrow the book from the library to see how close the movie followed it, but I have heard thatÂ the book is pretty closely followed.Â  I’ve always liked Dr. Suess, and it’s a shame he’s not still around to gift us with any more of his work or to see his creations come to life on the big screen.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Yeah the CLASSIC Grinch cartoon is one of the best Christmas cartoons (love it or hate it...I know people who cringe when they hear it is coming). I know they made a lot of the books into cartoons in days gone by. I believe my VHS (yeah... you read correctly... VHS... got it for Christmas long ago)) has Horton Hears a Who (or is it Horton Hatches the Egg?)  
**taylhis**I too like the Grinch cartoon, it's a classic. I will let you know about the Horton book vs. the movie - I'm going to get it from the library but of course there's a waiting list.  
**Jeoberg**I'm still not sure how they make a 1 and 1/2 hour movie out of a book I used to read to my girls in 10 minutes. They must be adding a lot that Dr. Seuss didn't have in the book. I haven't read that book in at least 12 years, so I can't remember the whole story, sorry can't help you on the mayor's kids. The Cat in the Hat, and the Grinch movies didn't do much for me at all. I liked the Grinch cartoon with Boris Karloff reading/narrating.  
**derek**:D Glad to hear that.  
**taylhis**When I got your comment I read this part first: "For some reason when I read this I thought of the movie theater floor." So I thought at first that you thought I was sleeping on the movie theater floor! Either way, nothing took place on the movie theater floor.  
**derek**> It should actually be called a candy clean-up since they > pick candy up off the floor; it has nothing to do with > Easter eggs or hunting. Still fun though, Iâ€™m just saying. For some reason when I read this I thought of the movie theater floor. :P I will probably check out the movie from the library in 2009. As a childless one there is no reason for me to see this until then, particularly since I see maybe 1 or 2 movies per year in the theater...

# What a Day!

We had our annual board meeting dinner banquet last night, and it went well; dinner was delicious.Â  However, we didn’t get home until late, and as I already posted, the kids have been having trouble settling down at night, so we didn’t get to bed until very late.Â  Today was no exception with the early morning whisperers, so I did not get much sleep last night.Â  I was planning on napping today, but it didn’t happen and the following is a lengthy explanation of why:

We made the rare decision to go out to lunch.Â  We never do that because my husband never gets a lunch break from work.Â  But our local bowling alley was advertising the best reuben sandwiches in town, thru St. Pat’s day only, of course (even though I’ve heard reubens were invented by a Jewish person, go figure), so we decided to take a lunch break to check them out.Â  The sandwiches were excellent, and it was well worth the trip, UNTIL…

It all began when 2 of our 3 dogs decided to follow us out the door and into the car.Â  Since it’s nice out, we figured, why not, let them come with for a change.Â  When we got to the bowling alley, somehow, and I’m not going to place blame here – except to say that it wasn’t MY fault, I wasn’t driving ðŸ˜‰ – the keys got left in the car.Â  It would not have normally been a problem.Â  We live in a nice safe area, I really don’t think someone would have stolen the car, especially since the dogs were in it – wait, the DOGS were in the car, and they jumped on the power lock button and LOCKED the doors with the KEYS INSIDEÂ THE CAR!!!

So, like desperate idiots, we stood outside the car, trying to coax the dogs back onto the UNLOCK button this time, but to no avail.Â  So, we went into the bowling alley and called the taxi company, of which there is only one in town.Â  It was busy, and busy, and busy again, but luckily the owner of the bowling alley knew the taxi guy, so he tracked him down at the bar he owned (!)Â – all the while so nicely using his own phoneÂ because (surprise!) our cell phones were BOTH locked in the car with the dogs.Â  Luckily, I had sense enough to bring my purse inside with me, so throughout the ordeal at least I had diapers and a stash of toys and candyÂ to occupy our toddler.Â  Finally got ahold of the taxi, and he’s on his way when I realize that the garage door opener is in the car, along with the house key, and of course, all the doors in the house are locked!Â  So the taxi picks up my husband (I really don’t know why we didn’t call a friend – we blanked at the time and couldn’t think of anyone in town who would be home during the day.Â  In hindsight, we thought of 2 people of course, but too little, too late), and I’m waiting at the bowling alley for 40 minutes, wondering how he’s going to get into the house.Â  At this point, I knew it was going to be too late for me to get a nap for the day (sigh), and it’s becoming clear that the baby is really in need of one and soon!Â  I was just out of candy and toys when my husband the hero walks thru the door, holding the extra set of car keys.Â  Turns out, he found a window to crawl through that we had never fixed – I guess thank goodness for that!Â  When we got into the car, we were like, what is that AWFUL SMELL – something like a dead fish!Â  WARNING – THIS IS EXTREMELY GROSS!!!Â  If you want to know more about this (must be a dog-lover and have a strong stomach), see explanation of canine anal draining [here](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anal_glands).Â  Otherwise, you can just take my word for it, we had to shampoo the car carpet when we finally got home.Â  I also stashed a spare set of car keys in my purse – now I just have to make sure my purse is with me at all times because sometimes, I leave it in the car.Â  What would happen if the spare set of car keys is locked in the car?!?Â  Tomorrow will be better, I’m sure, it’s the community Easter egg hunt, and a Saturday, we might go see Horton Hears a Who at the movie theater also – can’t beat that!

### Comments

# Kids VS. Daylight Savings

No one likes to lose an hour of sleep.Â  Usually I take it as it comes, however, because I do enjoy the extra hour of daylight.Â  This year is another story.Â  The kids have NOT adjusted well to the time change AT ALL!Â  My oldest, an 8-year-old, comes into our bedroom EVERY morning and whispers, “Dad…Â  Dad…Â  DAD…Â  Is there a delay?”Â  This is partially the school districts fault.Â  For awhile, we were having 2-hour school delays due to weather at least weekly.Â  So now, she can’t get used to the fact that the weather is finally nice enough to start school on time.Â  Either that, or the district is sick of the heat of all the missed school and won’t delay anymore…Â  But much of it is because of the time change; my daughter just wants there to be a delay so she can go back to sleep for an hour or two.

My 3-year-old is back to staying up later than us.Â  She has always been a toughie to get on a proper sleep schedule, and wouldn’t you know it, we had her in an awesome sleeping groove until this darned time change happened.Â  She is back to refusing to go to bed, and she is a crabby zombie in the mornings.Â  The other night, she was sneaking peeks as we tried to watch Poltergeist in the living room – THAT’LL get her right to sleep!Â  That movie scared me awake for years – that clown part is STILL scary!

The baby – actually, she is now an almost 17-month-old toddler – is the most affected.Â  She cannot fall asleep before 10 at night, and she actually sleeps in a little bit in the mornings, kind of.Â  She’ll wake up at 5 or 6, then fall back asleep when Dad lays on the floor with her – poor Dad!Â  Have you noticed a trend?Â  They go to Dad when it comes to sleep issues – they KNOW better than to mess around with me – I get kinda grumpy when I don’t sleep well.Â  Unfortunately, the pregnancy has made me a light sleeper so I get woken up anyway.

Something tells me we’ll get it all worked out, but then we will just have to change the clocks back an hour the very weekend the kids finally adjust, starting all over again!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Something tells me I would be the poor dad lying on the floor at 5 or 6. I haven't slept well this week either, but LOVE the hour at night.  
**derek**And I am just sleeping lightly in sympathy for you... Yep, that's the excu-- I mean, reason.

# The Office and The Anniversary

Our wedding anniversary is coming up – this year marks #9! – andÂ there’s a pretty coolÂ gift we get this year: the first new Office episode in months!Â  Steve Carell gave an interview with TvGuide, and said that his character Michael Scott is hosting a dinner party, and it goes terribly awry.Â  If you know anything about the show, then you know how hilarious this will be and are looking forward to it as much as we are.Â  So on April 10, check out the first brand new Office episode since the writer’s strike saga!

And that reminds me, on April 10, 2009, we are hopefully going to have the time and resources to put together a “second wedding” for our tenth anniversary.Â  We didn’t know any of our Ohio friends when we got married way back in ’99, so we’d like to renew our vows andÂ “get married”Â all over again in Ohio, 10 years later!Â  And, luckily for us, April 10, 2009 falls on a Friday!Â  So, this year we will be watching the Office.Â  Next year, we will be “getting married” again, hopefully!

### Comments

**derek**Get a motorcycle- plenty of mileage on those, and cheaper than one of those hybrids. Plus, Taylor can become the cool one in class for having Biker parents! All in jest of course...  
**taylhis**Actually we are probably going to have a dj - want some things the same as the original, including the music. Will be a different wedding party though to make it "Ohio". We definitely want you there to celebrate with us though... Mark your calender now! We will probably put the girls in as flower girls and ring bearers, we'll see... Again, this is just the plan for now, it's a year away, and if gas prices continue to rise, won't be able to save up much $ :(  
**derek**Do I get to be the best man again? :) Kidding... I'm all the way out in dreary Illinois! Jamy will of course be the wedding singer, from what I read on his blog. :P And now you have your own ring bearers!  
**jamiahsh**OH, Yes, but of course. EVERYONE WINS!!!  
**taylhis**You and Morat will be invited - time to practice those dance moves!  
**jamiahsh**I will be there... provided that I AM INVITED OF COURSE... never one to assume too much.

# Gas Gouging in NW Ohio - Alive and Well

**My fellow Northwest Ohioans, this is a call to action!**

Have you noticed that we are being taken advantage of?Â  Yesterday, the national gas price average was $3.22 / gallon for unleaded.Â  Yet here in NW Ohio, every station in this townÂ had gas for ***$3.39 / gallon***.Â  The price of gas in the Northern suburbs of Chicago has reached $3.27.Â  We (especially in our family since we haveÂ loved onesÂ in that area who we have to watchÂ pay through the nose for EVERYTHING)Â have always prided ourselves onÂ having lower pricesÂ than they have, MUCH lower actually.Â  We used to have gas prices about $.25 / gallon lower than Chicagoland.Â  This is no longer the case!Â  Their gas is now $.12 ***cheaper*** than ours!Â  What will follow?Â  Will we no longer have cheaper food than they have?Â  Will we soon be paying $10 for a hamburger, have an average restaurant bill of $30 for lunch for two, movie theater tickets at $10 each?Â  Where does it end?Â  I can’t help but feel the gas stations have called our bluff.Â  We can’t boycott them, because let’s face it, we’re an island.Â  We get to enjoy our relatively crime and pollution free extistences because we are so far from the nearest large cities.Â  However, the local gas stations are starting to take advantage of this, because they know it will cost way too much for us to get out of town to get some gas somewhere else.Â  The average price in ToledoÂ yesterday was $3.22 / gallonÂ , but to get to Toledo, it would cost about $5-$10 in gas, depending on your car!Â  And who has time to run to Toledo for gas, anyway?Â  But why is it that Toledo has cheaper gas prices than we do?Â  Everything was always cheaper here…Â  at least it used to be.

I’m just worried about how they will gouge us next.Â  I looked into filing a complaint with the attorney general of Ohio, and their website said to contact the stores first.Â  So I guess it’s only fair that we first let the gas stations know that we’re terribly unhappy.Â  I would write to the newspaper here in town also, but they’ve never printed my letters.Â  Maybe I complain too much?Â  Actually, one letter was very nice thanking the person who turned in my lost wallet with all the money still in it, but they still didn’t print it.Â  Anyway, if someone else wants to write to the paper, that’d be great.Â  The more the merrier on this, I say, what could it hurt?Â  Complain to the local gas stations and ask them questions, write to the newspaper, write to the attorney general, anything and everything anyone can do will help.Â  Remember, driving season hasn’t even officially started yet, and when it does, the price gouging at the pump will only worsen!Â  Here is a link to the complaint section of the Ohio attorney general’s website – it tells you how to fill out a complaint online, and also gives phone numbers and email addresses:Â  <http://www.ag.state.oh.us/citizen/consumer/complaints.asp>

**Please help me – let’s do SOMETHING!**

### Comments

**taylhis**I just HATE paying more than IL - it's not right! And it's not just a few cents either, it's $.12 - and that's the more expensive area. Can't imagine what the "cheap" areas are at over there.  
**Jeoberg**Well, I'm not sure about gouging in NW OH. I just got back from a trip to Columbus. On Wed. I filled up at 3.29 in Montpelier. On Thurs, I filled up at 3.39 in Bryan. That was the cheapest I found gas on my entire trip. 3.45 and Higher were the prices from Toledo to Columbus. Way too much to pay in my opinion, but not gouging by the local companies. They usually charge what the price the parent companies decide to charge.  
**derek**Yes gauge is a word too: http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=gauge Now, get some sleep!  
**taylhis**hehe - thanks. I knew it didn't look right, but I was too tired to care. Gotta get that spellcheck feature working... not that it would have helped me much in this situation, isn't gauge a word also? Can't think, still tired!  
**derek**Not to nitpick or anything, but I believe the word you were looking for is "gouge" not "gauge": http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=gouge As for the price that is unbelievable. When you told me before how much it was I fully expected a 20Â¢ or more jump here the next day. Actually, there \*are\* a some stations selling it for $3.45 for some reason while just down the road it was 12Â¢ less.

# Rollbacks Are Extinct!

Just a short little venting post because I made my weekly stop at Walmart today…Â  and not one, not two, but **THREE**Â price increases awaited me!

1.Â  drawstring kitchen garbage bags – when I started shopping at Walmart in Ohio only 5 years ago, these were $1.33 / box of 20.Â  Last time I went to Walmart, they were $2.88 for the same box, and today, they are $2.98 for the same box that was $1.33 not more than 5 years ago!Â  That is more than DOUBLE the price in 5 years!

2.Â  bananas – when they opened our brand new SuperWalmart a few years ago, they pretended like the regular price ofÂ bananas was a cheap $.29 / lb.Â  but the truth is, I haven’t seen them at that price since!Â  They have gone up and down constantly, and are now a whopping $.67 / lb – the most expensive bananas I have ever seen and I refuse to pay it!Â  And let’s face it, Walmart has the worst looking produce I’ve ever seen!

3.Â  dryer sheets – before today were $.88 / box.Â  Today, they decided we should have to pay $.96 / box.Â  If they go over $1, I will no longer be getting my dryer sheets at Walmart.

To complete my complaint session, I actually had to emailÂ Walmart the other day to complain about their photo service.Â  I used to get all my digital photos made into prints at Walmart because it was cheap and convenient.Â  I would order between $1-$10 at a time.Â  Since I have a lot of kids, they (used to) get lots of business from me.Â  But now they won’t let me pay for my orders in the store.Â  I like to order the pictures when I take them; sometimes there are only a few at a time.Â  And I refuse to sit there and make teeny weeny charges on my credit card over the internet every few days – it’s a bookkeeping nightmare, not to mention how little trust I have in Walmart after all the other crap they always pull.

About the grocery prices, I understand that there is something called inflation, but this is ridiculous!Â  No wonder Walmart has abandoned their “rollback” campaign – rollbacks are extinct!

### Comments

**derek**Possibly tied in with the gas prices, but more likely reality has just set in at Wallyworld.

# 10,000 B.C. - When Movies Cost $3

Oh wait, that was tonight.Â  Seriously.Â  We saw [10,000 B.C.](http://imdb.com/title/tt0443649/) (a new release, no less!) for ***$3 for 2 people!***Â  It was a 5:00 movie at matinee price, plus bring a guest for free night = $3!Â  Add in our popcorn and pop, and we spent less than $10 for a new movie at the theater, with popcorn and a drink!Â  Can’t beat that!Â  If we didn’t live around the corner from the theater, we would have spent more on the gas to get there – more aboutÂ gas prices in my next post, ugh.

We had heard that 10,000 B.C. was not a very good movie, but the other choices were [Spiderwick Chronicles](http://imdb.com/title/tt0416236/) (which we really liked but have already seen) or [Fool’s Gold](http://imdb.com/title/tt0770752/), which I have no desire to see for some reason.Â  10,000 B.C. was exactly what the previews showed – an adventure movie set way way back into the past.Â  I don’t know how accurate it is, but the computer animation depicting early humans (though you forgot this fact given that many of them spoke perfect English) hunting wooly mammoths was pretty good, actually.Â  In the movie, they also used the mammoths as “work horses” to haul blocks to build pyramids, which I didn’t know, if this is indeed fact…Â  interesting theory.Â  Though they aren’t clear if these are the Great Pyramids of Egypt, which I think were actually started more likely around 3,000 B.C. or after…Â  but I’m no expert, this movie did get me thinking and wanted to research a bunch of stuff.Â  It was neat to see everything interacting together, the early humans and theÂ dwellings theyÂ built, the animals, the environmentÂ – a great way to envision the past, but it did have me wondering how much is based on scientific fact, like I said.Â  I won’t go into the plot, mostly because I sheepishly admit that I couldn’t follow it.Â  I didn’t get my nap today, and I fell asleep during what were apparently a few pivotal scenes in the movie.Â  But, for $3, who cares?Â  And don’t think that the movie is boring either.Â  I have 3 kids and I’m pregnant, I get very tired and could probably fall asleep anywhere without that daily nap I’ve been so lucky to have most days.Â  And I did get to seeÂ [The Dark Knight](http://imdb.com/title/tt0468569/) preview, which was pretty cool.Â  I’m not a big fan of the Batman movies – I’ve only seen 1 and 3, but this one looks really dark and creepy.Â  I think the whole [Heath Ledger](http://imdb.com/name/nm0005132/) (R.I.P.) incident will sell tickets, but the previews might do a littleÂ ticket-sellingÂ themselves…Â  I can see why they say that role affected him in such a negative way – he looked really scary.Â

So, if you like lots of fighting; epic battle movies set in the past, or are just an admirer of CGI animation, check out 10,000 B.C. – especially if you can find it for $1.50 / person!

### Comments

**taylhis**I can't say the sound is as good as the Illinois chain theaters or that there are as many seats in the theater - but that doesn't matter because we haven't run into a sold out movie over here since Finding Nemo. Besides, when we did treat ourselves to a huge expensive theater in Florida, it seemed extra cool because it wasn't something we were used to. Yes, Jamy, I will probably be too busy in July to see Dark Knight in the theater, will have to wait for that one... July what is the release date?  
**jamiahsh**No Wooly Sheep?! WOOLY SHEEP! I cannot wait until July for The Dark Knight... you will be busy then.  
**computer animation » Blog Archive » 10,000 B.C. - When Movies Cost $3**[...] Read the rest of this great post here [...]  
**derek**Sure beats $10 for one ticket + $10 for pop+popcorn at the big chain theaters here. Even our lil' ol' town theater seems expensive at $6 (unless they've gone up- it's been awhile) compared to your theater...

# Awake... but I should have been asleep

Last night’s movie was called [Awake](http://imdb.com/title/tt0211933/), and it starred [Jessica Alba](http://imdb.com/name/nm0004695/) and [Hayden Christensen](http://imdb.com/name/nm0159789/).Â  When I first saw Jessica Alba, I was not looking forward to seeing the movie, and I don’t know why.Â  It’s not like I’ve seen anything else with her in it, but for some reason, I was under the impression that I didn’t like her as an actress.Â  I think it might be an interview I saw with her on the Tyra Banks show – she came across as self-absorbed and dumb, and then the whole pregnant-out-of-wedlock thing doesn’t score her many points either…Â  Anyway, surprisingly, she was not the weak link in the movie.Â  It was the script.Â  The movie had tons of accuracy flaws, and I really don’t want to spoil it for you in case you’d like to waste your time on it, but let’s just say the movie was kind of pointless.Â  It’s about a young man who has a heart condition and must undergo a heart transplant.Â  When they put him under anesthesia, he does not fall asleep but instead overhears the doctors plotting his murder.Â  There actually is more to the plot, at least they pretend there is, and there are some so-called twists and turns that anyone with any movie watching experience can see coming from a mile away.Â  Aside from the unbelievability of the plot – and I’m not talking about staying awake during surgery; according to the movie’s tagline, it’s actually more common than you’d like to think – I’m talking about when this guy is getting his surgery, his “spirit” is walking around the hospital experiencing flashbacks.Â  It’s just dumb and ridiculous.Â  Anyway, aside from the unbelievability of the plot,Â  I have to share what the dumbest part about the whole movie is.Â  And I’m going to risk spoiling the movie for you, so if you might see this movie, stop reading now.Â  But I just have to say what the dumbest thing about the whole movie is:Â  there is no point to the main character’s overhearing his murder plot!Â  His mother, while waiting for his surgery to be completed, overhears everything anyway, the cops are called, yada, yada!Â  I still don’t consider watching this movie a waste of time – it’s really difficult for me to say that about a movie.Â  It was only 84 minutes long, and one of the rewards of watching the movie was seeing [Christopher McDonald](http://imdb.com/name/nm0001520/) (aka Shooter McGavinÂ from [Happy Gilmore](http://imdb.com/title/tt0116483/)) as an alcoholic doctor who is too oblivious to stop the murder plot.Â  But I would much rather see him for the 100th time as Shooter any day – I would suggest you don’t waste your time with Awake, and go for something with more substance instead – like Happy Gilmore!Â  That sounds like a joke, but this movie was so bad, it’s really not that funny – Happy Gilmore is a much better movie in my opinion!

### Comments

**taylhis**It's weird, I don't remember seeing the previews for it. We like thrillers and decided to try it. At first, I thought it was going to be Awakenings with Robert DeNiro.  
**Jeoberg**You guys watch some weird movies. I saw the previews to that one, and decided to skip it.  
**Chris**This move was sooo bad. The lead character was boring and made you really not care if he lived or not. The entire premise was just crazy and the twist was very obvious. YUCK!  
**jamiahsh**I'm surprised Chris was even interested in seeing "Awake." I saw it in the theatres with my brother back in November. I'm glad he had free passes. I do not like Christensen at all.... one of the reasons the newest Star Wars movies were rather forgettable... along with other reasons which I am about to elaborate on..

# SPLASH! It's Mr. Woodcock in Real Life

We went kinda crazy with the movies this weekend…Â  We watched the 1984 classic [Splash](http://imdb.com/title/tt0088161) with the kids, and we also took in [Mr. Woodcock](http://imdb.com/title/tt0419984) and [Dan in Real Life](http://imdb.com/title/tt0480242/) (for the adults).Â  Splash is a [Tom Hanks](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000158/) and [Daryl Hannah](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000435/) movie about a mermaid who leaves the ocean to come to New York city and fall in love with Tom Hanks.Â  It sounds dumb, but it’s actually pretty well done and a movie with substance and heart.Â  The special effects of her fins aren’t bad either, considering they’reÂ over 20 years old and most likely made without computer assistence.Â  Since I haven’t seen the movie since I was a kid, I was wondering this time around about how many takes it took to film the underwater scenes…Â  mainly the one where Daryl Hannah’s character looks on a map in a sunken ship to find where Tom Hanks lives.Â  Also, there’s a scene in the movie where they are trying to choose a name for the mermaid, since her name is unpronouncable in English.Â  They’re walking down a New York street, and Tom Hanks mutters, “where are we, Madison…” to which Daryl Hannah replies, “Madison, I like Madison.”Â  That was a joke in the movie at the time, that the mermaid was named after a street in New York, but nowadays, the name Madison is almost TOO popular.Â  We had about 4 Madisons or Maddies in a play we directed last year out of 21 kids!Â  Anyway, I would recommend this as a good family movie, especially for little girls.Â  There is actually some nudity (female rear end), and I could have done without a few of the kissing scenes, but overall, it is good family entertainment.Â  I wonder if it would have gotten a PG13 rating if it had come out a few years later?Â  I know there is a [Splash Too](http://imdb.com/title/tt0096159/), but judging by the lack of returning actors, I haven’t bothered to check it out.Â  After a quick lookup on imdb.com, I found that it got a whopping 3.0 ratingÂ with only 170 votes.Â  Also interesting is that Madison the mermaidÂ in Splash Too is played by [Amy Yasbeck](http://imdb.com/name/nm0001865/),Â who is nowadays best known for being [John Ritter’s](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000615/)Â widow.Â  She was good in her bit part in [Pretty Woman](http://imdb.com/title/tt0100405/), but still…Â  I wonder if I should bother getting it from the library for the kids?Â  Also in the original Splash is [Eugene Levy](http://imdb.com/name/nm0506405/), who plays the bad guy trying to expose the mermaidÂ  – literally, by throwing water on her in public.Â  This must be one of his first movies; I think he was a relatively unknown actor back then…Â  Also, the late, great [John Candy](http://imdb.com/name/nm0001006/) is hilarious as Tom Hanks’ party animal brother, and those two have great chemistry in the movie…Â  but on to the adult movies…Â  ahem, I’m talking about the movies we watched without the kids…

Mr. Woodcock is a comedy starring [Billy Bob Thornton](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000671/), who came no where near to reminding me of his character in [Sling Blade](http://imdb.com/title/tt0117666/) – that’s probably why he was nominated for an Oscar for that performance.Â  I wasn’t expecting much from this movie, but it was actually worse than I thought.Â  It wasn’t horrible, and I didn’t feel like I wasted my time watching it, but it wasn’t very funny, and there wasn’t much to get from it.Â  For one thing, I thought they would make the Mr. Woodcock character a little more nasty.Â  As it turned out, he was really only nasty to little kids, which is still pretty bad, but I thought we’d catch him being nasty behind his girlfriend’s back.Â  Let me back up for a minute and give a plot synopsis – Mr. Woodcock is a horribly nasty gym teacher who terrorized kids so badly that a former student uses his experiences as fodder for an inspiring self-help book he wrote.Â  This former student returns to his hometown in Nebraska to receive the “corn key to the city” only to find that his mom is happily dating Mr. Woodcock – his childhood nemisis!Â  The successful author is played by [Seann William Scott](http://imdb.com/name/nm0005405/), whose acting I wasn’t thrilled with.Â  His mother was played by [Susan Sarandon](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000215/), and she was pretty good in the movie, given the character she had to play, who didn’t have much depth.Â  Like I said, I didn’t feel like I wasted my time on this movie, but I don’t know that I’d watch it again either.Â  It definitely wasn’t one of my favorite comedies.

Dan in Real Life is a touching comedy (just falls short of a dra-medy, I would say, not quite sad enough, thank goodness) about a columnist widower named DanÂ (the ever-awesome [Steve Carell](http://imdb.com/name/nm0136797/)) who is raising 3 daughters alone.Â Â The girls seem to be about 16, 14, and 9.Â  For starters, let’s just say that this movie had me dreading my life in about 10 years – the movie depicted teenage girls as frightening challenges for parents!Â  Anyway, Dan takes his girls to visit their extended family for aÂ few days, and whenÂ he first arrives, he really falls for the ‘perfect woman’.Â Â He gets to his mom and dad’s house, andÂ wouldn’t you know it, the ‘perfect woman’ turns out to be his brother’s girlfriend.Â  After a few days of torture…Â  well, I’ll let you watch the movie, I don’t want to spoil anything for you.Â  It’s a really cute romantic comedy.Â  If you have sons, you will be amused atÂ Dan’s daughters’ antics.Â  If you have daughters, be afraid, be very afraid!Â  On another note, Steve Carell has beaten out Tom Hanks as my favorite actor – he is just amazing and so fun to watch, whether it’s in [the Office](http://imdb.com/title/tt0386676/), [Evan Almighty](http://imdb.com/title/tt0413099/), or Dan in Real Life.Â  His characters never remind me of each other, and it’s not like they’re mentally impaired like Billy Bob Thornton in Sling Blade or Tom Hanks in [Forrest Gump](http://imdb.com/title/tt0109830/) – sometimes those types of characters are actually easier to play since they have a very specific demeanor about them.Â  SteveÂ CarellÂ plays ‘regular’Â guys,Â yet he gives them such depth and character that itÂ really helps drawÂ you into the movie and / or show.Â  I never watched the tv show [Get Smart](http://imdb.com/title/tt0058805/), but with Steve Carell playing Maxwell Smart in the big screen version of [Get Smart](http://imdb.com/title/tt0425061/)Â due this summer, you can bet IÂ plan on checking it out!Â  Dan in Real Life is funny and heartwarming, and it makes me look forward to having huge family get-together weekends at our house someday with the kids and their spouses and kids…Â  providing we survive the teenage years of course – that remains to be seen!

### Comments

# Dodged a Bullet

Ohio was on the national news last week, and it wasn’t for politics.Â  CNN and the Weather Channel were talking about our state because of the major snow storm that befell Cleveland, not to mention the rest of the state – except us, for once!Â  Here in the Northwest corner of the state, we dodged a bullet this time.Â  Got about 2 inches only, and it didn’t affect driving conditions.Â  My husband didn’t even have to shovel since the wind blew it all off the sidewalks this time!Â  I hope it will stop snowing for the season soon, but if it doesn’t, any more “storms” like this are welcome any time!

### Comments

**taylhis**We got about what was forcasted, and like I said, it all blew off the sidewalks and didn't really affect us because we didn't drive in it. My mom was wondering about us too - they were talking about on the news how weather channel had their live people in Cleveland who got socked.  
**derek**I was wondering about you with that forecast for the Ohio Valley. I wasn't sure where it was in relation to you.

# Spring Ahead... to Country Music Award Time!

Actually, it’s time forÂ the Academy of Country Music awards (ACM’s), whichÂ are totally different than the Country Music Association’s awards (CMA’s), but somehow *Spring Ahead to the Academy of Country Music Awards* just didn’t make such a great blog title.Â  For you country music fans out there, you know that spring and fall are the awesome times of year for country music awards.Â  We get 2 great awards shows, and coming up in May are the ACM awards – the nominations were announced last week, that’s why I get to write about this now.Â  I was lucky enough to attend this show live oneÂ time in 2000.Â  It was TOTALLY AWESOME – I’d LOVE to go back…Â  something like that (and lots of liquor) just might get me on an airplane again…Â  yeah right.Â  Anyway, Dolly Parton hosted, and Dick Clark ran around the stage during the breaks fretting over this and that and everything in between.Â  Winners’ acceptance speeches got cut off, and there was the general glitz and glam of any L.A. awards show – only we were there!Â  And talk about a GREAT concert!Â  Getting to see like, 15 top country music performers LIVE, singing only their hits was unbeatable.Â  And I learned a lot too because I had never been to the taping of a live tv event before.Â  Did you know that they have “stand-ins” ready in case anyone who is seated down in front has to leave for the bathroom or anything else?Â  They pay models to dress up and get ready in case they need to sit in say, Wynonna Judd’s seat so it’s not empty when they show the audience on tv if Wy needs a potty break (that actually happened!).Â  So anyway, this year I will be watching the ACM’s from the comfort of my couch; hopefully without interuptions from kids (should change the name of this post to *Yeah, Right*).

I can’t remember ifÂ it’s the ACM’s or the CMA’s where they’ll have a live performer, and then that person will be nominated for the next award, so after their performance they’ll be waiting backstage, and every time they endÂ up winning the award!Â  I wish they’d make it aÂ little less obvious!Â  We like to fill out our own ballots and make a guessing game out of our picks for winners, and this type of format makes that too easy!Â  All you have to do is figure out the order of award presentations, figure out the schedule of performers, and *Viola!*Â  You’ve won the bet!Â  I’ll let you know come CMA awards time which awards show does this, unless they’ve (hopefully) changed things by now.

Here are the nominees this year, enjoy the show!

**ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR**

**Kenny Chesney**

**Brad Paisley**

**Rascal Flatts**

**George Strait Keith Urban**

**TOP MALE VOCALIST**

**Rodney Atkins**

**Kenny Chesney**

**Brad Paisley**

**George Strait**

**Keith Urban**

**TOP FEMALE VOCALIST**

**Miranda Lambert**

**Martina McBride**

**LeAnn Rimes**

**Taylor Swift**

**Carrie Underwood**

**TOP VOCAL GROUP**

**Diamond Rio**

**Eagles**

**Emerson Drive**

**Little Big Town**

**Rascal Flatts**

**TOP VOCAL DUO**

**Big & Rich**

**Brooks & Dunn**

**Halfway To Hazard**

**Montgomery Gentry**

**Sugarland**

TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST

Luke Bryan

Jack Ingram

Jake Owen

TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST

Sarah Buxton

Kellie Pickler

Taylor Swift

TOP NEW DUO OR VOCAL GROUP

Carolina Rain

Lady Antebellum

The Wreckers

ALBUM OF THE YEAR [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

5th Gear â€“ Brad Paisley (Arista Nashville) Produced by Frank Rogers

Crazy Ex-Girlfriend â€“ Miranda Lambert (Columbia) Produced by Frank Liddell, Mike Wrucke

Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates â€“ Kenny Chesney (BNA) Produced by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney

If Youâ€™re Going Through Hell â€“ Rodney Atkins (Curb) Produced by Rodney Atkins, Ted Hewitt

Taylor Swift â€“ Taylor Swift (Big Machine) Produced by Scott Borchetta, Nathan Chapman # 6 Produced by Robert Ellis Orrall

SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

Donâ€™t Blink – Kenny Chesney, Produced by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney BNA

Famous In A Small Town – Miranda Lambert, Produced by Frank Liddell, Mike Wrucke Columbia

Lost In This Moment – Big & Rich, Produced by Big Kenny, John Rich – Warner Bros/WRN

Stay – Sugarland, Produced by Kristian Bush, Byron Gallimore, Jennifer Nettles Mercury

Watching Airplanes – Gary Allan, Produced by Gary Allan , Mark Wright MCA Nashville

SONG OF THE YEAR [Award to Composer(s)/Publisher(s)/Artist(s)]

Donâ€™t Blink – Kenny Chesney – Writers: Casey Beathard, Chris Wallin Publishers: Lavender Zoo Music (BMI), Mamaâ€™s Dream Music (ASCAP), Sony/ATV Acuff Rose (BMI), WB Music Corp. (ASCAP)

Lost In This Moment – Big & Rich –Â Writers: Keith Anderson, Rodney Clawson, John Rich Publishers: EMI April Music, Inc. (ASCAP), Romeo Cowboy Music (ASCAP), WB MusicCorp. (ASCAP), Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp. (BMI), Writerâ€™s Extreme Music (BMI)

Moments – Emerson Drive – Writers: Dave Berg, Annie Tate, Sam TateÂ  Publishers: Gravitron (SESAC), WB Music Corp. (ASCAP)

Watching You – Rodney Atkins – Writers: Rodney Atkins, Steve Dean, Brian White Publishers: Bethar Music (BMI), Mike Curb Music (BMI), Multisongs (SESAC), Songs From The White House (SESAC)

Stay – Sugarland – Writer: Jennifer Nettles – Publishers: Jennifer Nettles Publishing (ASCAP)

VIDEO OF THE YEAR [Award to Producer(s)/Director(s)/Artist(s)]

Donâ€™t Blink â€“ Kenny Chesney – Producer: Tacklebox FilmsÂ  Director: Shaun Silva

Lost In This Moment â€“ Big & RichÂ  Producer: Big Kenny, Steve Lamar, Marc Oswald Director: Robert Deaton and George Flanigen

Online â€“ Brad PaisleyÂ – Producer: Frames Per Second – Director: Jason Alexander

Stay â€“ Sugarland – Producer: Kristian Bush, Byron Gallimore, Jennifer Nettles – Director: Shaun Silva

Watching You â€“ Rodney Atkins – Producer: Broken Poet Production – Director: Eric Welch

VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

Because Of You â€“ Reba McEntire Duet With Kelly Clarkson – Produced by Tony Brown, Reba McEntire MCA Nashville

Find Out Who Your Friends Are â€“ Tracy Lawrence With Tim McGraw and Kenny Chesney – Produced by Julian King, Tracy Lawrence – Rocky Comfort/CO5

Shiftwork â€“ Kenny Chesney Duet With George Strait – Produced by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney BNA

Till We Ainâ€™t Strangers Anymore â€“ Bon Jovi Featuring LeAnn Rimes – Produced by Dann Huff – Mecury

What You Give Away â€“Vince Gill With Sheryl Crow – Produced by Vince Gill, John Hobbs, Justin Niebank – MCA Nashville

### Comments

**Spring Aheadâ€¦ to Country Music Award Time!**[...] pudgy\_raito wrote an interesting post today on Spring Aheadâ  
**Chris**I sure hope Chesney doesn't win entertainer of the year again. Yipes!  
**derek**Country music, eww... Guess it shows that I'm not a country boy, even at heart! :D

# LOST Episode 3/6/08

My blog title is just about as creative as last night’s episode – not one of our favorites.Â  Let’s start by referring you to the tvguide.com blog.Â  Thank goodness our regular writer is back.Â  Not only does she give a completeÂ synopsis of the episodes, she likes to make it interactive by posing interesting questions to the viewers:Â  <http://community.tvguide.com/blog/Lost/800062566>

And, as a bonus this week, tvguide.com had a really interesting Q & A with some of the Lost cast members.Â  It wasn’t just interview-type questions either; it was cast members asking the producers questions about what’s going to happen in the show.Â  I think I learned more from this Q & A than from last night’s episode!Â  Check it out here:Â  <http://www.tvguide.com/news/lost-questions-answered/080304-01>

Keep in mind that since this is a synopsis of last night’s episode, there will be **SPOILERS** ahead, so don’t read if you don’t want to know what happened!

When the episode opened last night, we see Juliet in makeup, which tells us this is either a flash-forward or a flash-back.Â  My first thought (and likewise with the tv guide blogger it turns out) is that it’s a flash-forward and Juliet is one of the *‘Oceanic 6′*.Â  We soon find out that this is not the case; it’s actually a flash-*back,* and BOOM – here are 2 new characters for us all of a sudden, Harper and her husband, Griffin.Â  Later in the episode, we find out that Griffin has met his demise already, so at least we only have Harper as a new character to contend with.Â  I don’t know about everybody else, but I don’t remember Griffin from previous episodes.Â  They showed him when the Others saw Oceanic 815 fall from the sky, and the tv guide blog mentioned him interacting with Ana Lucia, but I personally don’t remember him.Â  If I wasn’t worried about being reminded of a thousand loose ends that haven’t been tied up, I would go back and watch the episodes with Griffin in them.Â  And speaking of Ana Lucia, her name has come up *a lot* lately for someone who has been dead for awhile.Â  During the preview for next week’s episode, they mentioned that we will *“see a face you never thought you’d see again.”*Â  Please, **please** do not let it be Ana Lucia!Â  Luckily, I think Michelle Rodriguez was too much of a liability for the show to ever resurrect her character – I hope.Â  Didn’t like Michelle Rodriguez (couldn’t she afford a taxi or better yet, to not get drunk at the Lost party rather than drive home?Â  She ruined her up-and-coming career – what a moron), and I didn’t like Ana Lucia one bit.Â  And speaking of coming back, tonight’s episode marked the reappearance of the eerie whispering in the forest, along with the numbers (there was a safe on the wall behind a painting, how corny, but the combination to the safe was some of the numbers that played such a major part in seasons 1 and 2 – haven’t seen them much since).Â  The eerie whispering and the numbers are two things I really hope they will explain someday…Â  And speaking of questions, here are my questions after watching tonight’s episode:

1.Â  Locke says to Ben, “There is just one more thing I want to know.”Â  WHAT?Â  There is really only ONE more thing Locke wants to know from Ben?Â  I would have a million questions for that guy!

2.Â  Why does Ben say something about kids asking for their mother?Â  Are the Zach and Emma heÂ is referring toÂ HIS kids?

3.Â  Do Farraday and Juliet know each other?Â  In tonight’s episode they seemed to, but before this, they didn’t.

Also tonight, there were 2 interesting quotes which I will leave you with:

1.Â  Ben pulls a video tape labeled *Red Sox* out of the safe, and says, “I taped over the game.”Â  I found it kind of cheesy, but my husband thought it was funny.Â  Cheesy or not, it *was* pretty funny to hear Ben say that inÂ thatÂ calculatingly evil tone of his.

2.Â  Juliet says, “It was very stressful being an Other, Jack.”Â  I guess you had to see it, but it was a very entertaining and intriguing line, hearing it after all we’ve been through, especially when the Others were so mysterious for so long.Â  The tvguide blog mentioned this line too; it was very noteworthy.

I was disappointed after this week’s episode because again, there are more new characters and less answers than ever.Â  The cast Q & A they had on tvguide.com helped to cheer me up a little though; it gave me hope that the producers and writers do have some idea of where they’re taking this show because I do have my doubts that they know what they’re doing or where they’re going.Â  I just hope next week’sÂ episodeÂ is better.

### Comments

# Thanks, But I Prefer a MA'AM-wich

I have yet to figure out what makes women so much better at making sandwiches than men.Â  It might sound funny, but it’s very true.Â  I’ve been to a number of Subway Sandwich Shops across a number of states, and every time without fail, if a male makes the sandwich, eating it is dreadful.Â  They don’t spread the condiments evenly, so the sandwich is either soggy or falls apart or both, and it definitely doesn’t taste very good when ingredients are all clumped together and not spread out correctly.Â  I can think ofÂ 4 possible reasons why females make better “sandwich artists” than males:Â **1.**Â  **organizational skills** – Women tend to have better ways of organizing things and in a more efficient order.Â  Apparently, this holds true even when organizing sandwich ingredients.Â  **2.Â  detail-orientated thinking** – Women tend to think about and obsess over every little detail, just ask their husbands.Â  **3.Â  patience**Â – WomenÂ practice having lots ofÂ patience to put up with the men in their daily lives.Â  It takes lots of patience to make a perfect sub.Â  **4.Â  compassion –** Let’s face it, women have more of this than men.Â  And it takes an understanding woman to want to take the time to care about your sandwich.

Does this mean that having a woman in the white house is a better choice after all?Â  Probably not, I wouldn’t read that far into it.Â  But if I were you, next time you go to a Subway and a male worker says, “Can I help you?”,Â  you should say, “Thanks, but I prefer a ma’am-wich”.

HAHAHA!Â  Just kidding!Â  You’ll look like a big idiot if you say that!Â  If a man makes your sandwich, just wear a bib and don’t expect it to taste very good!

### Comments

**Thanks, But I Prefer a MA’AM-wich Post Revisited | My Food Chain Gang**[...] sandwiches made by women, but apparently this fellow would not agree.Â  Check out my original post here. And here is the summary of the man’sÂ SubwayÂ mishap; scroll down for the link to the [...]  
**taylhis**ok :) not a fan of subway?  
**derek**I'm not even touching this one...  
**jamiahsh**hmm.... Morat a think very strange: womans make a better sandwich artist than man. WHat about interviewers for the news. New owner America country? NO WOMANS!!!

# The Good Girl

Bet you think this is going to be about one of my kids, don’t ya?Â  Well, the truth is, they’re all good.Â  Unless you count yesterday, when #2 and #3 were acting up…Â  but it was another snow day, so I think they had cabin fever.Â  And luckily for me, my friend and neighbor called out of nowhere and asked if she could take the older 2Â sledding with the kids she watches.Â  I was having a bad day, especially since the dogs were being needy about going outside constantly (with a new one, it’s not really a fun gamble to see if she’s “lying” about having to go potty!), and as I said, the kids were acting up, so I was very agreeable to theÂ sleddingÂ plan!Â  It was like a miracle – I SOOO needed that break, and the kids needed to get out of the house, so in the words of my friend Morat – EVERYONE WINS!!!Â  THANK YOU SHELLEY!

Now, for what the post is really about:Â  The [Jennifer Aniston](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000098/) movie, [The Good Girl](http://imdb.com/title/tt0279113/).Â  We watched it last night.Â  You’re probably thinking, wow, they watch lots of movies, and you’re right!Â  We have a lovely library system where you can search almost every Ohio library online for almost any movie you can think of, and they will ship it toÂ our homeÂ library for free – you just have to wait a few days, sometimes longer if it’s a popular movie with a waiting list.Â  So, almost every night, hubby and I like to sit down with a movie during our “parent time”, providing the kids willingly go to bed,Â which of course is not always foolproof…Â  But most of the time, it works, so last night the movieÂ was [The Good Girl](http://imdb.com/title/tt0279113/).Â  The movie started out kinda slow, but it did get better.Â  I would classify it as a dark comedy.Â  [Jennifer Aniston](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000098/) plays a bored, depressed housewife whoÂ decides to have an affair with a co-worker, played by [Jake Gyllenhaal](http://imdb.com/name/nm0350453/).Â  Â Her morals (if she had any to begin with that is) and behavior spiral out of control from then on, and the movie is an entertaining look at modern day suburban life gone awry.Â  It is a good dark comedy, like I said, it takes some getting used to, but we liked it overall.Â  [Jake Gyllenhaal](http://imdb.com/name/nm0350453/) probably stands out asÂ the best actor in the movie (along with [Mike White](http://imdb.com/name/nm0925234/) – more on him later); his character was justÂ this crazy 22-year-old man-child.Â  Â [Jennifer Aniston](http://imdb.com/name/nm0000098/) was ok, but it took me about 20 minutes to get past her just acting like Rachel from Friends with a southern accent.Â  Maybe anÂ actress playing the same characterÂ for 10 yrs.Â in a hit sitcom clouds a viewer’sÂ perception, I don’t know…Â  I did really like that show and have seen every episode at least once, some MANY times.Â  Once I got used to her in this movie, sheÂ did a good job of bringingÂ her character to life, although none of the main characters in this movie were really all that likable.Â  That probably has to do with it being a dark comedy – more on those later.Â  You have to really feel sorry for her husband in the movie who is a real dip (not to mention a pothead), but comes nowhere close to deserving all the crap she makes him put up with, not that I know who would…Â  [Zooey Deschanel](http://imdb.com/name/nm0221046/) is great in this movie; she doesn’t play a likable character as far as being a nice person, but she is hilarious and provides much of the movie’s comic relief.

I really only like to compare movies in the same genre, so it’d be difficult for me to rate this one compared to other moviesÂ I’veÂ watched lately, like [Vantage Point](http://imdb.com/title/tt0443274/), [The Hitcher](http://imdb.com/title/tt0455960/), or [As Good as It Gets](http://imdb.com/title/tt0119822/).Â  I can’t really remember the other dark comedies I’ve seen, but I know I liked them; [Heathers](http://imdb.com/title/tt0097493/) and [Drowning Mona](http://imdb.com/title/tt0186045/) come to mind, but I’ll have to watch them again cuz it’s been awhile.Â  Overall, I would say that if you like dark comedies, I recommend this one, but I don’t think dark comedies are for everyone.Â  The script is interesting, and some of the acting is pretty good.Â  [Mike White](http://imdb.com/name/nm0925234/) wrote the movie, and I have to say, I like his work.Â  He is best known (to me anyway) as Ned Schneebly from [The School of Rock](http://imdb.com/title/tt0332379/), which he also wrote.Â  Maybe it’s because he writes the characters he plays that he is fun to watch, and this film is no exception – his character (a religiously religiousÂ security guard who moonlights as a minister) isÂ actually quite likable, especially compared to all the other characters!Â  Also toÂ Mike White’sÂ writing credit is [Nacho Libre](http://imdb.com/title/tt0457510/), but I don’t think I was a big fan of that one.Â  Since we try to cram in so many movies, some are watched while we’re ultra-sleepy or being interrupted by kids, and Nacho Libre just might be one of those because I don’t really remember it.Â  Either that, or it was just bad.Â  Again, if you like dark comedies, go rent [The Good Girl](http://imdb.com/title/tt0279113/), it’s certainly “different” as far as comedies go…

### Comments

**Gambling Online   
Gambling Online** It's unlucky to be superstitious.

# Snow Day #11,572

Ok, I’m exaggerating just a tad on the number of snow days we’ve had, but that’s what it feels like by now!Â  I suppose with the new dog in the house, today was as good a day as any to have yet another snow day, but my poor husband is going to go crazy from shoveling all this snow!Â  It’s become almost a daily chore –Â just what he needed!Â  And, the weather guys are saying that they’re tracking ANOTHER system due here on Friday!Â  They won’t use the dreaded 4-letter “s” word though, it’s kinda funny.Â  They’ll just call it a “weather system” and “let’s see what it drops on us” – as if there’s any chance it will bring something other than snow (that dreaded 4-letter word!), yeah right.

Hubby and I braved the weather last night to venture out to a movie for date night.Â  Our date night is once a week on Tuesdays, and wouldn’t you know it, it’s snowed for the last like, 5 Tuesdays in a row, no exaggerating this time!Â  Last week, Â our movie theater was CLOSED because of the snow – that stank.Â  Instead of having a nice dinner, we got snacks at KFC cuz we were running late for the movie, and then we got there, and they were closed!Â  So sick of this weather already!Â  What did that groundhog say again?!?Â  So anyway, we ventured to a neighboring town with a movie theater that’s a little bigger; that way we could be assured it would be open.Â  We saw Vantage Point, an action movie with Dennis Quaid, Forrest Whittaker, and Matthew Fox.Â  And speaking of Groundhog Day, if you’ve seen that movie, even though it’s a comedy,Â Vantage Point actually had something in common with it in that they kept showing the same scene over and over.Â  The point of the movie was to take the audience through an incident of terrorism, one persepective at a time.Â  Dennis Quaid and Matthew Fox played secret service agents, and Forrest Whittaker was a tourist bystander who happened to catch everything on video.Â  It was a satisfying action movie – MUCH better than Gone Baby Gone…Â  I might actually say it was kinda like Groundhog Day meets In the Line of Fire, if you’ve seen that movie, since Dennis Quaid’s character had been through an assassination attempt on the President before and was jumpy – just like Clint Eastwood’s character in In the Line of Fire.Â  If you like action movies, this one won’t disappoint.Â  I was actually surprised there wasn’t a little more to the plot, and I can’t believe the constant violence earned it only a PG13 rating.Â  But when I think about it, I suppose you could see the same type of violence on tv any given night or even on cable during the day – it’s just what has happened to entertainment these days, I guess.Â Â Vantage Point hasÂ constant action, the movie is never slow, and seeing the action from the different people’s perspectives (vantage pointsÂ Â  get it?)Â was interesting and not at all confusingÂ like I was concerned about.Â  I found something at the end of the movie incredibly hokey, but then again, that’s common in action movies, you gotta appreciate them for what they are.

### Comments

**taylhis**yes - this next system is supposed to drop 6"+ - but they are being very vague - I think the weathermen are afraid of some sort of revolt from the viewers and the public if they say "snow", so they're just saying 1-3" tomorrow, then continuing into Sat with significant storm accumulations possible. What the heck does that mean?!?  
**derek**Well, we had a little dusting last night, that was it. It was all gone by this afternoon. Nothing more than flurries over here until next week when two days of rain are predicted (highs in 40s). Sorry to hear about all your snow.  
**taylhis**WHAT?!? I knew they were tracking another system, but since they won't use the s-word... I didn't realize it was supposed to be that much! Wish I had put the noon weather on!  
**jamiahsh**more snow for NWO sometime tomorrow.... up to 6".... hope that brightens your day  
**derek**Less than one inch? No one would care. Besides, it will all melt on Sunday, err.. Monday now it seems (just checked weather.com and the next above-freezing day has been pushed back a day).  
**taylhis**That's a nice idea... wonder what the neighbors would think of that? Living so close to downtown, we have lots of pedestrians, and I don't have the nerve to let them fend for themselves thru the snow... of course, we've never had merely 3/4 inch to worry about!  
**derek**I hope the schools are air conditioned for those extra days this summer... :P I have to say I am glad we haven't seen much snow here in the past week or so. I think the radio weatherguy mentioned a whopping 3/4 inch tonight though. I think I will just drive over that tomorrow morning rather than shovel it...

# 3's a Crowd?

Announcing a new addition to the family: Beesley!Â  No, we didn’t have the baby early – Beesley is of the canine variety.Â  She is named forÂ a character on what is quite possibly the best tv show ever, The Office (Pam Beesley).Â  Now that the writer’s strike is over, we can once again look forward to new episodes of this great show.Â  This way, if Pam and Jim get married, there is still a Beesley namesake 

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/03/beesley-pre-adoption.jpg)

She is a cocker spaniel mix about 5 1/2 yrs. old.Â  She is black and white and really cute!Â  She’s great with kids, and we’ve had a bit of a rocky start with our other 2 dogs, but we think 3 dogs will be good company and not a crowd soon.Â  We got her from the humane society, which is always a crap-shoot, but **well worth it** if you do your research.Â  Get to know the breed of dog you’re considering (if possible, sometimes they don’t always know what a mutt is made of!), and spend a lot of time getting to know the potential pet and vice versa – bring your whole family to test the dog around kids and look at a bunch of dogs to get an idea of what kind of personality and habits you may or may not want in a new family member.Â  Remember, this pet will be living with you and your loved ones for hopefully a number of years, so it’s really important to find a good fit!Â  Giving a pet a home who needs one is so rewarding!Â  It’s really easy and funÂ to go puppy shopping at a pet store because let’s face it, puppies are some of the cutest things ever!Â  But remember, they grow out of the cute and teeny phase within MONTHS, sometimes even mere WEEKS!Â  Puppies are not potty-trained, and you will have no idea how easy (or difficult!) your new puppy will be to potty train.Â  Our first dog took **years** to potty-train, whereas our 2nd dog basically potty-trained herself even though she was a young puppy when she came into our home.Â  Beesley is already potty-trained, and she seems to have had a good home in the past.Â  She is used to being let out on a cable in the backyard, knows her way around the house, and basically seems to fit right in so far at least…Â  So, our crap-shoot seems to have paid off thus far!Â  I will keep you posted!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**or 5am :)  
**taylhis**hehehe - the wild animals usually leave by 1, sometimes 3 am ;)  
**jamiahsh**unless of course they count the wild animals that keep invading for parties, etc. But VERY adorable picture  
**derek**Looks like a cute dog. Let's see now, 3 kids, 3 dogs. Hmm... (It \*has\* been just Scooby and Charity, right?)

# Voting in the great state of OHIO

Today is finally our turn to vote in the primaries here in Ohio.Â  And of the candidates who are left, I only really like one!Â  A lot of people in this neck of the woods find it unfair that we don’t get much of a say earlier in the campaign, when all the candidates are left.Â  I just accept it for the way it is, and I enjoy being in the national spotlight now – it’s neat to turn on CNN and hear Ohio this and Ohio that.Â  So, I will be going to the polls later today when time permits to perform my duty as an American citizen and vote – though I hope it doesn’t land me in jury duty at a later time.Â  And I will vote for the candidate I would like to see lead our country, even though he doesn’t stand a chance and will most likely drop out of the race within a week.Â  Then tonight, I will watch all the news channels as the final numbers come in, and whether we like it or not, we can all enjoy being a part of history, since pretty soon it will be official – we will have a presidnetial candidate who does not fit the mold of the traditional American president: a white male.Â  Well, sometimes change is good, but for now, go Buckeyes!

### Comments

**taylhis**I hear ya on the voting for a candidate you're unhappy with... actually, when we went to vote today, they made us vote EITHER Dem or Republican, not both... maybe I'm naive, but I didn't realize it was going to be that way for the primaries!  
**derek**But as it stands I will have to vote for a candidate I am not really happy with, just to try and make sure the other candidate (that matters according to our process, sorry Nader...) doesn't win.  
**derek**@Chris: (Two thumbs up)! @Lisa: And may the non-white or non-male, whichever it may be, NOT win in November, though not for any gender or race reason. If Huckabee was a black female, I would still vote for hi-, er- her. :)  
**Chris**Go Huckabee!

# The Mayor and the Macarena

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/03/march-08-roller-skating-007.jpg)

We went roller skating tonight for the first time in…Â  well, ever, for most of us.Â  My husband and I have never been roller skating together, and we go back 11 years, so needless to say, none of the kids have tried it before tonight.Â  The kids had a great time, and I was surprised to see how well our 3-year-old picked it up!Â  It doesn’t surprise me too much though – she’s always been the “physical” one.Â  Our 8-year-old is more creative and into arts and crafts than physical stuff, but she did well too…Â  I was surprised that when she kept falling, she didn’t get frustrated or upset or cry (for theÂ first hour anyway)Â because she is a perfectionist with aÂ VERY low pain tolerance.Â  Sure enough, by the end of the night, Taylor (the 8-year-old) was “hurt” and crying.Â  It was still lots of fun though.Â  And, living in an area with a small population is where the title The Mayor and the Macerena comes in – The mayor is the owner of the skating rink, and was spinning the tunes tonight.Â  When he played Macarena, hilarity ensued – I think he has the skating rink so he has a place to blast his ’80’s and 90’s music.Â

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/03/march-08-roller-skating-008.jpg)

### Comments

**taylhis**Guess it is something everyone does less after the teen years... I didn't try - not confident enough on my feet to risk anything happening to the baby. Maybe later this summer or fall we'll go back so I can take a few spills...  
**derek**I still have a pair of inline skates gathering dust, barely worn...  
**jamiahsh**ROLLER SKATING?! Been years and well.... let's just say it is not pretty.

# A Miracle for Every Season

Today when I was putting away laundry, it occurred to me that it’s almost that time of year when I need to pack away winter clothes and see if I have enough spring / summer clothes for the kids in the right sizes.Â  And, since I’m going to have another little bundle of joy, I started thinking about what I already have in the way of baby clothes…Â  Since this is my 4th girl, I have plenty of pinks and purples.Â  However, I really do need to check if any of these clothes are fitting for a July baby – I’ve never had a summer baby before!Â  Come to think of it, my girls were born in December (winter), May (spring), October (fall), and now, July (summer) – giving me miracles for every season!Â  We are so blessed!

Since #3 arrived not even 2 years ago, I still have ALL of her baby clothes, and my friends at the time were so nice to throw me a baby shower, even though she was #3…Â  I think it had something to do with my friend Sue insistingÂ baby #3 (Disney)Â was going to be a boy, but it was very thoughtful of her at any rate.Â  This next part is weird, I’m warning you…Â  The problem is, all of my baby clothes are in the basement, and I have put myself on strike from going in the basement for awhile…Â  It’s a long story, but I probably won’t be ready to go down there until the end of summer or fall – it’s just not something I want to deal with these days…Â  maybe I’ll go into it in another post.Â  So, I guess I’m going to have to bribe my husband to dig around in the basement to find all of our newborn baby clothes in time for me to wash them and see if there’s any shopping to do before our new arrival.Â  The good news is, since it will be July, I shouldn’t need too many clothes off the bat…Â  some onesies and blankets will do it until fall, and maybe by then I will be basement-ready!

### Comments

# imdb quiz

If you haven’t been to the site imdb.com and you like and/or watch movies, I give you permission to take a break from my blog and visit it now:Â  [imdb.com](http://imdb.com)

This site has everything about pretty much every movie:Â Â a list of the actors and crew involved with clickable links so you can see where else you’ve seen them if they look familiar or where else to find them if you like their work, trivia about movies, quotes, discussion boards, and much more.Â  They also have a movie rating system for users, so you can see if a movie is going to be worth the time toÂ watch it according to popular opinion.Â  Imdb lists keywords for movies, which I’ve often thought would make a fun game.Â  I’ve posted some below for you to try.Â  These are the keywords imdb has listed for some popular movies – I will give a hint – all but 2 are movies made pre-1990.Â  Keep in mind that I didn’t choose these keywords; imdb chose them for whatever reason andÂ some can beÂ quite strange!Â  Let me know if you would like additional hints, I can give you genre, actors, or just random hints, happy guessing!

1.Â Punch / Kiss / Muscleman / Eggs / Fistfight

2.Â  Bikini / UsedÂ Condom / Champagne / BrokenÂ Window / BrotherÂ BrotherÂ Relationship

3.Â  ComingÂ OfÂ Age / Controversial / Fantastic / Wish / WishÂ Fulfillment

4.Â  NoÂ OpeningÂ Credits / TragicÂ Incident / TalkingÂ Animal / CopyrightÂ Infringement / FalselyÂ Accused

5.Â  Planet / ConcertÂ Scene / BoxÂ OfficeÂ Flop / Laser / Physicist

6.Â  Miniaturization / Shrinking / Remake / SwordÂ Fight / ToyÂ Soldier

### Comments

**derek**Here's some useless trivia about me: I started using the internet movie database before it was an online database. You used to have to download the software and database and run it offline. I did this on my lil' ol' Amiga 500 (with hard drive of course- not possible otherwise!) in the early 90's.  
**taylhis**Don't sweat it by grading yourself - the keywords are really off the wall, and that's what makes the game "fun" - but it's probably much more fun to make the quizzes than to guess them... thanks for playing!  
**derek**Okay, I found all of them. Apparently I'm an idiot because I have actually seen all but one of them, including the infamous #2 which of course reached cult status (never saw #6). I never knew #4 had used a song illegally- I just looked up why that keyword was there and apparently they actually lost the suit. I can say that I should have been able to guess #1-4 after the hints (I did guess #1 in fact, but not the others). It's been far too long since I saw #5 to ever guess that one. In any event, an "F" for me on this one...  
**derek**Ah. I know #1 now at least: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0075148/ No clue on the rest though I did look up a few things which turned out to be wrong. And I have no idea who Annette Funicello is. I will look up by keyword now to find the answers...  
**taylhis**Thanks for trying! HINTS: 1. came out in 1976 - genre: drama, romance, sport - won 3 oscars 2. Chicago setting - one of the lead actors went to the same HS I did in Wheaton IL - movie from 1980 - action, comedy, musical - but because of the weird keyword, go ahead and keep your distance, can't say I blame you 3. cartoon - 1992 4. cartoon - 1994 - type of animal from cat family, yes 5. terrible movie from the 80's, also involves talking animal, not a cartoon 6. Annette Funicello  
**derek**Strange keywords indeed. Of course I could cheat and look them up on imdb, but that wouldn't be any fun. Well maybe I'm not so fun because I'm really not sure on most of them. 1: No idea 2: Erm... I think I will stay far, far away from this one... 3 sounds like it could have many answers, except maybe the controversial part 4: Not sure. Was the animal a cat? For some reason there are two movies I know of that have talking cats. Well, one of the cats spoke telepathically, but hey. I would guess if yes then it was the one where the cat actually opened it's mouth to "speak" rather than do it telepathically (The Cat from Outer Space is the title of the latter I believe). 5: Did Real Genius have a concert scene? I know there was a party... 6: Small Soldiers? No. Was there a movie titled The Incredible Shrinking Kid/Man? If there was I didn't see it... :P

# ANOTHER forward?

I hope you’re not getting the wrong opinion of me – I’m really not a big fan of email forwards…Â  it’s just that I get so many.Â  I don’t religiously forward every one to everybody I know.Â  And I am certainly not superstitious and don’t believe that I will get bad luck for not forwarding emails.Â  But occasionally, I will follow the directions on a forward, or sometimes I even pass it on to my friends and family because I find something cute, fun, or just a little bit entertaining.Â  One popular forward is the “4 Things About You” forward.Â  I’ve recently received this one for the umpteenth time (wish I had been keeping track), but I don’t mind since filling out questionaires about yourselfÂ tends to be fun, I don’t know why…Â  maybe toÂ get a chance to think about your favorite things and put them in a list?Â  Anyway, I’ve decided to post my answers here:Â

A) Four jobs I have had in my life:

Mommy

business owner

receptionist

office manager

B) Four movies I would watch over and over: (I’m just gonna put my favorites even though I wouldn’t watch them over and over – Forrest Gump is just too sad, but it’s still my favorite even though I haven’t seen it in years)

Wizard Of Oz

As Good as it Gets

Forrest Gump

Nanny McPhee

C) Four places I have lived:

Warrenville, IL

Lincoln, NE

Pioneer, OH

Wheaton, IL

D) Four TV shows I watch:

The Office – writer’s strike is OVER – can’t wait for new episodes!!!

Lost

Dr. Phil

Friends / Everybody Loves Raymond reruns

E) Four places I have been:

Orlando, FL

Washington, DC

Idaho

California

F) Four people who e-mail me (regularly):

Sue

Vickie

My mom

Elizabeth

G) Four of my favorite foods:

gyros off the spit

saganaki

spaghetti

cheese

H) Four places I would like to be right now:

home

somewhere warm

at a zoo

at an animal park  
Â

I) Four friends I think will respond:

Elizabeth

Jamy

Vickie

MB

J) Four things I am looking forward to this year:

The birth of our 4th daughter

having 4 kids

warm weather

the Cubs season

### Comments

# Too Many Questions... LOST All the Answers? AYE!

Here is my own review of the Thursday, February 29Â episode of Lost:

To sum it up quickly, see title of post.Â  This show is intriguing, yet if they don’t start answering questions soon…Â  I don’t know what I’ll do.Â  I’d still watch it, but only to get answers to the thousands of questions the writers have put out there over the years…Â  That is, if I can actually remember all the questions…Â  there are literally hundreds of loose ends, with at least 5-10 new plot twists and story linesÂ opening EACH WEEK!Â  Stop it already!Â  I am a busy person with a terrible memory!Â  Now that that is out of the way…Â  on to the actual synopsis of the latestÂ Lost episode.

\***WARNING – SPOILERS AHEAD – DO NOT KEEP READING IF YOU DON’T WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED MOST RECENTLY ON LOST!!!\***

First, let me refer you to the tvguide.com Lost blog – they do a great job and I really recommend reading their blog every Friday after the show airs.Â  Although I must say that the person filling in this week is not nearly as insightful and clever as theÂ person whoÂ normally writes the blog, so if you don’t like it, I would suggestÂ reading it another week when the regular writer is back: <http://community.tvguide.com/blog/TV-Show-Blog/Lost/800062566>

This episode actually opened with the answer to a question!Â  Albeit, it was a question only raised last episode, but still a step in the right direction – Sayid and Desmond are alive!Â  But, immediately following this revelation, we were introduced to 2 MORE CHARACTERS – Omar and Kearney – and YET ANOTHER plot twist – time travel!Â  I have to admit, the time travel aspect was interesting, if not confusing, but at least they answered some of the questions they raised about it this episode – they tell us what year Desmond is traveling back toÂ (1996) and why he is time-traveling (exposure to radiation).Â  Unfortunately for Desmond,Â others who have traveled thru time in the show met an unfortunate demise – RIP Eloise andÂ Â George Minkowski, Desmond’s roommate on the ship.Â  Of course we will have to wait and see what Desmond’s fate will be, as that is yet another unanswered question at this point.Â  But Thursday’s episode was remarkable in that it showed (fast-forwards NOT INCLUDED!) the FIRST time any of the island-dwelling characters have gotten off the island!Â  Way to go Sayid and Desmond!Â  Unless, of course, the ship is a bad place to be – we don’t know what the ship is yet because that is an UNANSWERED QUESTION!

As always, we had some time for a bit of subtle comic relief this episode, such as the moment when Penny’s father said “Walk with me.”Â  to Desmond so they could have a chat, but then the scene cuts away, and he is in a urinal – it’s no secret how he feels about Desmond!

The tvguide blog likes to pose some questions to viewers at the end, so here they are with my answers in CAPS.Â  Since this week’s blog was written by a replacement writer, the questions are not nearly as thought-provoking, witty, or well-written as they usually are:

1. Was Penny expecting Desmond’s call? It wasn’t clear if Present Penny remembered Past Des’ promise.Â  TO ME IT WAS CLEAR SHE REMEMBERED HIS PROMISE!Â  SO SHE HAS BEEN LOOKING FOR HIM FOR 3 YEARS EVEN THOUGH SHE DIDN’T REMEMBER HIS PROMISE – UNLIKELY!

2. Why would Faraday need a “constant”?Â  MAYBE HE WAS JUST PARANOID AND WANTED ONE IN CASE – I WOULD!

3. Does Miles still have that grenade in his gob?Â  WHO CARES – MILES WAS AN A-HOLE!

4. Are Sawyer and Kate still in bed back in New Otherton?Â  AGAIN WHO CARES – THOUGH I BET THE ACTORS WHO PLAYED THEM WERE IN FOR A SURPRISE WHEN THEY READ THE SCRIPT THIS WEEK AND WERE NO WHERE TO BE FOUND – ALSO JIN, SUN, HURLEY, CLAIRE, LOCKE, MICHAEL (where IS Michael, anyway?!?)Â ETC, ETC.Â  THAT’S WHAT THEY GET FOR HAVING SO MANY CHARACTERS IN THE SHOW!!!Â  UNFORTUNATELY, IT’S NOT THE ACTORS’ FAULTS!

5. Where was Ms. Hawking? I missed her.Â  WHO IS MS. HAWKING?

Now that that’s out of the way, here are the questions I have about this episode:

1.Â  How does Desmond know what Daniel looks like in 1996 at Oxford?

2.Â  How come Penny doesn’t look any different between 1996 and 2004 – what is her secret?

3.Â  If Penny was so fed up with Desmond, why was she looking for him for 3 yrs. (since 2001), Â even though he said he wasn’t going to call her until 2004?

If you are an avid watcher of the show, give me some feedback!Â  Let’s pick our brains and come up with some insights and possible answers to all these questions!Â  They have said that they have put the show on a timeline – meaning, they know when they want it to end, so they are writing it so that ALL (so they say, yeah right) questions will be answered by the time the show is finished.Â  My husband thinks maybe what the show is about is that the island is pergatory, and that when someone dies on the island, they are going to Heaven if they’ve passed their test, or ahem, the other place if they haven’t.Â  It had certainly seemed this way at times, and this is a good theory, but I don’t think it’s going to be that biblical in the end.Â  Especially after this last episode, I’m starting to think the island is about time travel…Â  maybe it will turn out the Oceanic survivors were only missing for a matter of hours or days…Â  all we can do at this point is hang on tight and wait and see!

What do **YOU** think?!?

### Comments

# I did the Macarena with a phone because Big Bird said to and he's my leader.

The subject of this post, my friends, is the result of an emailÂ forward I got today.Â  It’s one of the stupidest forwards, yet somehow irresistable at the same time.Â  I posted it below if you want to try it.Â  I didn’t have the nerve to bother my friends with this at work, so I decided to post it on my blog instead.Â  Imagine my surprise when I got an email from a neighbor my mom had like 4 years ago (I somehow got on her forward list) with a subject of: “*I love an ipod because I think I need some serious help.”*

*This is funny, and silly butÂ fun..keep it going..Type the sentence you end up with, in the subject line and forward to your friends… Pick the month you were born: January——-I kicked   
February——I loved   
March——–I karate chopped   
April———-I licked   
May———-I jumped on  
June———-I smelled   
July———–****I did the Macarena With****August——–I had lunch with   
September—-I danced with   
October——-I sang to   
November—–I yelled at   
December—–I ran over*

*Pick the day (number) you were born on:*

*1——-***a birdbath***2——-a monster   
3——-a phone   
4——-a fork   
5——-a snowman   
6——-a gangster   
7——-my mobile phone   
8——-m y dog   
9——- my best friends’ boyfriend   
10——-my neighbour   
11——-my science teacher   
12——-a banana   
13——-a fireman   
14——-a stuffed animal   
15——-a goat   
16——-a pickle   
17——-your mom   
18——-a spoon   
19—— – a smurf   
20——-a baseball bat   
21——-a ninja   
22——-Chuck Norris   
23——-a noodle   
24——-a squir rel   
25——-a football player   
26——-my sister   
27——-my brother   
28——-an ipod   
29——-a surfer   
30——-a llama   
31——-A homeless guy*

*Pick the color of shirt you are wearing:*

*White———because I’m cool like that   
Black———***because that’s how I roll.** *Pink———–because I’m crazy.   
Red———–because the voices told me to   
Blue———–because I’m sexy and I do what I want   
Green——— because I think I need some serious help.   
Purple———because I’m AWESOME!   
Gray———-because Big Bird said to and he’s my leader.   
Yellow——– because someone offered me 1,000,000 dollars   
Orange——–because my family thinks I’m stupid anyway.   
Brown———because I can.Â    
Beige———–because I a NICE person!   
Other———-because I’m a Ninja!   
None———-because I can’t control myself!*

*Â*

*Now type out the sentence you made, in the subject line and forward to your friends.Â*

### Comments

**Chris**Taylor today says "I ran over a Ninja because I'm cool like that"  
**jamiahsh**I did the Macarena with my neighbor bcause I'm sexy and I do what I want. HAHAHA  
**taylhis**hehe - can't believe you actually did it! Chris says "I smelled your mom because Big Bird said to and he's my leader."  
**derek**I sang to a snowman because I can.

# UNDEFEATED Chicago Cubs!

How ’bout them Cubs?Â  Ok, it’s only been one game of spring training, but they are undefeated!Â  Whoo-hoo!Â  I am so ready for baseball season; especially with all this snow – had ANOTHER snow day today, by the way.Â  Which means we have 2 make-up days now in the summer, and counting, probably since I’m sure with the way the snow has been falling out of the sky that it’s not done yet…Â  but that’s ok, because come June, when the kids have their extra days of school, I will be at home, sitting on my very pregnant behind, watching the Chicago Cubs WIN some baseball!Â  GO CUBBIES!

### Comments

**derek**Oh, by the way, I found an easier way to add the Â¢ sign or any other symbol to your post, though it won't work for comments (just use cut 'n' paste then, mmkay?). The icon all the way on the right of the post editor opens up the advanced panel, which is just another row of options added below the original. You will see an omega symbol toward the right. Clicking this (Î© is a symbol, clever of them, no?), called "insert custom character" will open up a dialog where you can click on an ASCII character not on your keyboard to add it to your post.  
**derek**Well, I suppose I ought to be a Flyers fan if minor leagues counted. Wait, I'm not a Cubs fan either- something about not caring for sports. Meh, oh well...  
**taylhis**Once a Cubs fan, always a Cubs fan... besides, we're about the same distance from Chicago as we are from Cleveland or Cincinatti. Toledo only has a minor league team- the Mudhens -not quite the same.  
**derek**Are you allowed to be a Cubs fan out there? I think there's a law somewhere that you have to root for an Ohio team now... :P Go Reds!, or something like that.  
**UNDEFEATED Chicago Cubs!**[...] Meanderings wrote an interesting post today and shared it with the world.Here’s a quick excerptHow â€™bout them Cubs? Ok, itâ€™s only been one game of spring training, but they are undefeated!& … #160; Whoo-hoo! I am so ready for baseball season; especially with all this snow - had ANOTHER snow day today, by the way…. [...]

# The Hitcher

Hubby and I watched this movie last night.Â Â Plot inconsistenciesÂ aside – it is a horror movie after all, so we weren’t expecting much – it was actually better than I thought.Â  I really enjoyed how they let the main characters keep slipping away from the Hitcher, the bad guy, only to be back in danger…Â  but I kept wondering, ok they’re safe now, but the movie can’t be over, so how are they going to get back inÂ The Hitcher’s clutches?Â  The answers to these questions are an entertaining combination of extremely stupid and horrible decision making on the part of our “heroes” and alsoÂ some pretty good plot manuvers on the part of the script.Â Â There was also a lot of police involved in this movie, which, for a horror movie, is pretty rare.Â  Usually once the main characters encounter the police, they are safe, but without spoilingÂ TOO much for you, this film is different from the norm.Â  Like I said, it was better than I expected.Â  Not super-great, but IÂ was never bored or grossed-out, both of which I can’t say during my recent viewing of Saw IV – now that was an awful movie.Â  I think part of it is the pregnancy, but I just couldn’t handle the gore.Â  It never bothered me before, but I always did find it annoying when they use lots of gore just for shock value.Â  Now it’s both annoying AND so gross I can’t even watch it.Â  And what was with the casting of Saw IV?Â  They chose 2 actors who look exactly alike!Â  Even if I was making a serious attempt to follow the plot of the fim, which I wasn’t anyway since I constantly had to divert my eyes and ears from all the gore, I wouldn’t have been able to follow the movie because of the 2 identical actors they cast who were not supposed to be the same character but looked like it!Â  Anyway, back to TheÂ Hitcher – IÂ liked it better than Gone Baby Gone, but then again, it’s a totally different kind of movie.Â  If it weren’t for some plot unbelievabilities and some of the STUPIDEST decisions I’ve ever seen main characters make, the movie would have been better.Â  In review, if you like horror / suspense movies, see The Hitcher.Â  By the way, I’m talking about the newer version, don’t know anything about the older version, maybe I shouldÂ give it a try.Â  If you like pointless gore fests, I still wouldn’t recommend Saw IV – I wouldn’t recommend that movie to my worstÂ enemy.Â  If you want to sit through a terrible movie, try The Night Listener – at least itÂ has Robin Williams!Â

On an unrelated note,Â for those of you who have read my Walmart rant, during my weekly visit today, the “*magic price increase of the day”* was yogurt – up from $.44Â per container to $.46 each.Â  By the way, have you noticed that computer keyboards do not have a cents sign?Â  If I’m mistaken, let me know, I have actually gone to use them before!

### Comments

**derek**I'm so not a horror fan anymore. It doesn't scare me but rather makes me think about real supernatural evil from the real evil one and makes me glad God chose me for His side. There will come a day when the devil will be bound up for 1000 years, as is written.  
**taylhis**A Nightmare remake? Now that would be interesting... if only they didn't ruin it... watching the original as an adult makes it seem kinda dumb, but it was SO scary in the 80's. I know they're working on a Friday the 13th remake: http://imdb.com/title/tt0758746/ And then, of course this isn't horror - well, maybe it will be - but Goonies 2 is scheduled for filming...  
**jamiahsh**No... haven't seen either movie. I'm finding interesting how they are beginning to remake horror films from days gone by. Texas Chainsaw Massacre, etc. They keep talking about a remake of Nightmare on Elm Street... too soon, if ever.  
**taylhis**Have you seen the Hitcher from the 80's? And wow - so wmart isn't even trying to disguise their price raising anymore - that spells trouble, more on the way, it'll get even worse! Thanks for the info, I hadn't realized that!  
**jamiahsh**The Hitcher is actually a remake of a film of the same name from the 80s. Apparently, WM has abandoned the Low Prices Always campaign and gone with Save money. Live better. Questionable how this price gauging is saving the customer money.  
**derek**Next few weeks? Ever the optimist...  
**taylhis**interesting... but I will never remember how to do that... wonder why they took off the cent sign - wasn't it one of the numbers on my commodore 64 keyboard? Guess it's obsolete because everything costs more then mere cents these days... speaking of which, my mom tells me that gas prices are supposed to go over $4 / gallon in the next few weeks?!? Hope this doesn't affect your potential visit to our neck of the woods?  
**derek**46Â¢ now, up from 44Â¢? What happened to the commercial showing all the prices being \*lowered\*? Time to start visiting Meijer if you have one over there (I can't remember). P.S.: No, there is no Â¢ symbol on mine either. Just hold ALT and type 0162 on the keypad, then let go of ALT. VoilÃ ! It works for all extended ASCII characters (symbols).

# This town SMELLS

You think you know where I’m going with this, but it’s actually not a complaint.Â  A lot of places have their own smell.Â  I’ve driven through towns in Georgia that smell like peaches.Â  Gary, Indiana smells like what I can only descibe as “burning rubber french fries” –Â a term I inventedÂ as a kid, and IÂ haven’t been able to think of a suitable replacement description that doesn’t involve a 4-letter word.Â  A place in Idaho I visited one time smelled like mint – there was a mint field nearby…

In the town where I live, we have a number of factories.Â  You might think because of this, our noses would meet the same fate every morning as the poor residents of Gary Indiana, but fortunately for us, one of our largest factories manufactures **CANDY**!Â  So, our town literally smells like candy almost every day.Â  Chocolate some days, unidentified sweetness on the others…Â  it is wonderful and really puts a spring in your step!Â  Ahh, now there’s a post that’s short and sweet! ðŸ˜‰

### Comments

**taylhis**Gary smells worse than any town I've been to!  
**jamiahsh**Gary Indiana Gary Indiana Gary Indiana let me say it once again. Home of the Jackson 5 (for better or for worse).

# Ohio VS. Illinois - weather

From time to time, I will be talking about what it’s like to live in various places throughoutÂ the midwest because I have a lot of experience in that area.Â  We’ve lived in central Illinois, northern Illinois, and various suburbs of Chicago.Â  We also lived in Lincoln, Nebraska and rural Ohio.Â  Of all these, I love rural Ohio the best!Â  But it is really interesting how different things like dialect and attitudes can vary from place to place, even places that are only hundreds of miles apart and in virtually the same climate.Â  One thing I’m still getting used to in rural Ohio is their attitude about weather.Â  I spent my childhood in Illinois, specifically the suburbs of Chicago, so I am used to the attitude of snow days being a rarity.Â  I wonder what the average is there, but I would guess it’s one per season or even less – they will not cancel school unless the schools are buried.Â  There was one time when my mom’s car was snowed in, she couldn’t get it out of the driveway, and so she wanted to take the school bus with me to school – she worked at the same school I attended.Â  So I did what any mature 12-year-old would do – I cried.Â  Foolish, maybe yes, but I figured I had suffered enough with her working at my school – why should I have to face the humiliation and ridicule of her riding my bus?Â  It had nothing to do with how cool I thought I was; it was more about how MEAN kids can be…Â  I was so afraid of what the kids would say or do once they found out my mom was riding the bus!Â  So anyway, lucky for me, she got her car out, and I was saved.Â  But my point is, her car was stuck in the snow, yet they hadn’t cancelled school.Â  Here in Ohio things are MUCH different.Â  We are on our 6th snow day already this season!Â  And I’ve lost count of how many 2 hour delays we’ve had – which luckily (for them, not me) the kids don’t have to make up.Â  Coming from Chicagoland, I had never even heard of a 2 hour delay before we moved here – they don’t exist there.Â  But in Ohio – they are quite common, most of the time because of fog – FOG!Â  We actually have fog days!Â  School has beenÂ CANCELLED because of fog…Â  it was really hard for me to get used to at first…Â  you’d think we live in a swamp or something!Â  Oh, wait, – that’s just it…Â  this area used to be the Great Black Swamp before it was turned into farmland a few hundred years ago.Â  So I guess that explains it…Â  but I would be willing to bet that if Illinois had a fog problem, they still wouldn’t cancel school.Â  I don’t know anything about Nebraska’s attitudes about weather and school since we didn’t have a school-aged child while we lived there.Â  I don’t really have an opinion about who is right or who is wrong – it’s not that Ohio devalues education or anything like that…Â  they are just over-sensitive about childrens’ safety when it comes to weather (is there such a thing?), and the school days and curriculum are made up in the end so they’re not behind.Â  I’m just enjoying my role as an amused spectator observing the differences in weather attitude between different regions.

### Comments

**taylhis**Yes, well this year everybody is already way over the average snowfall - I think we're about 7 in over or something like that. Also, last time I checked we are expecting another 1-3 inches tonight! Could this be snow day #7?!? It is annoying, but I (unlike the kids) am SOOOOO looking forward to the makeup days - I will be almost 8 mos pregnant then and needing a break even more than I do now!  
**jamiahsh**Growing up in the Buckeye state, I remember at the very mention of snow or fog.... at least more than an inch or two... it would be.... ooooohhhh.... delay tomorrow. this would allow a bit of time to catch a few minutes of sleep or finish that last bit of homework. We also took bets on who would cancel first. There came a time when a pattern formed. Particularly with Edgerton and its neighbor to the north, Edon. One would delay and two minutes later, the other. AH.... youth in NW OHHO :) Then of course came the make up days:(  
**derek**Well, one may be the norm, but I believe we have had three this school-year so far. But fog is still a rarity here of course as you know.

# Snow Day!

Yet another snow day is upon us…Â  that makes #6 for us this year, and it’s now officially time to start making them up in the summer.Â  Which I guess is good news for me, because the kids now have at least 1 extra day to attend school in the summer, near the time when the baby is due and I wouldn’t know how I’m going to handle all 3 of them alone anyway!Â  But for today, we are stuck here, buried under about 6 inches of snow which isÂ still falling.Â  My gem of a husband had already shoveled twice – it’s our “date night”, and he says he wants nothing to stop the car from taking the kids to the babysitters later.Â  But I feel badly for him cuz it just keeps snowing and burying our sidewalks yet again.Â  And speaking of being buried, our garbage is no where to be seen – oops!Â  Once a month where I live, we have big garbage day, when you can put all your garbage out for free, no special bags or stickers needed.Â  So today was ours, and even though none of the neighbors had theirs out, we put ours out, like idiots…Â  my idea.Â  So now it’s buried, and I don’t know how they’re going to pick it up.Â  Don’t think the neighbors would be too happy if we leave it there until next month!

So the kids are already fighting, and Dr. Phil isn’t even over.Â  I still have to make lunch, get my load of laundry in, finish this post, and make sure the kids pick up the mess they made all morning.Â  If I get all that done and I can bundle the kids before it gets too cold and windy outside like they are forcasting, we might go sledding.Â  I’m not a big fan of the snow days; it throws our whole schedule off, but at least they’ll be going one more day in the summer – disappointing for them = freedom for me!

### Comments

**taylhis**We have a city sled here hill - it's pretty neat... went back there today for a little bit, and since the snow has been packed down, it was really slick! Poor Sammie accidently got dragged down without a sled!  
**derek**Ah yes, sledding. The popular one around here is the retention base in Rolling Meadows by Wilke and Kirchoff.  
**taylhis**Taylor was actually disappointed because she likes school and it was also art day. But she was over it when we went sledding!  
**derek**Snow day? What snow day? :p This time we only got a few inches here. Fortunately I didn't lose another work day as happened twice before, in the space of a week. I bet Taylor didn't mind though!  
**taylhis**I don't know how she does it either! And she and I are in the same club - the "what the heck are we gonna do with all these kids when summer comes" club! Maybe I will have the baby early and it will be Chris' problem - HA!  
**jamiahsh**WOW... we have 4 kids here all day!!! Grandma so graciously allows S & A to come on days off and the two little ones are here every day. I do not know how she does it.... especially when she has them on Thursday and Friday while she works in the beauty shop. She keeps saying that she is not watching them all in the summer.... we'll see.

# Oscar Party

We had an Oscar party last night.Â  It was a lot of fun!Â  We asked the guests to bring a $5 item from home they would have put in a garage sale.Â  Everyone filled out a ballot, and whoever got the most correct guesses (my husband out of sheer luck, can you believe it?Â  He doesn’t know anything about the Oscars!Â  Congratulations Honey!) chose an item first, followed by the person with the next most correct guesses, and so on.Â  So, we got a cool looking food chopper.Â  Haven’t tried it yet…Â  I didn’t do too badly on the guessing, I got to choose fourth…Â  but I was disappointed because the item I really wanted (needed, actually) had been taken by then…Â  but I am happy with the food chopper, I’ll have to see how it works.Â  What I really wanted were the set of metal padlocks, it sounds weird, I know…Â  but we have this escaping parrot who needs all the doors on his cage padlocked – there are 3 – and he can bite thru plastic padlocks.Â  The other day he got out of his cage and chewed the light switch plate off the wall…Â  so I’m afraid we’re going to come home one day to fried parrot.Â  But, who would have guessed that the padlocks would be in such high demand.Â  Not my husband, who did get to choose first but thought the padlocks would be left for me to choose, so instead he chose the food chopper for me – awww.Â  But I really recommend doing award show parties, sports-watching parties, etc. this way, it’s lots of fun, and it’s really interesting to see what kind of stuff you end up with.

But enough about us and our party, let’s move on to the real party…Â  I didn’t really see any of the red carpet this year – oh darn – cuz we were busy playing a game and then we watched Barbara Walters interviews, which I don’t usually watch.Â  I did see Hillary Swank, who I mistook for Halle Berry – don’t know what that was about, but she looked really different, barely recognizable.Â  I thoughtÂ the showÂ was supposed to start at 8, but it started closer to 9, which could explain why our poor friends were stuck here until midnight on a work night!Â  I thought Jon Stewart did pretty well as host.Â  He was pretty funny, but my favorite Oscars host is Ellen – I really wish they’d have her back.Â  I got 8 of the 24 votable categories correct.Â  Not an outstanding score, but among our party of about 10, I think it was about average.Â  The only award contenders I saw this year were Gone Baby Gone and Juno.Â  See one of my previous posts for a review of Gone Baby Gone and you’ll see why I wasn’t broken up about it losing out on its Oscar chance.Â  I was glad to see Juno win for one of the screenplay awards – it was a really well written movie, and I recommend it to anyone who is not a teen.Â  If you have a teen, watch out, and do not let them see this movie, as it totally glorifies teen pregnancy, makes it seem easy, and will most likely have them saying, what’s the big deal, I can handle it, no problem.Â  Enough of my rambling, here are the Oscar winners in case you can’t find them anywhere else for some weird reason:

**Best Motion Picture:** “No Country for Old Men.”

**Lead Actor:** Daniel Day-Lewis, “There Will Be Blood.”

**Lead Actress:** Marion Cotillard, “La Vie en Rose.”

**Supporting Actor:** Javier Bardem, “No Country for Old Men.”

**Supporting Actress:** Tilda Swinton, “Michael Clayton.”

**Director**: Joel Coen and Ethan Coen, “No Country for Old Men.”

**Foreign Language Film:** “The Counterfeiters,” Austria.

**Adapted Screenplay:** Joel Coen and Ethan Coen, “No Country for Old Men.”

**Original Screenplay:** Diablo Cody, “Juno.”

**Animated Feature Film:** “Ratatouille.”

**Art Direction:** “Sweeney Todd the Demon Barber of Fleet Street.”

**Cinematography**: “There Will Be Blood.”

**Sound Mixing:** “The Bourne Ultimatum.”

**Sound Editing:** “The Bourne Ultimatum.”

**Original Score:** “Atonement,” Dario Marianelli.

**Original Song:** “Falling Slowly” from “Once,” Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova.

**Costume**: “Elizabeth: The Golden Age.”

**Documentary Feature:** “Taxi to the Dark Side.”

**Documentary Short Subject:** “Freeheld.”

**Film Editing:** “The Bourne Ultimatum.”

**Makeup:** “La Vie en Rose.”

**Animated Short Film:** “Peter & the Wolf.”

**Live Action Short Film:** “Le Mozart des Pickpockets (‘The Mozart of Pickpockets’).”

**Visual Effects:** “The Golden Compass.”

### Comments

# The Price is WRONG, Bit... TAKE TWO, ENTER WALMART

I thought this would be a perfect title to use for my venting session about many people’s favorite place to shop, Walmart.Â  But since I just used the title the other day, this will have to be take two on the title.

I have a love-hate relationship with Walmart.Â  It’s a lot more hate than love at this point, but I try to be an optimist, view the cup as half full, that kind of thing.Â  I used to love the place.Â  That was when I had lots of other shopping choices.Â Â Also I wasn’t stuck there at least once a week for hours on end with crabby kids because I had fewer kids then, and for some reason, they used to like shopping there.Â  But now that Walmart has put many of the other stores in my area out of business, and there aren’t very many other choices for local shoppers to make, Walmart is beginning to engage in a little bit of price gouging.Â  Let me back up for a minute…Â  what I loved most about Walmart when I first started shopping there were their low, low prices.Â  This is no longer the case!Â  I go to Walmart about twice a week.Â  I try to go just once, but that plan never works in my favor – we either run out of something, I forget something, or something comes up, like an impromptu get-together or Pampered Chef party.Â  But anyway, so I’m there twice a week, at least.Â  And EVERY time I go, they raise the price on at least one of my “staple” items!Â  Even if it’s only 7 cents or so, it’s still a big deal to me, because over years, it really adds up!Â  And, in the case of the toilet paper I buy, it used to cost $1.Â  The price went up to $1.24 **in one visit!**Â  I’m no math wiz, but I thinkÂ that is almost a 25% price increase **in one visit!**Â  Also, it’s difficult to compare prices at different stores if the prices are constantly changing.Â  But don’t be fooled – Walmart knows this.Â  And that’s not the only trick they have up their sleeve either.Â  If your Walmart is anything like mine, they are out of stock on things constantly!Â  I think it’s a purposeful action so that they can force you into buying a similiar item that costs more just to avoid running out of the item yourself or having to take the time to go to another store – if there are any other stores left, that is.Â  For example, let’s say Walmart is out of the Great Value (Walmart’s generic brand = same as Heinz but cheaper) brand of ketchup.Â  Are you going to tell your barbecue guests you don’t have enough ketchup?Â  Or are you going to make another stop atÂ different store,Â unloading all your kids from the car just to run in for ketchup?Â Â Or,Â are you going to choose likely option #3, the one Walmart wants you to choose: you mumbling and swearing under your breath as youÂ pay more for theÂ Heinz ketchup, of which Walmart has so thoughtfully stocked plenty?Â  If I had the time or any fewer kids, I would probably go with option #2 just on a matter of principle, but I just don’t have the time nor the energy to take a freaky stand against Walmart and their price gouging ways.Â  In updating this blog I will keep you posted on what has changed by how much – it will be good to help me vent so my family and friends don’t have to hear all these gory details constantly.Â  And, because I’ve rambled forever about Walmart, I will alsoÂ save my gripes about theirÂ oil changes for another post.Â  For now, I think I’m done wasting time droning on and on about Walmart…Â  besides, it’s almost Oscar time!

### Comments

# The Pampered Chef

I hosted a Pampered Chef party last night – it was just for fun.Â  I do like their products, but I find them extremely over-priced.Â  MyÂ experience of working for a company that imported goods from China doesn’t help these opinions; that’s when I got to see how inexpensive plastics can really be.Â  But anyway…Â  we did have fun.Â  And an interesting note for all you stoneware fans out there – stoneware is an imposter!Â  If you’re not familiar with Pampered Chef parties, I’ll give you a run-down of how it all went down…

When you agree to host a party, you choose one recipe to make with all the victims, I mean, friends, you invite to your party.Â  I, being pregnant, could not resist the sound of the chewy caramel brownies.Â  We were having a grand old time, measuring things, chopping things, and spilling ingredients all over my living room, until the consultant proceeded to burn the brownies to a **crisp!Â Â**The smoke alarm went off and scared the kids and everything!Â  Which brings me to the subject of the mythical stoneware, noted for its ability to cook things evenly.Â  Guess what?Â  The brownies did burn **edges first!**Â  So much for that theory.Â  My husband, ever the conspiracy theorist, was wondering if she didn’t burn the brownies on purpose trying to gain sympathetic orders from my victims, errr, guests.Â  But, once we saw the effect of the stoneware, this theory was proven incorrect by the sheer failure of the purpose of the stoneware.Â  Needless to say, I will not be choosing any stoneware items with my party-hosting credit!Â  And I have to admit, the brownies were a big disappointment.Â  Not at all cuz they were burned, but because they were TOO sweet and rich for my tastes, however pregnant I am.Â  I did feel badly for the consultant; but stuff happens, gotta chalk it up to gaining experience.Â  Overall, I would recommend hosting one of these parties.Â  It’s fun to get together with your victims,Â I mean yourÂ friends and family and cook.Â  You have to be a little bit willing to stand up for yourself though – the consultant WILL pressure you to invite tons of people, call them all constantly to remind them to come, and will also try her darndest to get YOU to be a consultant yourself!Â  AndÂ since my “excuse” of having 3 kids 8 yrs and underÂ PLUS 1 on the way wasn’t reallyÂ good enough – I had to “just say no” in the end – good luck to you!Â  So as long as you can deal with the peer pressure involved, it is definitely worth a try to host a Pampered Chef party.Â  And thanks to all my suckers, I mean, my guests who ordered things – that was really nice of you and I appreciate it – we had fun!

### Comments

# The Price is WRONG, Bit...

You know I’m not going to finish that sentence…Â  if you’ve seen Happy Gilmore, you know how it ends, anyway.Â  If not, rent it if you like comedies, it’s a good one.Â  In case you haven’t noticed, I watch a lot of tv.Â  Actually, I don’t really watch it, I just leave it on to listen to while I putter around the house doing various chores and tending to children all day…Â  it’s nice to hear adults talking, even if they aren’t talking to me – I can pretend.Â  Anyway, I usually have The Price is Right on in my laundry room for my parrot – it’s his favorite show.Â  He likes to imitate the AWWW noise the audience makes when they get something wrong.Â  I’m getting used to Drew Carey.Â  He’s no Bob Barker, but he is finally becoming less nervous and getting in the groove of the show – or so I thought.Â  The other day when I started this post – it got POSTponed (HA) because the baby and I have been under the weather – Drew was a little “off”.Â  The opening prize was a train set, and he goes, what do you want to bid for that chainsaw?Â  As he admitted, he didn’t even look at the prize!Â  Then later on, he called one of the models Rachel Ray.Â  Funny stuff – and though it might seem like I have too much time on my hands, I beg to differ.

### Comments

# Finally, a Walking Baby!

She finally did it!Â  Tonight was Disney’s first serious attempt at walking!Â  Well, she has tried before, but tonight she was doing it over and over, 5 steps or more at a time!Â  I tried to get it on video, but as soon as I took out the camera, she got all distracted and started crawling toward the camera saying “cheese, cheese” – it was really cute, but I had to put the camera away and get back to walking!Â  It’s like she knew the deadline was nearing, because we have a Dr. appointment on Monday just because the Dr. wants to make sure she’s walking – she was really surprised she wasn’t walking at her 15 month appointment so she asked to see her again in a month to make sure…Â Â Now she has until Monday to practice, and her sisters are a big help with that!Â  Since tomorrow is her 16 month birthday, I was wondering, how late is she?Â  Beyond average, I know, but I’m curious about how late kids start walking…Â  let me know if you know of any lazy late walkers – it’s kind of like a poll, let’s see the latest we can find, hope it’s not Disney though ðŸ˜‰

### Comments

# Baby Names

Ok, with a baby on the way, I’ve got baby names on the brain.Â  With 3 girls already, we’ve exhausted our supply of favorite girls’ names.Â  Since we just found out this one is also most likely a girl, we have been pondering ways to name the baby.Â  Our first 3 all have middle names that start with “A”s, so we’d like to keep that pattern.Â  The problem is, since we’ve used up all of our top choices by now, I would like to name this baby after a relative.Â  My relatives don’t have the best sounding names…Â  I don’t want to offend anyone here, so no offense, but Dolores (my grandmother), Phyllis (my mother), or even Lisa (my name = my husband’s idea to use it) just don’t appeal to me, to say the least.Â  I was very close to my deceased grandmother whom my husband never met, but her name was, GULP, Frances.Â  Now, I do not regret using the middle-names-start-with-A pattern at all, I think it’s cool and all of our girls have pretty names; so far anyway, but if we didn’t have to stick to the pattern, we could name her something we like with Frances as a middle name to use as the namesake.Â  But, with our lovely pattern at stake, if we’re going to use the name Frances, it has to be a first name.Â  After being blessed with 3 beautiful girls and getting to give them 2 names each of our choosing, I think it’d be nice to use a namesake this time.Â  But my husband HATES the name Frances.Â  I can’t say I blame him, he never met my grandmother, and I’m not a big fan of the name either, but I think it would grow on us and we could also call herÂ by her middle name or a nickname.Â  And, let’s face it, we can’t get more flak than we’ve already gotten for naming our third child Disney!Â  That’s a long story, best to be saved for another post…Â  but let’s just say little Disney is our happiest baby yet, so who has any right to say what’s in a name?

### Comments

**taylhis**Do you mean Tevye for Chris? hehe... one more to go...  
**derek**Oh, and speaking of nicknames, I guess we know what we can start calling Chris now... :D  
**derek**Nickname: "Frankie" :P Not a lot of Biblical choices for girl names either. Mary and Sarah are really the only ones I can think of who can be seen both in a positive light and have names we use here in the West.  
**jamiahsh**How about Rafaella Gabriella Avell? Or Frances Alouisius? Frances Amanda (or is it taken) might not be bad.

# Dr. Phil

Dr. Phil is one of my favorite tv shows, especially during the writers’ strike.Â  Thank goodness that’s over because my FAVORITE show is The Office, which I also plan to write about once they start airing new episodes – CAN’T WAIT!Â  I also enjoy Lost and what I call “junk tv”, meaning whatever is on like Moment of Truth, other fly-by-night reality shows, and shows like Cops and Dateline.Â  Enough of the tangents (wink, wink ;)) – back to Dr. Phil.

First, let me talk about how lucky I am to be a Dr. Phil fan living where I live, in the middle of rural Ohio, halfway between Toledo and Fort Wayne, Indiana.Â  That means we get two of each of the major networks, one out of Toledo, and one out of Fort Wayne.Â  Dr. Phil is on in Toledo at 10 am, and it’s on in Fort Wayne at 3 pm AND 7 pm.Â  The 10 am and 7pm airings are the same episode, so if I miss the morning one, I have another chance to catch it.Â  And if I miss both of those, the 3 o’clock airing from Fort Wayne is a week behind the others, giving me yet another chance to see a missed episode!

Anyway, today’s episode was disturbing.Â  Not like people-who-harm-children disturbing, but there was this husband who was a “right-fighter” and a “bully” – if you’re a frequent Dr. Phil watcher you will know that these are two of his favorite terms.Â  These and “hero”.Â  Hardly a week will go by when he doesn’t say “this relationship needs a hero”.Â  So anyway, today’s “right-fighter” was probably the worst husband I’ve ever seen on the show.Â  I don’t understand the point of their marriage, to be honest…Â  I can’t believe Dr. Phil didn’t pull out another of his favorite sayings – “Children would rather be from a broken home than living in one.”Â  This guy verbally and emotionally abuses his wife about her weight, cleaning, everything, then justifies his every action.Â  I think you probably had to watch the show to even get the severity of what was going on…Â  If you live near Fort Wayne, catch it next Wednesday at 3!

### Comments

**Weight Watchers » Dr. Phil**[...] My Food Chain Gang wrote an interesting post today on Dr. PhilHere’s a quick excerpt Dr. Phil is one of my favorite tv shows, especially during the writersâ€™ strike.Â  Thank goodness thatâ€™s over because my FAVORITE show is The Office, which I also plan to write about once they start airing new episodes - CANâ€™T WAIT!Â  I also enjoy Lost and what I call â€œjunk tvâ€, meaning whatever is on like Moment of Truth, other fly-by-night reality shows, and shows like Cops and Dateline.Â  Enough of the tangents (wink, wink ;)) - back to Dr. Phil. First, let me talk about how lucky I am to be a [...]

# Gone Baby Gone

Saw the movie Gone Baby Gone the other night…Â  Had a free rental at the video store; every once in awhile they call and give us one…Â  but I hate standing there forever trying to choose a good movie!Â  So we had Saw IV in hand, and my husband’s like, you know, we really haven’t liked the last 2 Saw’s all that much, compared to the first one.Â  So I said yeah, and I saw Gone Baby Gone, and since I’d heard it was supposed to be good, we went with it.Â  Besides, it got Oscar nominated, and I always like to be in on Oscar buzz…Â  Not my kind of movie.Â  Not that it was bad, but just a lot of dialogue and violence…Â  not my kind of movie.Â  It was entertaining, and I appreciated the twists and turns without seeing them coming, though I can’t say the same forÂ Hubby.Â  We like to give movies we watch our own imdb (interent movie database – cool site!) ratings, so I gave this one a 6.2.Â  Hubby gave it a 4.Â 2.Â  I appreciated the movie for what it was, and I can’t say much more without spoilers, so I won’t.Â  The bottom line is, if you like violent crime dramas with intense dialogue, this movie is for you.Â  I personally have trouble following movies where they talk about a bunch of characters and the audience is expected to keep them all straight, but that’s just me.Â  A few plot inconsistencies, but my rating was kinda high because I did appreciate the complexity of the plot, even if it was a bit difficult for me to follow at times…Â  so to quote one of my favorite movies, That’s all I have to say about that.

### Comments

**taylhis**That about sums it up... I appreciated the twists and turns in the script though - I wouldn't call it weak - just a lot of dialogue to follow which sometimes went over my head.  
**Chris**I thought this movie was entertaining but that the characters were poorly developed and the script was weak.

# Blankies

Did you catch Barney today?Â  Probably not…Â  but I did so I’ll fill you in.Â  Baby Bop lost her blankie, prompting much song and dance.Â  Which got me to thinking…Â  how old is too old for a blankie?Â  Actually, this blog was inspired by my oldest daughter who is 8 and still has a blankie.Â  I suppose it doesn’t sound like a big deal if I just put it that way, I mean, it’s not like she carries it everywhere with her anymore…Â  it was actually pretty easy to get her to stop bringing it places with us, thank goodness.Â  But when we’re at home, it’s a different story.Â  It IS carried everywhere around the house.Â  And if, help us all, we should have misplaced the blankie somewhere during the day and she doesn’t have it to sleep with at night – let’s just say the ENTIRE family suffers until it is found…Â  So…Â  how old is too old for a blankie?Â  Worse yet, our 3 1/2 year old is now figuring out what aÂ wonderful power trip she can take if she holds blankie hostage, causing ever-growing conflict.Â  Soon the 1 1/2 year old will be in on it too, probably just because she’ll decide there has to be something awfully special about that blankie based on the way her sisters are acting, but still, we don’t need any more conflict!Â  I think I will surf the net and get some feedback about this subject…Â  Dr. Phil once had a college-age guest on his showÂ who still had her blankie.Â  It was nothing but a tattered piece of material, and I remember him joking, “Does it keep you warm?”Â  Hehe.Â  I remember in the movie Mr. Mom, the dad decides the kid is too old to have a “whoopie”.Â  I think they burn it or something cruel like that…Â  I would never do that, butÂ I do worry thatÂ some day if I get frustrated enough, the blankie might meetÂ some sort ofÂ tragic demise…Â  So, is 8 too old for a blankie?Â  She still sucks her thumb too, but that will be another blog all together!

### Comments

**taylhis**LOL! Teen years might knock some sense into her as far as the blankie goes - or the peer pressure from friends will - but then you might be wishing you still had THAT problem instead of whatever the teen years will bring! As far as my blankie dependent, thumb-sucking 8 year old, sometimes we do call her Linus!  
**Kelly**I have a 12 year old who is still attached to her blankie so I can feel your pain. I am hoping the teen years will knock some sense into her. A teen getting some sense, yeah right!  
**jamiahsh**I suppose that is up to the kid. Someday, it may become only a string. I have a cousin who carried her blankie around, sucking her thumb until she was like 10-12 (still at times a cause for harmless razzing). Joshua had his special blankie (never knew a boy to have one... unless you are Linus)... not sure if he has it still. He would not go ANYWHERE without it. He is now in the 5th grade so one would think he has outgrown taking it everywhere.

# pictures

Â Â Â Â Â  I am learning how to add pictures to my posts – hopefully!Â  This is a picture of my girls:

Â [](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2008/02/copy-of-mid-july-2007-012.jpg)

### Comments

**taylhis**Chris is going to add a spam blocker to the site... hasn't happened to me yet though...  
**derek**Hmm... Looks familiar :) Have you gotten spammed yet? I did. Good thing moderation is on so I could just delete it before it was seen. I don't think I want to have to make people register to leave comments.

# First Post

This is basically a practice post.Â  I need to see that I know what I’m doing…Â  It is so **ironic** that as I’m learning how to do a blog about how **crazy** life is with all these kids and all these pets, I’ve had to pause my blog tutorial several times to make lunches, quiet a screaming parrot, and change a poopie diaper!Â  My friend also has a blog on this site. [Click here](http://jamiahsh.tangents.org) to see it.

### Comments

**Chris**I am a dad and need help with my girsl too!