

A tale of two gatherings...

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... (Sorry Mr. Dickens)

But then again it was. This weekend families gathered to mark similar yet different events.

On Saturday, my nephew celebrated his birthday. He has reached his teen years, and is more interested in the presents, food and television than the actual gathering. I do believe he 'suffered' through the gathering just to make sure he got his presents. Nothing really wrong with that, I'm sure most young people of his age do exactly the same thing. The gatherings, unless totally oriented toward the youth, are for the adults. We ate, talked, laughed and remembered many of these events during the day. This is what, through the ages, kept families together. We share common bonds and we celebrate those bonds. Be they birthdays, anniversaries, or holidays, times with family and friends keep our bonds alive.

On Sunday, another gathering was held. This was a memorial of the birth and death day of my grandson. He received no physical presents, and he won't be living into his teen years to complain about the attention he is or isn't getting. This was a day to support those who will miss his presence in the world. It was a time for family and friends to gather and support one another. We ate, talked, laughed and remember many events, but we also shared a tear or two. Coming together in the hard times is another thing that keeps families together. Death, sickness and other troubles are also something we all share. Another common bond. Another way to show support and love.

While on the surface, I wish that all we ever had to do was share the happy occasions, I realize that it is the difficult situations that are the true measure of what we mean to each

other. These hard times can show the best humanity has to offer.

So this weekend was the best of times and the worst of times, with the best of times far outshining the worst. Those closest to the sadness may not feel this for quite some time, but in looking back they will eventually remember “The Best of Times.”

Comfort foods

I wrote yesterday about how the fall has a shadow over it for me. Today, I was feeling a bit down, and I wanted a specific type of food for dinner. Unfortunately for me, the restaurant I wanted to go to was closed for renovations. I didn't get the dinner I wanted, so the psychological release I would have associated with it was gone.

Now I will admit that I could lose a few pounds. I'm not extremely overweight, but I know losing around 15 lbs. would be good for me in the long run. I also realize I have to watch what I eat due for other reasons. But I was good today, so I knew I could have my comfort food tonight. Then I realized almost all of my comfort foods are not what would be considered a healthy diet.

So anyway here are my top 25 comfort foods in no particular order:

1- McDonalds McDouble cheeseburger (I didn't really notice the missing slice of cheese that makes this not the Double Cheeseburger). Or the Wendys Junior Bacon Cheeseburger... Neck and neck on these. Both hit the same spot.

- 2- Pancakes, Waffles or French Toast. At home is good, but for personal reasons I really like I-HOP.
- 3- Sausage Gravy and Biscuits with Scrambled eggs.
- 4- Oreo Cookies and milk. Usually the Double Stuff
- 5- Mashed Potatoes and Gravy
- 6- Meatloaf
- 7- Gingersnaps
- 8- Good Coffee and Cheesecake
- 9- Pumpkin Pie
- 10- Yellow Cake with Chocolate frosting
- 11- German Chocolate Cake – I like the frosting with nuts, but the coconut is good too
- 12- Good Chocolate (Usually this would be imported and expensive)
- 13- Lemon Meringue Pie
- 14- Key Lime Pie (not with a meringue)
- 15- Red and Black Raspberries (in anything or fresh)
- 16- Chili
- 17- 'Lil Smokies
- 18- Sloppy Joes
- 19- Kielbasa
- 20- Bill Knapp's Chocolate Cake (If you know where to find this let me know)
- 21- Chocolate Frosted Donuts (Fresh made are best)

22- My Mom's BBQ sauce on just about anything

23- Dried Apricots, Fresh Apricots and even Canned Apricots

24- Fried Onions and Potatoes with Sausage

25- Fried Baloney, Onion and Ketchup sandwich (Thanks Dad..)

Now with all of these there is a time and place. I won't usually want Chocolate Donuts at the same time I want Mom's BBQ sauce. Believe it or not, each of these foods brings back certain memories for me. Mom's BBQ are those weekends when family would all stop to visit. Same with the Sloppy Joes. Chocolate Frosted Donuts and Bill Knapps' Chocolate cake will invoke memories of spending time with my aunt D. She never served the Bill Knapps' cake, but the one she did serve was very similar, but I never knew where she got it. CheeseBurgers – Backseat of the family car for a 'special' night out.

I just noticed a lot of this food are childhood memories, some others are memories from my life as a father and husband. Some are just plain good.

I do have to be careful of these, because I do know that most of the extra weight I'm carrying came from the years after my wife died. I can't tell you how many Oreos, gallons of milk, cheesecakes and coffee or Sausage Gravy and Biscuit meals I had, but it was way too many.

Ok, I shared. What are your favorite comfort foods. Do I need to add something to the list?

Those Beautiful Fall Days

If you were in NW Ohio, NE Indiana or Southern Michigan today, you probably had beautiful fall weather. Warm without being too hot, nice breeze and wispy clouds. And I noticed that some of the leaves have started to change color. We are still a few weeks off from most trees turning red, gold and brown, but it is starting. Some of the early changers have started to lose their leaves. Just a beautiful time...

Except, I still remember the good days from 6 years ago. The days before the intense shoulder pain slowed my wife's days to a crawl. The good days that soon turned ugly.

I remember that it was about now that I should be holding my new grandson. But the days turned ugly.

I remember the last few days of my Mom's life from many years ago now. She didn't know what was coming her way in the waning days of October 2000. And my father, one year later, going through things that I didn't understand then, but I really do understand them now. While his health wasn't very good when mom died, he could have lived many years with a bit of luck. My feeling is that his heart broke at the one year mark, and nothing would fix that. After my stress related illnesses of my first few years of being a widower, I can tell you that that takes a toll.

All this happened in those beautiful days of fall. For the past 5 years, I didn't see much of the beauty. I realized it was there, but other thoughts would push the beauty of the season out of my thoughts. The older thoughts don't weigh as heavily on my mind now, and for a moment I saw the beauty of the day. Then I noticed my arms were empty... My daughter and son-in-law have empty arms too. And I wonder when will I see fall again, without its ever present shadow?

Blogging time

I seem to have a bit of it. Funny how not having anyone at home gives me time to do other things. ☐ But where oh where is Jamaihsh (one of Tangents most frequent bloggers has been missing for a week). I know where one blogger is (no internet for Froggy). One may be taking a break (I really hope not, but that is his call). What about the Cabbages? Or Mare Mare? Hmm, is my extra blogging taking their space? ☐

On to different things. I had to get a new phone today. I've been thinking about getting rid of my land line for a long time. Recently I decided to keep it because I like being able to give people that number if I don't feel like giving them my cell number. But my last phone decided it didn't want to dial out anymore. I couldn't read the messages on the answering machine either. And to top it all off, the wireless extension didn't work either.

So I got a new phone. The answering machine is up and running again, but with a bit of a difference. I really like my cell phone greeting, so I put it on the home phone too. So Sorry Admin, but I like that greeting.

Talk like a duck

One of the things I remember doing (OK, I still do it ☐), was talking to the animals at the fair in their own language. Yes, I would snort and grunt at the pigs. Moo at the cows and steers. Neigh and bray with the donkeys and horses. And of course baah with the sheep and quack with the ducks.

Of course, I would then tell my children exactly what the animal on the other side of the conversation said. I don't know if I ever convinced any of my girls that I was 'talking' to the animals, but I had fun doing it. Still do.

This year at the fair, I heard an animal sound that I never heard before. Llamas in my experience were always very quiet. I'm not sure if this is a normal case, since I only see them during the fairs, and they are not very common at our little fair. It was an interesting sound and I got curious as to what type of vocalization they do. So I found [this site](#) that had a sound close to what I heard. Check out the humming vocalization. When one llama made this noise, the other responded. It was cool to see and hear them react to each other. It will take some time listening to the llamas to be able to converse with them, so I will have to wait until next year.

And for those who had a movie come to mind with this blog post, I will leave you with [this](#).

Solo Sailing...Almost

Well this is the start of my 3rd week without children at home, almost. I say almost since my darling youngest daughter has come home the first 2 weekends and will be home the 3rd weekend too. I don't run around as often, but the drive is a bit farther now. Sure there are good excuses for all of the home trips, so I won't say too much about that.

I did find it funny/strange all of the young ladies my daughter rooms with have gone home for the first two weekends. I'm kind of glad at that. If I were in that situation, I would hate to be the one left behind on the weekend.

So on to me. What have I done the past two weeks.. Well, same old same old except I was a bit lazy last week. I found a web comic from an artist I enjoyed in my youth, and I've been reading his stuff. It may take me a while to catch up. Anyway I was looking for [this](#), but I found [this](#). Years of comic stories too catch up on. It may be something I will need in my personal library, but so far the web comic is ok. On this site I did find the original comics that drew me to the artist. Back in my D&D college days, I remember reading [Phil and Dixie](#) on a regular basis. Then the Myth series of books that Phil Foglio illustrated. Such fun memories..

Thinking of the Fair

Our local County Fair starts this weekend. I don't think I missed this fair since I came with my wife and oldest daughter back in 1983. While it has change some, it really hasn't changed at all. Most of the same vendors come year after year, the local producers (pork, beef, dairy) serve the same food. There are always fresh fair donuts. □ The biggest thing this fair has to offer is all of the hard work the kids put into their projects. Animals, displays, showmanship, riding skills can all be seen. The fun I get from this is seeing the fun the kids have.

Even though my youngest was home for the Labor Day holiday last week, she wants to make the trip home again for a trip to the fair. She still has friends that will be showing their animals. She may get to run into a friend or two. One never knows at the county fair.

That's my job

As I've said in previous posts, my youngest is now off at college. Earlier this year she also turned 18. By the laws of this land, that does make her a legal adult. For the past 25+ years I've been doing my best to raise my daughters. I not only wanted to get them to legal adulthood, I've been trying to get them to mature adulthood. It was, of course, my job.

I've often said that I've had little to do with how my daughters turned out. Their mother was the primary reason they turned out the way they did. My job was to follow her lead. I thought I did that very well. Even after she died, I tried to follow her lead. She had a way with her daughters, I could never hope to do as well.

Anyway my youngest is now a young adult. In my eyes, she has grown in to a very mature young lady. Now I can say all four daughters survived into adulthood. Me, I'm just the guy who listened to their mother. Hey, it's my job.

What happened to my coffee???

I have written many times about my love of coffee. I will admit that I am a bit of a coffee snob. But I never needed to have gourmet coffee at every turn. But for the past couple of days the coffee I've had just didn't taste right. Hmmm...

At work last Friday I had one cup of coffee. It was flavored coffee (beans from a local coffee shop) and it had an off

flavor. Ok, maybe I don't like that flavor, I've had some experience with that.

Saturday no coffee. Sunday no coffee. Tea tastes fine both days...

Monday coffee at lunch. It was bad even for store brands... Arrrg.

Monday dinner. I was at a well know chain restaurant that usually has decent coffee. The first cup was ok, the second cup not so good. More Arrggg.

Today I had one cup at work. My Kona blend. Can I just say it was nasty..

I think I found the problem at work, the water in our new office just isn't right for coffee or tea. My green tea in the afternoon had a weird/off flavor too. I really hope they get the water coolers. Or at least put a filter on the water. Maybe I should get a pitcher with a filter on it...

Told you I was a bit of a coffee nerd/snob. If I can be upset with the coffee based on the water it was made from. Funny the water doesn't taste bad from the faucet, just when mixed with coffee or green tea. The black tea was fine..

Another annoying late night

I'm not really sure why I'm up so late this evening, but I am..

I was skimming through some of my old posts because I noticed somebody was going back and looking at things. I think it was some sort of 'bot looking into my blog, but I can't tell for

sure unless they reply.

Last year at this time I made a plea for some blog responses. I did get a few and that really made my day. I realize that not everyone sees something in blogs to respond to. I know that I visit a blog site or three and don't respond. Not because I don't like the blog, but because I really think that I have nothing to add.

I've just been thinking, maybe (just maybe) I should respond every once in a while with a simple "I like your blog." response. That would take very little of my time, and would give the other blogger a small lift. I mean, it couldn't hurt.

That may or may not show up on blogs I semi-regularly post responses to. You know who you are, and I really enjoy your blogs. Sometimes they say everything that needs to be said. My response would be redundant.

I'm going to try to get some sleep... Ha Ha...