

I Don't Want To Play Inside All Day...

But some of us don't have a choice where, or even if, we get to play all day. And it's tax day, and shame on you if you haven't done yours yet! I don't know about you, but where we live, it's oh-so-nice out – I'm talking 80° weather! But you might be stuck inside doing your taxes...

So here is a song just to torture you. I've seen this on Sesame Street twice now, and I just think it's so cute; especially when Elmo sings along! It aired again the other day, so blog time! Sorry if you were stuck inside all day for work or other unpleasant tasks. Take comfort in that there will be a whole spring and summer's worth from where this came from – I ♥ Spring!

God's Strong Love For Fools

I came across this article the other day by Janine Dorsey of the Tampa Tribune; it's called "Don't Laugh; It Could Happen To You: Common Reasons For Emergency Room Visits Are Common and Serious"

If that title alone doesn't intrigue you, then go ahead and skip this post. But I found the article to be both interesting and amusing, so I'll share some highlights:

Federal regulators review a sample of those visits for signs a product might need to be recalled. Those records provide a view into the dramatic injuries of Americans who seem able to hurt themselves with almost any product made.

One woman fell from a galloping horse while texting. Another woman's bangs caught fire as she peered into a toaster.

More than 818 emergency room trips in the past four years involved "chicken" – dead and alive.

Boxes of cereal (cut fingers), cans of pork and beans (falling from a cupboard onto one's head), wood chippers (yes, people stick their hands in) and trombones. Hundreds of people suffer piercings gone wrong, thousands fall out of their mobile homes or have objects intractably lodged in orifices.

"Every day, people come in and you just think, 'You gotta be kidding me,'" said Brian Peckler, an ER doctor for 15 years, now at Tampa General. "I mean, what makes a guy think using a fish hook to clean out ear wax is a good idea?"

Everyone knows by now that talking on the phone is distracting, and now that cell phones have become even cheaper than land lines in many cases, people are finding a variety of ways to hurt themselves while using the phone:

A 19-year-old male, on the phone while lifting weights, drops a barbell on himself.

A 21-year-old male, riding his bike and texting, crashes, scrapes his face.

A 37-year-old male cutting chicken while on the phone slices his hand.

A 25-year-old male, texting, walks into a telephone pole's guide wire and tells emergency room workers "he might have gotten zapped."

Hundreds of injuries are blamed on the phone in its capacity as a weapon: They're used as missiles or as a bludgeon to beat people on the head.

And then there is something that's become obvious to me ever since I had a son almost two years ago – men are more apt to hurt themselves than women. There are more women than men in this country, yet men account for 56% of the ER visits, according to federal data.

Men suffer injury in 80 percent of pressure washer cases. Nine in 10 injuries involving "mobile home" and "alcohol" were suffered by men. And 96 percent of "nail gun" cases were men.

"Guys are definitely dumber than women in this regard," Peckler said.

One 37-year-old man tried cutting branches with a circular saw – on top of a running wood chipper. The saw cut off several fingers, which fell into the chipper.

Having a brother appears dangerous as well. Regardless of who was injured, ER records implicate the brother twice as often as the sister.

And my personal favorite part of the article:

“Demonstrate” appears in no small number of cases where less-than-skilled people tried to show off martial arts moves, wedding dances, pogo-stick skills and cheerleader routines.

Though many people consider themselves expert enough to demonstrate something, Robert Cano at University Community Hospital sees scores of cases that prove otherwise.

“Almost nothing good comes after someone says ‘Hey, watch this!’” Cano said.

Note the 52-year-old mother, demonstrating judo to her daughter by flipping her husband. Torn left knee.

Other cases: The 25-year-old man demonstrating to children how to climb on monkey bars when his shoulder “snapped.” Or the 16-year-old demonstrating a softball technique who stepped on a rake that smacked her in the forehead.

Or the 55-year-old woman showing her grandson how to use a pogo stick – she fell and smacked her head.

And finally, the ER doc’s favorite story:

Peckler at Tampa General marvels at accidents that should have been fatal but weren’t.

His favorite case: the man who was supposed to be watching his 3-year-old, but decided to change his car’s oil in the driveway. Seeking a safe holding area, Dad put the child in the car and crawled underneath to drain the oil.

The child knocked the gear shift from park to neutral, and

the car's tire rolled over the man's chest.

He suffered no major injuries, Peckler said. But how could anyone survive?

Peckler shrugged and said, "God's strong love for fools."

Indeed. Just be careful next time you hear someone say, "Watch this." Maybe you should get the phone ready to dial 9-1-1. Then again, after reading how inclined some folks are to hurt themselves while using the phone, perhaps a better response to "Watch this." would be "No thanks."

Small World

Well, we missed our yearly trip to Disney World this year, so it feels like ages since I've been on the Small World ride. That isn't what this post is about anyway.

13 years ago when we started dating, I met my future husband's mother, father, and grandmother for the first time at his grandmother's house. She lived beside a lake, and I have fond memories of walking their new 8-week-old adorable Cocker Spaniel puppy Murphy around the lake with my new boyfriend, with whom I had already fallen in love. A few years later, we were married, and my father-in-law was tragically diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). The disease is awful; one's mind remains intact while muscles in their body begin to fail. My father-in-law was soon confined to a wheelchair, and one day while his caretaker was taking him for a walk, his beloved Murphy ran into the street and was hit by a car while my father-in-law was forced to watch, completely helpless. Murphy was taken to the vet, and miraculously, she had no

major injuries.

After my father-in-law passed away, one of the tough decisions we had to make was what to do with Murphy. My mother-in-law worked all the time and didn't feel it was fair for Murphy to be alone much of the time; she thought my husband and I should take her. I would normally do my best to take in an animal in need, especially a dog as sweet as Murphy and especially back then when I had only one child. But at the time, there was so much going on that it was impossible. I will spare many details, but among other things, we had a new baby, there was a crisis with our business, and we knew we would have to be moving in the near future – it's difficult to find an apartment (especially in the Chicago area where we lived at the time) with the pets we had – one dog and one cat – let alone with adding another dog to the mix. So it broke my heart because I knew my father-in-law would have wanted Murphy to stay with us, but I said no.

We did our best to find her a good home; we spread the word, and my mom put up fliers at the school where she worked – someone heard about the story of Murphy's "dad" and was interested. So she took her home, and months later, we heard that she had been made a part of their family; even getting her own professional Christmas pictures taken.

All was well, 10 years passed, and from time to time, my husband and I would think about Murphy. The woman at my mom's work moved on to another job just a year or so after taking Murphy, and they fell out of touch, so we often wondered what became of them. It had seemed like we had made the right choice and that Murphy had found her family, but you just never know...

And then today I got this email from my mom:

Hi Lisa,

Thought you would want to know....Murphy (Vince's dog) passed away last week. She was with the same family all this time.

They are very broken up as she became part of their family.
The way I found out...their son came in to school for a
conference on his 6th grade daughter. Small world.
Love, Mom

Of course I am sad to hear that Murphy passed away, but I am also relieved to know that she was part of someone's family all this time. It's a relief to know that her getting hit by that car didn't have an impact on her long-term health. I have closure knowing that she lived a long and happy life, and I can finally say that I know we made the right decision all those years ago. I think Vince would have understood and been happy about Murphy's new family.

Finishing Out The Wonderful Weekend

After our fun Friday game night and awesome anniversary celebration on Saturday, Sunday after church we decided to take the kids to Chuck E. Cheese. We decided to bring along Sammie's little 5-year-old friend (the one who is moving to Mexico – the new one, or New Mexico if you don't speak 5-year-old), and that turned out to be... an *interesting* decision, for lack of a better word – more on that later...

We had a blast at Chuck E. Cheese – we don't live really close to any like many people do, so it was kind of a new experience for my kids, and they had a lot of fun. We found some great internet coupons, and we were able to escape with minimal monetary damages – plus the kids didn't blow through their tokens nearly as quickly as I had expected; thanks no doubt to my husband's brilliant token allocating. My son, who will be 2 in July, just loved Chuck E. and called him "Mouse" pronounced "Mow" like rhyming with "Ow". He kept saying,

“Where Mow”; it was so cute! Here’s a video; he’s saying
“Right there, mouse”.

And luckily I didn't capture any of this on film, but I have to give a bit of a public service announcement here. Sorry if it gets graphic and disgusting, but just remember we had to witness it; you just have to read my blog about it. If you go to Chuck E. Cheese or just out in public in general, please keep your pants on. I know it sounds obvious to most of us, but you would not believe how many, er, how much we saw that we did not want to see. I guess those low-rider jeans are in style, but I don't like them. And I especially think that women who have small children should not wear those at all, especially at a place like Chuck E. Cheese where you are constantly bending down to talk to or pick up your kids or squatting to get tickets or whatnot. Use your imagination if you don't know what I'm talking about because I certainly don't feel like describing it. Thank goodness we hadn't planned to eat there or appetites would have been lost – YUCK. Enough said.

We had a great time, except that my daughter's 5-year-old friend was extremely hyper and by no means a good listener. She was the kind of kid who made me truly appreciate how well-behaved my own kids are, and I'm still working on un-doing some of the bad habits they learned on the hour-long car ride to Chuck E. Cheese – like putting Mike & Ike's in their noses and spanking butts. At Chuck E. Cheese, they have a kid-friendly check-in system, so we wanted to let the kids roam a little bit, but this was next to impossible since our little friend was the kind of kid who was constantly climbing on the outsides of rides while other kids were on them. Then, she came up with two little finger rings, and my husband asked her where she got them. She led me to someone's table, and I was horrified to realize that she had taken the rings from the table. Could have been an honest mistake, but I could tell by her face that she knew she didn't really "find" them – at least she was honest about where she "found" them. Luckily she had no trouble putting them back, and kudos to Hubby for being so head's up. Maybe it sounds mean, but we high-fived

each other all day that she is moving. Don't get me wrong, she's not a bad kid and she and my daughter get along great, but our 5-year-old is our biggest challenge behavior-wise and having a friend prone to misbehavior would not be a good thing for her. Besides, she's only 5, and she will make other friends – friends that will listen to their parents as well as to their friends' parents.

Overall, a great day to finish out a fun-filled weekend! Even though it will probably take me all week to recover sleep, it was well worth it! ☐

Our Eleventh

This past Saturday, April 10, 2010, marked 11 years of marriage for my husband and I. Since it was a weekend, and we treasure that as family time, we didn't think about calling the babysitter to get some alone time. A generous friend stepped up and offered to watch the little ones for a few hours for Hubby and I to have some alone time, and we contemplated our options that morning. I love the zoo, but it seemed like too big of an endeavor to travel all the way to Toledo after staying up until 3 the night before for game night. We had an awesome time Friday night, but note to self – no more game nights the day before our anniversary! Boy, were we tired on Saturday! So anyway, we ditched the Toledo idea, and we thought about just staying home since Zambrano was scheduled to pitch for the Cubs, and he is always entertaining. Finally, my husband came up with a great idea – we'd go to Buffalo Wild Wings, and our friend could take the kids across the street to Menards to play while we sat and watched the Cubs game at Wild Wings. Before you think I'm nuts, I should mention that Menards (at least our location,

anyway) has a hugely awesome indoor play area for the kids – they have many of their playground sets, play houses, and sandboxes on display for people to see and for kids to play in while parents shop – our kids love it and always have a blast, plus it's free!

So Hubby and I sat at Buffalo Wild Wings and watched the entire Cubs game on Saturday! And, as a special Anniversary present to us, Zambrano led them to victory! They started out playing terribly, but turned themselves around (which is rare for the Cubs!), and actually looked pretty good by the end of the game – I'm talking diving catches, great plays, homeruns, and most importantly, turning a 3-0 deficit into a 4-3 victory! YES!!

And I have to add that Buffalo Wild Wings was actually a great, albeit non-traditional place to celebrate an anniversary. Not only did they not mind us sitting there for hours watching the game, but they were happy to accomodate us in letting us choose which channel we wanted, AND they gave us a hat with 4 balloons attached to take home for our four children. AND a free anniversary dessert!

After watching the Cubs win, we got the kids and took them over for some go-carting. Always fun, and this is the first time in a long time no one had to sit out with a baby! Our son is old enough to ride this year, and although he was apprehensive at first, it only took him until the first turn when he began squealing with joy! First time he rode with Dad (because everything is less scary with Dad), and I was able to snap this pic before we took off:



Then I got to take him on the second time, and he was such a wonderful little passenger; he had so much fun! As I was riding in the beautiful weather with my little guy next to me, I had the thought, "It doesn't get much better than this!"

Happy Anniversary, Honey, it was a great one, as always! And thank you for eleven wonderful years of marriage and for four beautiful children! I love you!

Thoughts (from a PO'ed Cubs fan) On Opening Day...

Well, this was going to be a blog post where I was going to stay upbeat. I was going to talk about the positives and (as it became apparent) the negatives of the 2010 Chicago Cubs team, but I was going to do it as sort of an objective sportscaster... until the bottom dropped out, and I realized, for the first time on the opening day of a season, that the Chicago Cubs might just have to be written off in APRIL...

There have been seasons where the Cubs look great – they might make me nervous, but even in those years, providing they get a few lucky breaks and play some great baseball, they have a

chance to make it into the post-season, if not the World Series. And then there are the years where they can be completely written off; years where even the most optimistic of true fans can tell that our beloved Cubbies won't get much further than the dog days of summer, if we're lucky. I remember a year when I had to write off the Cubs in May. It was late May, but May, nonetheless, but it had become apparent to me that the Cubs were not going anywhere and that I had better explore the idea of a back-up team; not because I love the Cubs any less after all of their failures but simply because I love baseball, and I needed to have a team to follow into the post-season...

But I digress... back to today; the Cubs 2010 season-opener...

First inning was great – the Cubs were up 3-0... until the Braves got their turn to bat, and Zambrano (the famous hot-tempered Cubs pitcher) fell apart. While he did deliver on his promise to curtail his outbursts, that didn't stop him from choking. First the Cubs lost a fly ball in left field between 3 players – one of those 'who's-gonna-get-it-anyone-but-me' scenarios that should not exist in games where the players get paid millions of dollars to play baseball. Next, in the bottom half of the same first inning, Zambrano gave up a homerun, got an error (with an idiotic play – the ball got through the infield, but good fielding managed to make up for it and got the out at first. Apparently, Zambrano, who was covering first, got so high off the save of the play that he decided to throw to third base to get the runner, but he was so hepped up on his save at first that he overthrew third and got himself an error, which led the Braves to score – UGH). So back to my list of things Zambrano did wrong... So then, in his trademark frustration, Zambrano proceeds to bean a batter with the ball **and** give up yet another homerun – and he was finally out of the game, but at least he left the field tantrumless, per his promise... at least!?!?

Then I find myself at the top of the 5th inning when there is

a double play on the Cubs – a line drive was hit, but the runner at first couldn't get back to the base in time – terrible base-running!! Honestly, it looked worse than spring training out there!! Again, these guys get paid millions for this?!? WHERE is the coaching? I find myself wondering, just like I did at the end of last season – has Lou Piniella just given up? But isn't it too early in the season for that?!?

Next, to end the top of the 5th inning – Nate McCloud (on the Braves) makes a great catch – it was a great hit by the Cubs, but the Braves seem to have a team – why can't WE catch balls like that?!?

And then, at the top of the 6th – McCloud makes a diving catch... but wait, he drops it. He picks it up so quickly that the umps rule the ball caught and runners out – Kudos to Cubs coach Lou for not losing it and abstaining from performing one of his famous dirt-kicking tantrums, which is more than I can say for myself... total crap, and a few choice words were said in my living room... but to my credit, the kids were upstairs.

Bottom of the 7th – some Cubs pitcher named Samardzija walks 3 in a row but still gets to stay in the game somehow – maybe the team really does think it's still spring training? Then there is a huge error, but thankfully, I had to go to the bathroom so I missed it. Good thing too, I haven't yet learned how to control my cussing during baseball and my kids were still awake... And then... what's THAT? Someone hits a ball way back into the outfield which bounces into the stands, and the ball is played wrong, plus the throw to third is terrible... And that's it, I'm done. I'll watch the rest of the game and maybe offer some final thoughts, but the bottom line is this – I am sad to say that the Chicago Cubs did not show up to play baseball today.

At least the Detroit Tigers, a team I chose long ago to be my back-up team due to their close proximity to where I live plus the fact that they are in the division of my nemesis team, the

Chicago White Sox, won their opening game, albeit against the Kansas City pushovers.

And as for the Cubs...

It's not about the 11 run deficit; the fact that the Cubs lost 16-5. If they had tried, been well-coached, and played good baseball, it would just be me here pouting. Fact is, they played terribly. It's one thing to have a bad game; that can be forgiven. But when you're a team who has so many dedicated fans, and you have so much to prove... how can you possibly recover from a debut this horrible? The Chicago Cubs looked like they don't even know how to play baseball.

I do have a tendency to over-dramatize things, so here is my plea to what I fear are the hopeless 2010 Chicago Cubs:

Surprise me. PLEASE.

**An addendum... After this sorry excuse of a baseball game, I did a google search for 'cubs logo sad clown face' – thinking it would be easy for me to find a Chicago Cubs logo that someone had morphed into a sad clown face -after over 100 years of disappointment, does it really seem that far-fetched? I did not find what I was looking for, but I found [this amusing blog entry instead](#)..

New Easter Traditions

Over the past year I've learned a lot. Many people can say the same, for life itself is one big learning experience. So while I've learned a lot about many things, I have also grown spiritually by leaps and bounds ever since we joined a wonderful church family in March of 2009.

As my entire family grows spiritually, we've come to realize how much more there is to Easter than eggs and bunnies. The coloring, decorating, hiding, seeking, and eating of Easter eggs is always so much fun on Easter, and this year was no exception. As parents, my husband and I treasure all of the milestones, big and small – we even treasure the little sleep we get when we stay up late to prepare the Easter Bunny's baskets for our children and wake up early to frantically hide the perishable eggs before the excited little ones wake up.



The girls and their colored
Easter eggs

But last year, we added a new tradition to our Easter weekend – attending a beautiful church service where we were taught (in my case) and reminded (in my husband's case) of the real meaning of Easter Sunday – the sacrifice of God's only Son and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We attended church again this Easter Sunday, and we were pleased to see that our worship center at church was overflowing – standing room only; filled with people who were excited to share His Glory with their family, friends and loved ones.



4 cuties ready for church
on Easter Sunday

This year, we also added a new tradition to our family's Easter celebrations. My thoughtful sister had sent the kids [Resurrection Eggs](#) in the mail the week before, so after we colored our edible eggs, we sat down together and listened as my husband read the story of Easter Sunday aloud. Along with the book came a set of a dozen plastic eggs, each containing a little token illustrating the story of Easter Sunday – there was a little donkey, a cross, a whip, a cloth, a crown of thorns and more. The kids took turns opening the eggs, and it really got them thinking about the meaning of this special holiday. I think the Resurrection Eggs really helped them to understand the meaning of God's sacrifice. After the story was read, they continued to play with the eggs for over an hour, and then they brought down the entire set for me to put away until next year – that says a lot right there because putting away toys after they're done playing with them is not exactly one of our kids' strong points!



My girls exploring
Resurrection Eggs with
their Daddy

So it was a wonderful Easter, filled with family, laughter and love, and I am grateful for every minute. As we add these new traditions, Easter is becoming a favorite holiday of mine, and I am very excited to continue all of these Easter traditions next year!!

However you celebrated, whatever your faith, I hope your Easter was happy, safe, and fun!!

OPENING DAY IS HERE!!!

GO CUBS!!!

GO CUBS!!!

GO CUBS!!!

Well, I just went to check my countdown timer on my blog site; it should say there are mere *hours* left until the Chicago Cubs open their 2010 season... but I can't find the countdown timer on my site. And I can't find it in the widgets section either. Since I have two kids fighting and one crawling around on the dining room table, I think it will be quicker to

just write a little post about the opening day of baseball – I don't include last night since the Cubs didn't play ☐ – rather than try to fiddle around with the countdown widget.

So YAY!! Baseball season is finally here, and the Cubs open against the Braves today at 3:10pm Chicago time – I have made arrangements to shirk my responsibilities of making dinner, and hopefully the kids will be good for the first hour of the game until my husband comes home from work. I don't expect to watch all of the games or even most of them, but I figured I deserved a bit of a break for opening day – hey, it's been a LONG winter without baseball, as always!!

GO CUBS!!!

GO CUBS!!!

GO CUBS!!!

(oh yeah, and GO Indians – just because they are an Ohio team who just happen to play the White Sox today!!)

Hazards Of The Trade

Back in 1999, when I was expecting our first child, I remember having the WGN Chicago news at noon on the tv in our teeny-tiny downtown (Rockford Illinois) apartment. I was in the (hallway of a) kitchen making lunch, when I heard a long screech of tires coming from the tv. The fact that I was able to get from the kitchen into the living room to see the tv even in my expanded pregnant state should tell you how small that apartment really was... So I made it back in front of the tv to see the reporter **get hit by a car** – scary! Luckily she was ok, but the news anchors at the studio were a bit shook up and forced to forge ahead in the newscast, not knowing the fate of their co-worker. Every now and then, I remember this incident, and I've looked for a clip of it on the internet to no avail – until the other day when I finally found it. And just because it took me so long to find it, I will post it – perhaps others are looking for it also, who knows. Remember, the reporter was not seriously hurt in the accident – she hurt her leg and has since recovered from her injuries. Unfortunately, she was laid off last year, but the lay-off had nothing to do with the accident that had happened almost a decade earlier and everything to do with the station's budget cutbacks because of the terrible economy.

When searching for the above clip, I came across the following video of a Dutch weatherman getting nailed by a car, but don't worry – this is not as graphic as it seems because it is a fake clip; it's actually a commercial for tires.

Another Two Feet Of Snow?!?

Did you know that residents of the Midwest and the Great Lakes region are to expect one last hurrah from Old Man Winter with two feet of snow expected?



APRIL FOOL'S!!! Have a good one – And BE NICE!!!