

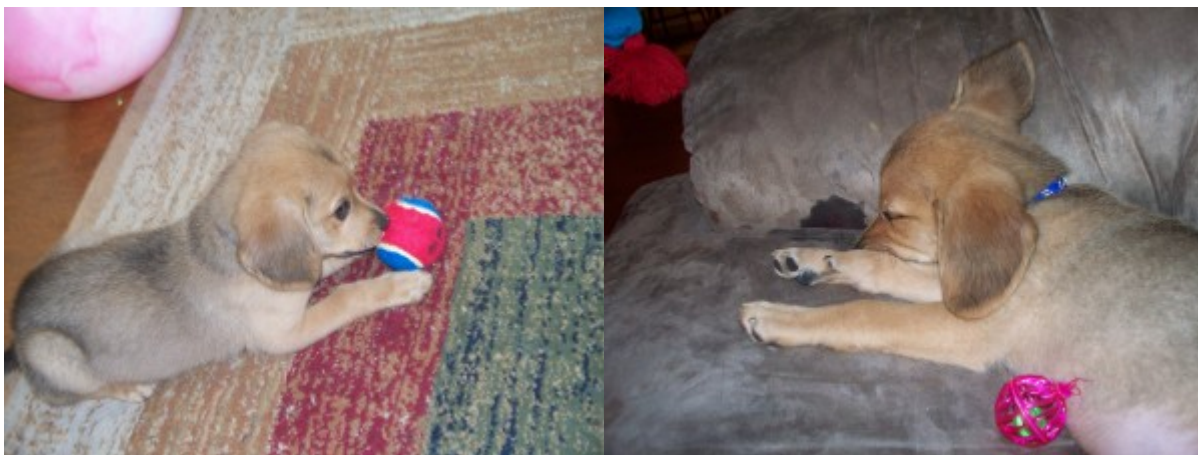
# Introducing: ?

We don't know yet! We have a new addition to our family, but he doesn't have a name yet! It's hard for a family of 6 to all agree on the same name for a new puppy...

As you probably know, our beloved almost 12-year-old dog passed away a week before Christmas. If you know our family and how much we love animals, then it should come as no surprise to you that we are again a 2-dog household. It all started a few Saturdays ago when we decided to take the kids to the Humane Society, "just for fun". Yeah, right – I should have known better! How could I possibly think we'd be able to resist giving a cute homeless pet a loving home? We couldn't. We found a lab mix we all loved, and we went to lunch, talked it over, and decided to turn in an application. But another family turned in an application five minutes before us for the same dog! They said they would look over the apps and call us either Monday or Tuesday either way. Well, the entire week went by, and my husband called them every day because we had 3 anxious kids! Disney (who's 3) kept asking if we were going to take the 'vanilla dog' home; it was so cute! Finally they called on Friday to tell us that the dog had been adopted. We were disappointed but also kind of expecting it since we knew that another family wanted him. But that did it – now we officially wanted another dog. So Saturday on the way to the zoo, we stopped by another humane society and found another dog we really liked – she was a very unique looking dog, a black Lab / Basset Hound mix. She had the long, stocky body of a basset, complete with long ears, but she was all black like a lab – adorable. We didn't have our checkbook with us, so we had to come back Sunday to put down a deposit. When we came back Sunday, the dog got so excited that she nipped my husband on the mouth – twice. Uh, oh. Can't do nipping on the face with 4 small kids, whether it was intentional or not, so we were back to square one.

When we were there on Saturday, we had seen people come in with 2 teeny tiny puppies, so we decided to have a look. I was going to have to housebreak the Lab/Basset, so I figured if I was going to have to housebreak a dog, it might as well be a teeny tiny adorable puppy, right? Never mind that I'm potty training a 3-year-old, have a toddler to chase around, and two other kids to get to school. My days are so hectic, why not add to the chaos?

So here he is, how cute is this puppy?!?



He's a beagle / shepherd mix about 8 weeks old, and yes, he is as sweet as he looks! He just adores our dog Beesly, but she's not sure what to think yet – eventually they'll be friends I'm sure. Squawky the parrot was intrigued with him too, mostly because he has a little bell on his collar so we know where he is. The kids like the names Johnny and Buddy, but we're not taken with either of those. We liked the name Gizmo, especially because the kids have been into watching Gremlins lately, but the kids don't like the name. My husband and I also think the name "Hank Markdukas" is really cute – it's a reference to the movie I Love You Man. It's a funny movie, not one of our favorites or anything, but there is a funny running joke in the movie about a Hank Markdukas. We also like the name Michael Scott after the main character on our favorite show, The Office, but of course the kids aren't thrilled about any of those names. This sounds like a good poll...

[poll id="15"]

The bottom line is, our cute little guy needs a name before he starts answering to "puppy". Yesterday I was feeling overwhelmed by the prospect of adding a puppy to my already hectic lifestyle, but it went well today, and he is incredibly adorable! I love to snuggle him; he is so soft and sweet. And the responsibility involved with him is different than the kids; there is much more instant gratification. Kids whine, cry, yell and fight, while puppies wiggle and snuggle. I love our new puppy! That reminds me of an Alan Jackson song – "I'm in love with you baby, and I don't even know your name"!

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Wow – that last post was such a downer that I decided to write a little follow-up – I'm feeling better! I took forever in the shower, and my son is still napping! And the two girls have been playing together... funny how the house calms down when a certain little Kindergartner is at school. Coincidence or instigator? You tell me ☐

My little parakeet JJ likes the sound of running water, so my shower music today was supplied by a happy little bird – that was a mood lifter! I've been reaching into his cage as part of training to get him used to me, and he's been letting me touch him! So today I was touching his belly, and he started to close his eyes, and it occurred to me that we didn't have to just do training – I could pet him! So today, I would say that JJ became a REAL pet – he enjoyed my company, let me pet him, and he cheered me up!

And now I get to sit here at the computer for a few minutes, and I actually get to have my glass of water next to me since

there is no one to come drop things into it (one of my son's favorite activities is the put things in water, you'd think he'd appreciate his baths more than he does). And I treated myself to a piece of chocolate. Ah, a long hot shower, chocolate, and peace and quiet... what more could I want? Sorry about the grumpy post I made before ☐

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## My Job Is To Make People Miserable

My husband works from 9:30 to 5 on weekdays, which leaves me the job of holding down the fort. My kids are generally good kids, and they are adorable, so it should be a fun job. But I'm not having fun today. I've had 3 kids crying literally constantly today from 9-12:30. Taylor is 10, and she's home sick from school. She's the only one being good, but I can't give the poor kid a break because her sisters and brother are acting so crazy!! This is the 2nd Wednesday in a row that the kids have acted up – what is up with that?!? I have 5 minutes of peace right now because we got Sammie to Kindergarten and the baby is napping. I just need to blog about it because I feel like I'm going to explode!! The baby is getting over being sick, so if he's not being held, he's crying. I don't know what the deal is with 3-year-old Disney, she's usually pretty good, but today she is screaming about *everything*. And she has this loud, shrill, ear-splitting scream like you wouldn't believe. In the meantime, Sammie was provoking everyone and starting fights with all 3 of her siblings; I was trying to referee, hold the baby, clean up his messes, change dirty diapers, and make lunch all at the same time. Now that I have some "peace", I feel worse – Disney has asked me 6 questions just in the short time it's taken me to write this.

I'm trying not to snap at her, but I'm in a really bad mood. It would really help if I had my dog to snuggle, but she died in December and my other dog is too smelly to snuggle. I feel like I work really hard all day, and all I do is make people miserable. How can my husband get any work done with all the screaming in the house? It adds pressure to me to try to keep a suitable work environment for him. I am looking forward to a relaxing evening. No, wait. It's youth group night, which I normally enjoy, but to go try to teach a bunch of preteens after a day like today seems daunting. Not to mention that I have an extra group tonight since a fellow teacher had back surgery yesterday. I hope it went well for her...

I would cry but then I'll get another nosebleed – my nose has been bleeding a lot lately, stress maybe? I sure wish I could figure out a fun way to wind down to give me something to look forward to tonight, but my kids have been refusing to go to bed lately, and the little guy has been waking up all night with his illness.

Ok, that's my vent, sorry to be such a downer, but I thought writing about it would help. Dunno yet if I was right... Time to make the most of the baby's nap and get the garbage out and lunch cleaned up. If I'm lucky and he sleeps long enough, I just might get a nice long hot shower – but that's probably too much to ask.

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## **LOST!**

What seems like ages ago, I was a big fan of Lost. I didn't watch the first season when it aired, but all the buzz about it got me curious, so my husband and I gave the first season dvd's a try – and really liked it! But then the second season

of Lost wasn't as good, mainly because there were way too many questions and loose ends brought about – we couldn't figure out why they weren't concluding some of the mysteries instead of adding tons of new questions each week! When production was temporarily halted because of the writer's strike a few years ago, things on Lost really went downhill. But we had invested the time in watching it, and because the show's creators announced a definitive end date for Lost – this is the last season – we decided to stick it out.

So last night's highly anticipated last Lost season premiere was... eh. Only so-so, I would say. First, the show opened with really cheap-looking computer animation showing the island underwater, what was that? And there was a recap episode before the premiere, thank goodness for that, but between the 2 episodes, we saw the same climatic scene 3 times in 12 minutes! And the recap episode didn't help as much as I would have hoped – 12 minutes into the new Lost, and I was officially lost. My husband tells me that there are now two sets of each character, but I somehow missed that. If it's true, I don't like it.

Ugh... I like the concept of seeing flight 815 before it crashed, but all the actors look 6+ years older! Especially Boone!

The end of the episode was breathtaking, although I remain confused... were any of these people aware of what had happened? The time travel throughout the various decades?

I guess I have to watch the premiere again; I feel like I'm missing something... actually I'm missing a lot of things. The show is still entertaining, but I am so glad it's almost over! It really require more thought and more of a time commitment than I have to give to tv right now!

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# My New Doctor

How funny is it that I had this email forward waiting for me in my inbox when I returned from the doctor this morning?

## MY NEW DOCTOR



Q: Doctor, I've heard that cardiovascular exercise can prolong life. Is this true?

A: Heart only good for so many beats, and that it... Don't waste on exercise. Everything wear out eventually. Speed up heart not make live longer; that like say you can extend life of car by driving faster. Want live longer? Take nap.

Q: Should I cut down on meat and eat more fruits and vegetables?

A: You must grasp logistical efficiencies. What does cow eat? Hay and corn. What are these? Vegetables. So, steak nothing more than efficient mechanism of delivering vegetables to system. Need grain? Eat chicken. Beef also good source of field grass (green leafy vegetable). And pork chop give 100% recommended daily allowance of vegetable products.

Q: Should I reduce my alcohol intake?

A: No, not at all. Wine made from fruit. Brandy is distilled wine. That means they take water out of fruity bit; get even more goodness that way. Beer also made out of grain. Bottoms up!

Q: How can I calculate my body/fat ratio?

A: If you have body and you have fat, ratio is one to one. If you have two bodies, ratio is two to one, etc.

Q: What are some of the advantages of participating in a regular exercise program?

A: Cannot think of single one, sorry. My philosophy: No Pain...GOOD!

Q: Aren't fried foods bad for you?

A: YOU NOT LISTEN!!! ... Foods fried in vegetable oil.. How getting more vegetables bad for you?

Q: Will sit-ups help prevent me from getting a little soft around the middle?

A: Definitely not! When you exercise muscle, it get bigger. You should only do sit-ups if want bigger stomach.

Q: Is chocolate bad for me?

A: You crazy? HELLO .. Cocoa bean! Vegetable!!! Cocoa bean best feel-good food around!

Q: Is swimming good for your figure?

A: If swimming good for figure, explain whale.

Q: Is getting in-shape important for my lifestyle?

A: Hey! 'Round' is shape!

Well, I hope this has cleared up any misconceptions you may have had about food and diets.

AND....

For those of you who watch what you eat, here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth



after all those conflicting nutritional studies:

1. The Japanese eat very little fat

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

2. The Mexicans eat a lot of fat

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

3. The Chinese drink very little red wine

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

4 The Italians drink a lot of red wine

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

5. The Germans drink a lot of beers and eat lots of sausages and fats

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

CONCLUSION....

Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you!

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## Double Doctor Duty

This morning was our appointment with the pediatrician. The “our” refers to my little 18-month-old boy and I. It seems strange for a 31-year-old to have an appointment with the pediatrician, but as I’ve said before, he is also our resident sleep expert. Since I never feel rested no matter how much sleep I get, I was trying to get to the bottom of it and even got a sleep study done.

First and most importantly, my little boy is growing exactly in accordance with the growth chart at the pediatrician’s office! There was an intern doctor he was training this morning, and he noted to her that it was very rare to have a baby grow so normally – so I will take that as a good thing. My little guy **hated** being poked and prodded, but at least he

got the A-ok! He weighs 24 lb 2 oz and is 32 7/8" long.

As for me... nothing doing, really. My heart was fine during the sleep study, so that's a good thing. But according to the doctor, I slept for 7 hours of the 7.6 hours I was being studied (could have fooled me). My oxygen levels went a little bit low, but nothing that needs any fixing, I guess. He said that because of my "structure" (I have one huge tonsil), I will have to get this sleep study done every few years to make sure that things don't get worse, but I disagree – that is not going to happen. All in all, it was a waste of time I would say. I'm a little frustrated because the sleep study was kind of an unpleasant experience, especially to have nothing to show for it. And for the past week, my sleepiness has gotten even worse – I feel like I've been bordering on narcoleptic! I've stopped sleeping with the tv on, something I've done and loved doing since I was about 6 years old. I've been going to bed earlier, as much as I hate missing out on 'me and Hubby' time – I even got a nap in on Sunday! But even after making all these efforts, I've still fallen asleep at the movies, at home while watching movies; and (I hate to admit it), but I was struggling at church and I also dozed during a class we're taking. And it's not like I'm bored – I love to learn, and I really like church and look forward to it! I was really disappointed that I missed some of last week's message! Why can't I stay awake?!? Back to square one, I guess... whatever that is. Time to stock up on coffee and energy drinks, I suppose, there seems to be no other hope for me.

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# Reading Dog?

Have you seen the dog who can read on the news lately? The really cool-looking dog named Willow was on the Today show in October; here's a snippet:

So what's your opinion? Can he really read or is it much ado about nothing (ie, the owner is doing something else to signal the trick)?

[poll id="14"]

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## Dear (Deer) Friends

It's always fun to read about friendship that crosses the boundaries between animal species. I received some cute pictures of a cat and her deer friend via an email forward. What's interesting is that friendships between cats and deer don't seem to be as uncommon as one would think – I was having trouble getting the picture from the email to the blog, so I did a search for cat and deer pictures, and I came up with pictures of at least 5 different cats being friendly with deer! But thanks to Hubby for graciously taking the time (even during football playoffs) to help me get the original pictures from my email. These are cute!





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## Those Crazy Kids

Well, it's not a full moon tonight, but you could have fooled me. My kids are acting completely nuts today; I just had to get away from them for a few minutes for some "me" time to vent and blog this out. Ok, it's not really "me" time; the kids are right here, they just happen to not be needy at this moment – first time all morning. I actually just checked the moon's forecast, and we are only 2 days away from a full moon. Oh, my – does that mean I have 2 more days of this? My [blogging teacher friend](#) wrote about how she used to be able to predict her students' daily behavior by the way a herd of Clydesdales were acting when she passed their farm on the way to school each morning. If the horses were running around, there was a good chance the kids were going to be crazy. I'm betting that if I had a herd of Clydesdales in my backyard, they would be running around. And that would be cool – I've always wanted a bunch of animals. But hopefully I'm wrong about something crazy being in the air and the chaos is just localized to only our house because I have to teach youth group tonight, and I don't know what I'll do with crazy teenage girls if I have to deal with crazy little kids all day!

Sammie, my Kindergartner is still sleeping, and it's almost

lunch time. I can't complain about her behavior because for the past 3 days now (knocking on the wood floor), she's been good as gold. Yes, I am counting the days of her goodness because we just endured an incredibly bad phase of hers that lasted a few months – it was really bad. Why dwell on the negative, though? Today she was playing with her little brother without even being asked, and they were so cute together! They played tag, and she read books to him – I would have taken a picture, but I was busy meeting the demands of my 3-year-old, Disney. She was always the one I could count on to be good; she's always been a sweetheart. But lately, she's been in a really intense phase, and it's hard to handle. She has a very loud, shrill little voice, and she's always using it to yell "MOM", and you wouldn't believe how often she needs something – hungry, thirsty, help with something... we starting heavily potty training; I'm talking no more diapers during the day, so of course that makes her even more needy. By the way, the potty training is not going very well.

Well, I'd better wrap up; I'm sick of all the interruptions – I've found it's better when I don't really try to blog or work while the kids are around because it causes more frustration than productivity. But it's amazing how positive things look when our Kindergartner is in a "good" phase! And her older sister has been completely awesome lately too, so that makes 3 of my 4 kids in good phases. And Disney's bad phase can't even be called "bad" when you compare it to one of Sammie's bad phases. It's funny how our family dynamics are constantly changing as the kids go in and out of phases – kind of like the moon!

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# Lab Rat

Mostly, it was worse than I thought it was going to be, but I survived. I spent the night at the hospital last night undergoing a sleep study. These are becoming increasingly common, and many people experience anxiety beforehand, so perhaps I can help by describing it to someone who doesn't know what to expect. Then again, maybe you shouldn't read this post if you're looking to be reassured...

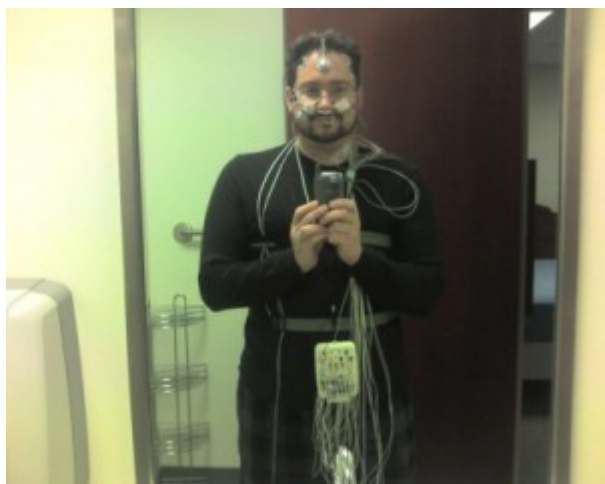
First, I got a prescription for a sleep study from my kids' pediatrician, who is also the local sleep expert doctor – I had mentioned to him that I never feel rested. So I arrived for my sleep study last night around 8 pm; usually they have you come earlier, but they wanted to mimic my bedtime schedule, and I rarely go to bed before midnight. That's funny – mimic my bedtime schedule, yet the 4 rowdy kids who usually keep me up past midnight were no where in sight, hmmm, not much mimicry there. So I waited in the lounge for a little bit for the nurse to do paperwork, which is more like a little living room that I luckily had to myself – didn't really feel like being social. Soon it was time to “hook me up” (which sounds better than it is, believe me) and we went into this little room off the lounge. I would not be exaggerating to say it was reminiscent of a clinical torture chamber. There was a simple chair bolted down in the middle of the small room, and various medical apparatuses and who-knows-what bolted to the walls, along with extra wires and electrical looking boxes and things – is this where they interrogated Saddam?

Not that I was nervous or anything because I really wasn't. I didn't like being away from my family, but I made the best of it by telling myself that I was going to enjoy the few hours away from the chaos; I had brought piles of old newspapers to catch up on and 3 hardcover books to read. And as far as the medical stuff goes, it didn't really seem like a big deal

after the 9 mos. of poking and prodding I've endured as a pregnant woman – times 4.

So I get all wired up, and after I sat in the lounge alternating between reading and watching tv (I had no idea what was even ON tv, which shows how little I watch it now), I decided that it was time for bed, and this is where things take a turn for the worse. As if the millions of electrodes the nurse had glued to various parts of my body weren't enough, she added two belts and also shoved something up my nose. That's right – they **glue** electrodes to you, disregarding your hair and everything. My kids today had fun playing with my stiff “glue hair”, but I quickly took a shower and washed it out before anyone got any ideas that “glue hair” is cool – that is one mess I don't need to clean up today or ever!

So I'm fully wired, and the nurse plugs me in, and then she leaves the room and comes over the intercom. She makes me do a series of silly actions – she said she wanted to “test the sensors”, but I was starting to think that her having me roll my eyes around in my head and demonstrate fake snoring might have just been cheap entertainment for the hospital's 3rd shift. When we were finished “testing the sensors”, the nurse turned off my light and I was expected to fall asleep, but I had lots of trouble. First of all, imagine trying to sleep while looking like this:





Not only that, but the bed was just awful, hard as a rock – I have a crick in my back today. And don't forget there is a camera and microphone on you at all times; it's a bit daunting to relax in this situation. And when they said that I could "bring my own pillow if I wish", I thought that was implying I should bring my pillow if I have some sort of special attachment to it. What they really meant was "You might wish to bring your own pillow because we only have little slabs of rubber we cover with pillowcases." Maybe they figured that if they put a pillowcase on it, they could call it a pillow, but after spending 8 hours with it, I strongly disagree.

So I had trouble falling asleep, big surprise. Not only was I so wired I felt like I could help E.T. phone home, but the bed and pillow were awful, there was a camera and a microphone on me, and the room was dark and quiet (that NEVER happens at home!). I was alone with my thoughts, and that's never a good thing ☐ It didn't help that I could occasionally hear the wind howling outside, and it reminded me of when the lights were on and the nurse was "checking" my fake snores – the lights had been flickering slightly. What if the power goes out, and there is a sudden electrical surge? Would I get shocked? Would I burst into flame? Would I disappear? Might I come away with some sort of obscure superpower? Hey, that might be kind of cool... I guess I finally drifted off, because the next thing I know, I'm waking up, even though it felt like I hadn't fallen asleep yet, and that's how I knew I still had hours left in my sleep study. Still uncomfortable, still cold, still not liking being both seen and heard while I'm asleep. And then I wake up again. Still uncomfortable, still cold... you get the picture. I must have woken up about 5 times during the night, tossing and turning each time, hoping for comfort until I passed out for good all tangled up in wires like a fly caught in a spider's web. Then I had a nightmare, and I wonder how that appeared on the charts? Finally, I hear a voice from above say "Lisa, the sleep study is over." Even though that was the best news I had heard in hours, it was a

bit unsettling to be woken up by an intercom saying my name.

Overall, it wasn't that bad, even though I was disappointed because I had been under the impression that I would be able to fall asleep easily, and that I would be in a comfy bed and stay asleep until the morning. Instead, I returned to real life very poorly rested early this morning with 3 kids to look after all day. But at least today, unlike yesterday, I can have all the coffee I can brew, and tonight I get to sleep in my own bed! Well, providing the coffee doesn't keep me up all night anyway!