

Thoughts From A Registered Ohio Voter

Swing state, political battleground, campaign focal point, election ground zero... call it what you will. As a Christian middle-class American, I call it Ohio, and Ohio is my home. With regards to the 2012 Presidential election, like countless fellow Ohioans, I've grown weary of the seemingly endless parade of dinnertime (wakeup and bedtime) political phone calls. I'm tired of receiving campaign postcards in the mail (between Thursday and Saturday last week, we got EIGHT political post cards in the mail – I don't want to be wasteful; I'm thinking of incorporating them into a quilt). And what if all that postcard mailing money were being spent on feeding and housing the homeless? Or providing quality health care to the uninsured? But I digress...).

I do care about the governmental consequences at stake; I note opinions and where the candidates stand on such controversial issues as abortion, the definition of legal marriage, and the state of the economy. However, the Holy Bible is the law by which I try to live my life. And there are no less than 17 Bible passages referring to false prophets. While educating myself about the Presidential candidates, I did a bit of research into the Mormon religion where I determined that Mormonism does not follow the same Bible I believe to be God's word. Although my political and societal views are usually Republican-esque, in this election, I have felt unrepresented by a candidate, which is why I've begun telling the Romney people who call me that they cannot count on my support for their candidate.

We can faithfully pray about the election and how our lives will be affected afterward, and we can also have peace knowing that our wonderful God is sovereign. I like the definition of God's sovereignty I found on theopedia.com: The Sovereignty

of God is the biblical teaching that all things are under God's rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction or permission.

Have peace. Your vote counts, it matters to people, but also know that God is in the cockpit – no one is going to pilot this plane we call the United States unless our Lord lets him into the cockpit. Whether Americans will call Barack Obama a 2-term President or if they get to know Mitt Romney as Commander-in-Chief, it happened because God allowed it to happen.

“The Lord has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.” Psalm 103:19

As a popular saying goes: may the best man win. As far as I'm concerned, that man is Jesus.

WHY Can't Babies Go To The Movies?

Gonna climb upon a soapbox for a moment...

The families in Colorado who were involved in the shooting need prayer. Probably one of the very last things they need right now is a network of UNsupport – people using mass media to put down the people involved and some of their decisions. Mainly, I'm bugged by those who say things like, “What was a 3-month-old doing at a movie theater anyway? Especially a MIDNIGHT showing of a PG13 movie??”

What's wrong with taking a baby to a movie? As long as the parent(s) willingly leave before the baby causes a disruption, then I don't understand what all the fuss is about. I have 5 kids, none of whom have slept thru the night until they were

over a year old (probably – my youngest is only 9 months old, but he's the worst sleeper yet, so I'm guessing he won't sleep thru the night until he's a year). So if I'm up at midnight anyway with the baby, I think it should be up to me if I want to spend my own money on a movie, knowing there is a chance that I won't get to see the entire movie if I have to leave if the baby fusses. Babies are not going to watch the movie; they're not going to pick up any bad things from the screen at that age, and taking the baby to the movies late at night can actually be the ONLY time new parents can find to connect to each other while trying to balance the demands of parenthood and careers.

Or, take the situation of a big brother who REALLY wants to see the midnight showing of Batman. Again, the parents feel they are going to be up anyway with the baby, so why not schedule in some family time at a most unusual, however more convenient, time. Again, if kids (or babies) cause a disruption in the theater, they should be taken out immediately as a courtesy to others who have also paid to see a movie.

Well, that's all I have time for now, just had to get that out – I just don't see anything wrong with taking a baby to the movies, and it bugs me a tiny bit that people are so busy worrying about how others raise their children instead of getting out there themselves to improve our society's crumbling family unit. Please don't attack the parents who are actually seeking to spend time with their children.

Dear Lord, Thank you so much for the gift of children. We pray to you to continue to guide us to love them, to nurture them, and to lead them to you. We pray for the comfort and healing of those involved in the Colorado shooting. May they grow ever closer to you, Lord. Amen.

Right Out Of Flipper

Came across this inspiring animal story, and since I haven't had the time to blog about any of the (mostly yucky) personal issues going on right now, I thought this would make a nice feel-good post. I'm still working on that Florida trip diary, really, I am!! But in the meantime, here is a story about some dolphins who saved a dog's life. This happened in Marco Island Florida, where we took our wonderful honeymoon almost 12 years ago.

[Dolphins Save Dog](#)

Too Close To Home

Crazy night here last night!!

Our 6-year-old, Samantha was up late, and since she was the only one of our 4 kids still awake, we decided to spend some 'just parents with Sammie' time and play a game. Dad had sunk one of our ships in Battleship when we heard a series of pops from outside. Following our instincts to take cover, we went into the interior of the house away from windows, where we discussed what we heard. Had we spaced on the date, was it New Year's already and someone was lighting off fireworks in celebration? No, my husband said, there is only one thing that sounds like that, and when he put it that way, I had to agree – it was gunfire. After we decided that it couldn't really have been anything else, we called the police, who told us there were already officers on scene. We got our police

scanner hooked up (who said I don't need a police scanner to keep tabs on small town action?), and we continued to sit in the hallway and listen to it. Soon we heard the unmistakable churning of the LifeFlight helicopter (we live blocks from the hospital), and we wondered if it was related – we would have more info in the morning. The police scanner just had mild chatter about officers responding and trying to find the “suspect's ID”. They found his cell phone, and an officer was told to see who the suspect had called. Not getting any useful info, we went to bed, and my husband woke me this morning with the info that he had heard on the big city Toledo news – a shootout had occurred in our small town, only blocks from our house, mere feet from our friends' house.

Turns out, a man had shot at the police station and then drove down to the park, where he shot at the police who chased him. The police returned fire, which explains the series of 6-8 pops we heard. The man was then LifeFlighted to a bigger hospital with life-threatening injuries. That was all the info in the newspaper, but when I did a google search this morning on the man's name, something interesting came up: a memory page for his daughter who died in a motorcycle accident in our town (this family was from a town 25 miles away) last spring. I remember that case: a man was driving a speeding motorcycle, and when police tried to pull him over, he gave chase. He eventually lost control of the motorcycle, and it crashed, killing his passenger when she was ejected from the motorcycle. From the research I did on the internet this morning, it seems that the suspect from last night's shooting incident was the father of the victim in the motorcycle chase case. Perhaps he was upset with the way police handled things last spring, so he shot up the police station and led them back to where his daughter was killed – the shootout took place at the same scene.

Tragic case all around, and we are reeling from yet another so-called 'big city' incident that seems quite out of place

here in our small Utopian town. I went to the shooting suspect's Facebook page, and there are several Christian activities on it. Perhaps in his grief for his daughter, the man lost faith in letting God handle things, and that is another aspect of the tragedy. Thank God that no officers or bystanders were injured, and I'm going to pray for the recovery and physical and emotional healing of the man and his family.

[Here's a link to the news story.](#)

Poor Paul The Psychic Octopus

No play on words necessary for this blog post – there really was a Psychic Octopus named Paul who lived in Germany, and he recently passed away at the ripe old age (for an octopus) of 2½ years.

In his lifetime, however short it seems to us humans, [Paul made himself famous](#) with his uncanny ability to predict World Cup game winners correctly! Before games, Paul would receive 2 boxes of mussels, one each with a flag of the countries of the two teams who would be facing off in the World Cup. The country whose box was eaten out of by [Paul](#) first was declared Paul's pick as the winner of that match, and he predicted correctly an astounding 100% of the time (8/8) for his World Cup predictions, and 86% (12/14) overall.

RIP • Paul the Octopus • 2008-2010



Preschool or Politics? Bonus Episode

November Election Day 2010 – it's come and gone; everyone is ecstatic to be freed from being forced to absorb those scathing campaign ads. In the wake of Election Day, one Chicago 'burb emerged with a history-making result. Buffalo Grove, Illinois citizens voted upon and passed a successful recall vote of a village trustee for the first time ever. You might have [read my previous post](#) about Lisa Stone, the *tenacious* (polite word) village trustee who helped make Buffalo Grove village council meetings look like too-good-to-be-real-for-reality-tv. She would do things like nit-pick, interrupt, refuse to take order; many times single-handedly being responsible for meetings lasting into the following morning! Lisa Stone and the Village President Elliott Hartstein would butt heads at every meeting until he was so frustrated he looked ready to burst. Well, the votes were counted, and Ms. Stone has to leave office. And if you think

that Village President Hartstein was happy about this, check out this little video of him impersonating (complete with wig) the thorn, uh, Stone in his side:

Yes, it was a horrible political decision, and a public apology was issued promptly. A guy's gotta vent, but he should have known better. Just when we thought the reality show was canceled, a bonus episode appears. [For the whole story, click here.](#)

***It's come to my attention that the video is no longer available – bummmmer!! It was too funny! Well, there's nothing I can do about that, so here's the next best thing: pictures.

Ms. Lisa Stone herself:



And Village President Elliott Hartstein dressed as Lisa Stone:



There Was A WHAT In The Front Seat?

Just in time for Halloween, I came across a macabre news story the other day involving a woman whose actions had even veteran police officers scratching their heads.

Woman Drove with Corpse for 10 Months

'It was very shocking'

COSTA MESA, Calif. (CNN/KTLA) – It's hard to shock a seasoned police officer, but cops in the Los Angeles area say they were shocked by what they found in a woman's car this week. They say a woman was driving around for months with a dead mummified body in the front passenger's seat.

"It was surprising even to myself. I've been a police officer for 15 years. To find a mummy in a vehicle, it was very shocking," said Det. Sgt. Ed Everett.

Police say a corpse was propped up in the passenger seat of a Mercury Marquis for the last ten months. A woman was driving it around town during that time. Apparently, conditions inside the vehicle allowed for mummification.

But how did this happen?

"Initially the driver of the vehicle had indicated that she was unaware that this person was in the vehicle and didn't indicate that there was anything wrong with the vehicle," Sgt. Everett explained.

But later, the driver came clean. The 57-year-old woman says she met a homeless woman at a local park and allowed her to sleep in the car. One day, the driver discovered her friend was dead, panicked, and she left the corpse in the passenger's seat. But she continued to dress the body and drive around with it.

“Due to the condition of the body, the coroner’s office was not able to determine the cause of death. There was no obvious signs of foul play at this point or trauma to the body that we know of,” said Sgt. Everett.

Police have few details on the deceased woman’s identity. The driver only had a first name for the lady and the poor condition of her remains will make identifying her difficult.

First my sympathies to the deceased and her family, and I hope they can identify her and then let her rest in peace. But how does this happen? Was the woman lonely? Afraid of getting into trouble? Lazy? Crazy? Wanted into the carpool lane? Here’s to hoping she gets the help she needs, whatever that might be.

More Beautiful Than Ever

My husband was in bed last night waiting for me to come up because I was putting some finishing touches on my daughter’s school fundraiser and picture forms when we both heard a bunch of sirens. We live pretty close to the fire station, so we didn’t think much of it, even if it was odd that they were allowing them to wail so loudly just before midnight. This morning a friend emailed me with the bad news, and I went to the local newspaper’s website to see the details: our beloved community park, Imagination Station, burnt last night.

We still don’t know how it happened, but it’s obvious that this was not a natural cause – it was not lightning, and there is no electricity capable of sparking such a blaze at the park. Unfortunately, this seems to be the work of people, and whether it was intentional or an accident remains to be seen.

At least no one was hurt physically in the blaze. But many in the community are emotionally distraught, for Imagination Station was a wonderful park where citizens from throughout the area would spend warm summer nights, cool autumn evenings, and many a Saturday afternoon with their families and friends. Funded by private donations and built by the hands of thousands of volunteers in 1994, it was a source of community pride. Everyone came together to create Imagination Station; kids volunteered their cool playground ideas, while adults physically built the play equipment and still others provided thousands of meals for the builders. The community worked together day and night, rain and shine for 6 days until it was finished. The final product was amazing, impressing locals and out of town visitors alike. And now much of it is gone.



Many people came out tonight to walk past the charred ruins. In a way, it was like paying one's respects, and many people stared at the blackened splinters in stunned silence. There

were whispers, “Who would do such a thing?” and “How did this happen?”, and one woman walked by slowly, saying quietly, “We will build it again. And it will be more beautiful than ever.” I believe her to be right. People came together in 1994 and built an amazing park, and people will come together again to replace the one we lost yesterday.

“The Greeks built an Acropolis – And Noah built an Ark
The Russians built a Sputnik But Bryan built a Park”
(Bryan Times, 1957)



****UPDATE****

There was an update in today’s (9/17/10) newspaper saying that tons of people have stepped forward and created a volunteer organization to rebuild. It was insured, and [Spangler Candy Company](#) has stepped forward to cover any costs not paid for by insurance. There is a [Facebook page dedicated to the rebuilding of Imagination Station](#) where people can share their memories of the park or volunteer for the rebuilding. Unfortunately the fire investigation and the insurance company’s investigation will both take awhile, and nothing can be done until they are finished. They hope to have the

playground replaced by Spring, but that is still a long time, especially for those of us with kids. Sure there are other parks in town, but Imagination Station was the favorite. ☐ The little town made the big Toledo news though, they had a nice story:

Felonious Dishonesty?

What do you think about this: a guy goes to the drive-up window at his bank, and they accidentally give him \$3350 that was supposed to go to another customer. He drives off. He is now facing felony theft charges.

I wanted to blog about this because I really disagree with it. Morally, it wasn't right of the man to drive off with money he knew did not belong to him. Ethically, he should have notified the teller of his or her mistake, and the teller should have thanked him profusely. But I believe that to charge this guy with theft is wrong. Sure, he took someone else's money, but it was a bad decision made in the heat of the moment. He saw a lot of money, it had been given to him, and he made a mistake. It was a bad decision, and a greedy one at that, but deserving of a felony? I think not. If convicted, this man will have a felony record. He will have trouble finding employment, and he will lose basic freedoms that many people take for granted, such as owning a gun or being able to vote. I believe it to be a bit severe to slap him with a felony record when his crime shows no premeditation nor malice toward another. For all he knew, he was **given** the money and he might not have realized that his taking it would have hurt anyone. He did not hold up the bank, and order a teller to give it to him or use a gun to get the money. Again, clearly the wrong thing to do morally, but were his

actions criminal?

What do you think? Check as many answers as you'd like, and feel free to add any thoughts or opinions you have in the comments section.

[poll id="20"]

If you would like to read the article before voting in my poll, below is a copy of the [original article](#) that was printed on dailyherald.com. Hmm, I see that his court date is only days away. I will post an update to this story if I come across one.

A man who reportedly drove off after a bank teller mistakenly gave him \$3,350 that was supposed to go to another customer now faces felony theft charges.

The teller at a drive-in window of Chase Bank, 2555 Golf Road, Hoffman Estates, accidentally sent the cash to the wrong customer and quickly told the recipient to come inside the bank, said Cook County Assistant State's Attorney Moe Ahmad.

But the driver, whose name and address was known to the bank because of his transaction, drove away, Ahmad said.

Hoffman Estates police arrested Luis Villarreal, a 26-year-old stay-at-home father, Thursday in his home in the 600 block of Alcoa Lane in Hoffman Estates. Ahmad said police found \$2,920 in a diaper bag.

Cook County Associate Judge John J. Scotillo set Villarreal's bond at \$25,000 and ordered him to appear at 9 a.m. Sept. 16 in room 108 of the Rolling Meadows Courthouse.

In Remembrance

9/11/2001

September 11, 2001 was day we won't forget, a defining time in our nation's history, and the first of its kind for the generations who hadn't been exposed to such feelings of terror nor national vulnerability before that day. This blog post is a day late, but I spent some time yesterday reflecting on the sacrifices made and the lives forever changed on that September day in 2001. Alan Jackson wrote a poignant song about September 11, 2001 that asks, "Where were you when the world stopped turning that September day?", and I think that everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing when they learned that the United States was attacked nine years ago. I remember receiving emails from my friend who was serving in the Air Force at the time:

To All My Friends and Family:

I just wanted everyone to know that I'm okay. We are not going anywhere. Our jets are on standby, but that's it. Also, Jerry made it home okay, for those of you that were worried. I love you all, and I miss you.

Love,

Kel

Hi Everyone,

Things are still going as well as can be expected. We are currently

working 12 hour shifts, 7 days a week. Please, I'm asking everyone,

do not call me during the day, because most of you know that's when

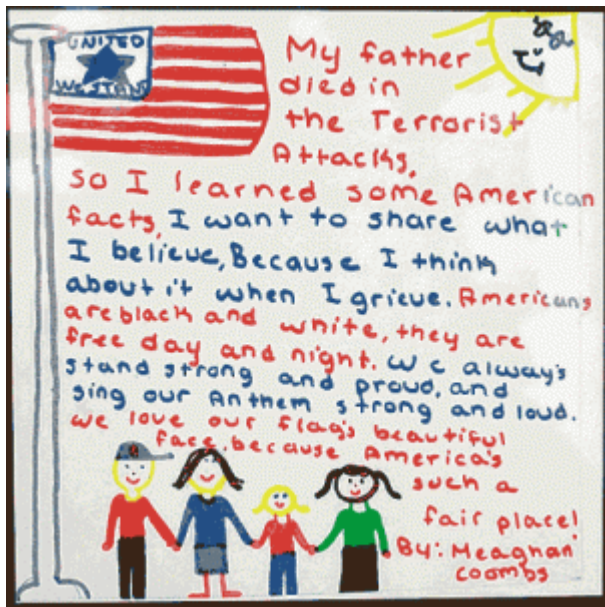
I sleep. I'm working 7:00pm to 7:00am. If you absolutely

need to get in touch with me,
you can call me at home between 5:30pm and 6:00pm, or in an
emergency I can be reached at work. (Mom and Dad you
can call me anytime, even at work if you want) Also I check
my
e-mail a few times a night, so I will respond to everyone as
quickly
as possible. If you have any questions, feel free to ask, but
I
only have limited info at this time. For everyone wondering,
we
currently have 1/3 of our jets standing by with a full load of
fuel
and equiped with armed missles. If anything else happens, the
jets
will take off and patrol from South Carolina to the Southern
tip of
Florida (the Keys) They will shoot down anything that comes
within
that area. They will give the planes one warning and if they
don't
turn back, our jets will shoot them down without hesitation.
We are
very tired and will be even more worn down by the time this is
all
over. Working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week will do that to
you.
Again, if anyone has any questions, please e-mail me. I love
you
and miss you all.
Love, Kel

Her emails illustrate the widespread uncertainty coursing
throughout the nation at that time as well as the need to keep
close contact with friends and family.

One of the most moving experiences I've had was visiting the

9/11 museum in New York city a few years ago. It was a somber experience, and there was scarcely a dry eye left amongst those who came to learn, reflect, and pay tribute to the victims of 9/11. The victims, their families, and those who were affected in other ways by the infamous September 11, 2001 were in my thoughts and prayers yesterday, as well as they are today, and I've included the following video if you'd like to reflect as well. God bless America.



My father died in the Terrorist Attacks,

so I learned some American facts, I want to share what I believe, because I think about it when I grieve. Americans are black and white, they are free day and night. We always stand strong and proud, and sing our Anthem strong and loud. We love our flag's beautiful face, because America's such a

fair place!

By: Meaghan Coombs