

Highway Tuneage

Our two day Chicagoland adventure began yesterday around 1PM when Mare and I hopped onto the 'pike and headed west. It was amazing to me how fast we flew there. We arrived at our hotel around 3PM (according to my chauffeur's cell phone time... she did not realize that her device automatically accounted for the change in time zones).

Our journey was seemingly made even more quickly with our listening variety. I brought along my *Carousel* Score. Mary I believe said that she played the part of Cousin Nettie Flower in a production of one of my favorite musicals back in the early part of the decade. REALLY! WHERE WAS I when they staged it?! Then, we popped in some Josh Groban and by that time we were very close. So... we let "Vera" guide us the rest of the way. Little to no traffic. Surprisingly, very little construction on our side of the highway. A very fun, easy trip.

Coming back, Megan joined us on the return trip. We made a slight detour to South Bend and took a drive-by tour of the perimeter of Notre Dame. Since it was rather rainy and a home football game, a more close up tour was out of the question. We did get a glimpse of the golden dome and Touchdown Jesus. Very fun!

One of the most interesting music selections in Mare's catalog was a CD of [Beatles](#) hits recorded by some interesting actors. Imagine Robin Williams and Jim Carey giving voice to "Come Together" and "I am the Walrus". There were lots of very interesting Beatles classics including a strangely bluesy rendition of "Hard Day's Night" by an even more interesting actress choice who none of us could figure out was Goldie Hawn. But no recording of the classic William Shatner take on "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." A very fun if at times a bit strange tribute.

All in all, a very fun trip on the road. Stay tuned for my take on the big fun in the city.

The final selection on the Beatles tribute was by the best Bond that seemed a bit odd because he stated his dislike of the Fab Four in *Goldfinger*.

If You Are A Happy Green Grape And You Know It

This morning, after she got out of preschool, my four-year old niece brought home a song to sing called "I Wish I Were A Juicy Green Grape." Sydney ran to me and asked me to sing it.

It is set to the tune of "If You're Happy And You Know It." Really, the exercise in song parody was not an easy one. My dad kept trying and sounded like he was singing The Oscar Meyer weiner song. See if you can make the melody fit the words"

OH, I wish I were a juicy green grape.

OH, I wish I were a juicy green grape.

When squeeze me

I will squirty

Onto everyone's shirty

Oh, I wish I were a juicy green grape.

Of course, this presupposes that you know the tune and words of "If You're Happy and You Know It." In elementary school, I remember having such an exercise in which I came up with a

parody of "White Christmas" entitled "(I'm Dreaming of a) Cheese Pizza." How adorable.

Eileen Escapes Fightin While Having A Pina Colada

This morning before leaving for work, I was listened to our local [Classic Rock station](#) to see if I could listen and win. Thursday is the Three Songs with a Theme in which you listen to the three songs in their ENTIRETY. I listened to the first song then by song two had the solution. While the final song was playing, I put the station's number up, waiting until the song faded, and hit the talk button. **BUSY SIGNAL!?** And Mr. Brigle came on and said... "Let's see if we have a winner." Sure enough, we had a winner. Someone must have been a little quicker on the draw than I.

OK... test your musical expertise and tell me what these three songs have in common. I can offer no more than your name and answer to be posted on my blog... but isn't that reward enough?

1. "Kung Fu Fightin'"
2. "Come On, Eileen"
3. "Escape (The Pina Colada Song)"

In the past I have won a few prizes: a gift certificate to an area coffee shop, and two CDs (the soundtrack to one of the *Scream* movies and one by Daryl Hall and John Oates that must have been their attempt at a comeback). My mother won a phone-in contest years ago. Her prize? A trip on the Jet Express that ended at the end of the season. The end of the season being that very weekend. Unfortunately, she was not able to use the prize.

All You Need Is An Octopus To Hold Your Hand In A Submarine That Is Yellow

Today seems to be one of those moments when it appears that Beatlemania will about however briefly. Not only is The Beatles: Rock Band hitting gaming systems the world over but many of the greatest albums are being reissued as remastered CDs. Abbey Road, Revolver, Rubber Soul, and the quintessential White Album are just four of the titles dropping today.

While I was cleaning the shop today, I glanced at a *Parent and Child* magazine and one of the cover articles pondered...["Why Kids Love the Beatles"](#). I don't know how many parents today introduce their children to the Fab Four but I know of at least one [father](#) whose youngest can rip off lyrics during a game with the best of them... oven obscure songs that flew right over my head. I agree wholeheartedly with most of the article. I believe that the longevity is due in large part to the creative genius of Lennon and McCartney who penned some of the most memorable songs imaginable that still hold up 40+ years after the groups break up. Classic melodies and words from ballads like "Yesterday", "Hey Jude," and "Let It Be" to pop standards such as "I Saw Her Standing There," "Can't Buy Me Love," and "Penny Lane" to the wildly odd lyrics of "Octopus' Garden" and "I Am the Walrus (goo-goo-ga-jooob)" are just a few of the hits produced from the Lads from Liverpool.

The article went on to give a small bio of the four gents. Who was the Cute Beatle, the Quiet Beatle, the Brainy Beatle, and the Sad Beatle? I did not list them in order they appear

in the article so if you decide to cheat you better make sure you read the question carefully. Not only did John and Paul contribute to the songwriting but George and Ringo wrote some classics as well.

No matter what kind of personal lives the quartet lived outside the stage or studio, one thing remains undeniably clear. Even after 40 years, millions are still listening to, singing along with, and commemorating the world's greatest rock band. I'm not sure if The Beatles will hold up to classic composers like Bach and Beethoven 100 years from now and I don't think I will be around to find out. Plus, we had an Elvis themed game night... why not a Beatles? At least we can introduce one of our friends to the classics who shall remain anonymous... unless they care to comment.

Random Night Of The King

On a random note, I decided at the last minute to kind of theme-up game night a little bit last week. I went to the library to find some background music to put in the kitchen CD player during game night, and the first thing I found was a Garth Brooks Greatest Hits collection – and not one of the two that I owned back when I was a huge fan – one of the reasons why Garth Brooks became intolerable, what a sell-out. But he has some really good songs, and I thought it'd be great to hear some of them again. Realizing I've tortured enough unwitting souls with my love of country music, I looked through the regular music. But it was the adult section of the library, and I had two of the kids with me, so I was in a big hurry and all I could find was an Elvis greatest hits collection. Thinking about it on the way home, I remembered a recipe I had come across months ago and put aside – Elvis'

favorite sandwich in a cookie. What was Elvis' favorite sandwich? Peanut butter, banana, and *bacon*. So I made the peanut butter, banana, and *bacon* cookies, we rocked to Elvis, even though he ruined more than a few people's careers in the [Mafia](#), I think. I didn't come across anyone all night who was ecstatic about my Elvis cookies, but they were more for the experience of emulating Elvis (this would have made a fun dress-up version of game night, haha) than they were for people to find delectable. I, for one, found them tasty, but not great. I'm not a big cookie person anyway, and I found the combination of bacon and banana quite interesting, though in a good way. Coincidentally, I found out that 3 days before our game night was the 32nd anniversary of Elvis' death, so it ended up being a tribute of sorts, I guess. I like the idea of themed game nights once in a while, especially if it doesn't require much extra dough (pun intended) or work. How about we light up the comment board with suggestions for possible future game night themes?

*** – Here is some bonus footage – the Elvis cookie recipe. Enjoy and let me know any alterations and feedback you have!

From the article where I read about it:

“Go with your gut – not your head – on this one; the combination of peanut butter, bacon, and bananas really is delicious.

ELVIS COOKIES

Makes 30 cookies

1 cup smooth peanut butter

1/2 cup packed light brown sugar

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1 large egg, lightly beaten

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 cup crumbled cooked (very crisp) bacon (about 6 strips)

1/2 cup diced firm banana

Heat the oven to 350F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment

paper. (I did some research because I didn't want to buy many extras like parchment paper, so I just greased a cookie sheet with margarine and it worked fine. So in place of the parchment paper, lightly grease a cookie sheet.) In a large bowl, combine the peanut butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar. Use an electric mixer on medium to beat until well combined. Beat in the egg until just combined and set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour and the baking soda. With the mixer running on low, add the dry ingredients, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Gently mix in the bacon and the bananas, trying not to mash the bananas. Using slightly wet hands, roll rounded teaspoons of dough into balls and place on the prepared baking sheets, leaving about 1 inch between them. Dip the tines of a fork into water, then use it to flatten the cookies until they are about 1.5 inches around. Bake on the middle rack for 11 minutes. Cool the cookies on the baking sheet for 2 minutes, then remove with a metal spatula to racks to cool completely.

NOTE – a guest commented that he wished there was more bacon!

I Can Play On My Trombone

One of the many things I look forward to at the beginning of the school year is to check out the fresh faces of the new faculty of my alma mater, particularly in the spot that seems to be a revolving door as of late. Let me say that from experience and word of mouth the previous band director will not be missed. However, the new director had to jump in quickly as days after her arrival, she had to get the band ready for the Festival of Flags parade. A group of 20 marching down North Michigan Avenue doing the best they could under the circumstances.

Reading the new instructor's bio in the hometown scandal sheet makes me think that she is very ambitious and hopefully will stick around long enough to bring some of these goals to fruition. Miss Reardon is a Sandusky native who graduated from UT. She plays the trombone, cello, piano, and sings. Very well versed. One of her goals is to bring musical theatre back to the EHS stage. AWESOME! It has been several years since Emily and I (can't remember who the dramatic director was) brought the "Nifty Fifties" to the stage. More of a revue of car tunes strung together by a flimsy plot, but fun.

Good luck to the new musical maestro!

Country's Biggest Night!

After my extremely busy weekend (more about that in my next post!), I'm just not up to the task of doing a live blog about the Academy of Country Music Awards like I did last year. I had a lot of fun doing it at that time, but this year we were lucky enough to share our awards experience with friends at our house, and I want to be a good host (well, as good as I can be with both eyes and ears on the awards show!). It's bad enough that I had to practically kick out people who were here for our voluntary monthly organizational meetings so I could watch the awards show when it started at 8 – hehe. I was accused of "chomping at the bit", to get to the awards show – but then again, I did sacrifice and miss the entire red carpet coverage... so I guess a point was made – I WAS chomping at the bit, so to speak!

Watch the show we did, and it was great – although I didn't win the tally for the most awards guessed ahead of time. My

picks for winners of the most popular categories are following in **blue** with the winners in **bold** (the ones I got right are in **bold blue** and my commentary is in *italics*. I'll let you know how our guests and I did at the end:

Entertainer of the Year

- **Kenny Chesney**
- Brad Paisley
- George Strait
- **Carrie Underwood**
- Keith Urban

Big shocker here, for real. Kenny has won this one for the past 4 years straight, so you can't blame me for voting the way I did – SHOCKER he didn't win tonight!

Top Male Vocalist

- Kenny Chesney
- Toby Keith
- **Brad Paisley**
- George Strait
- Keith Urban

Top Female Vocalist

- Miranda Lambert
- Heidi Newfield
- Taylor Swift
- **Carrie Underwood**
- Lee Ann Womack

Top Vocal Group

- Lady Antebellum
- Little Big Town
- **Rascal Flatts**
- Randy Rogers Band
- The Lost Trailers

A given – Rascal Flatts has a ton of talent and are one of my favorite bands!

Top Vocal Duo

- Big & Rich
- Brooks & Dunn
- Joey + Rory
- Montgomery Gentry
- **Sugarland**

Album of the Year

- Carnival Ride – Carrie Underwood
- Back When I Knew It All – Montgomery Gentry
- **Fearless – Taylor Swift**
- That Lonesome Song – Jamey Johnson
- Troubadour – George Strait

So there you have it. I didn't do so well, compared to past my past performances guessing on country music awards shows – I got 4/10 correct. But we had a great time watching... some highlights include Trace Adkins' performance with the West Point Glee Club, very moving, especially because the performance was introduced by a young veteran in a wheelchair. Another highlight, Carrie Underwood's humongous dress during her resurrection of Randy Travis' "I Told You So". (notice they didn't show her getting on or off stage in that dress – think she was "snapped" into it? That thing was HUGE!!!)... But I guess I'm a country fan-child of the 80's and 90's, sigh. The awards shows during that time period were so much more exciting to me because of the awesome music that was performed, unlike tonight. Just another sign that I'm getting old, I guess, since I much preferred our friends' conversation tonight to the live performances... just nothing special on the modern country artists' part, I guess...

But congrats to those who won, and it was a great show to watch and predict, even if I didn't do so well. Until the CMA's in the fall – maybe I will do a LIVE broadcast for that one – we'll see!

I'll Have A Sample Of Birdie To Go Please

Do you remember the days gone by when jingles in television ads contained familiar samples of famous songs? Some of these included women "[Washing the Grey Right Outta Their Hair](#)" or using window cleaner to "Put On A Windex Shine." Last night while watching *Cars* while sitting four terrific kids (although two of their overnight sleeping habits...), there was a State Farm insurance add that included lines from "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" to promote their partnership with the Disney Channel to increase teenage driving safety. My concern with that is I could not recognize the TUNE at all. I realize that decades have passed since *South Pacific*, *Bye, Bye Birdie*, and *The Sound of Music* were considered cool. And, unless radically changed to fit today's teenage tastes, the music from these shows even less cool. A few years ago, Gwen Stefani sampled "If I Were A Rich Man" in her aptly titled "Rich Girl." At least with the old ads, the tunes were familiar instead of dressed up to make them SOUND like something they are not. But I suppose companies and artists(?) have to advertise to their target demographics. Sorry I did not try harder to come up with clips of all the ads.

The Prize

In my previous post I was looking for the title of a song and the artist who sings it, and I promised a prize to anyone who

could provide me with the info. Two readers and fellow bloggers, [justj](#) and derek, successfully completed the challenge. So what's their prize? A blog post of recognition, of course!

Alright, that's dumb. It's going to make sure that people never take any challenges I offer again. Isn't just knowing that you helped a friend enough? Of course it is, but you were promised a prize. Maybe I can treat your ears to a round of *Senorita Mas Fina* (that's the name of the song I was looking for in case you're wondering, and it's sung by Kevin Fowler).

Just kidding! I won't make you listen to the song. It really seems like something only a country music lover would like – cheesy lyrics, hokey theme, obscene amount of twang – the kind of song I can really use to tease my friends who hate country music!

Well, thanks again derek and justj for playing and for coming up with the info I was looking for. And it's ironic, I did do searches myself, and I did come up with the name Kevin Fowler, but before I was able to listen to the song, I had to do something else (the baby has been crying for 3 days straight – teething), and I guess I forgot I was close to a result when my computer crashed. So thanks for helping me, and you will get more than the blog post recognition I had planned – I will have a real prize the next time I see each of you – something small, but maybe a little better than blog recognition and being made to listen to an extreme lesson in the country music technique of twang. Thanks for playing!

This Gringo Needs Help

From dictionary.com:

gringo [gring-goh] –noun, plural -gos. Usually Disparaging. (in Latin America or Spain) a foreigner, esp. one of U.S. or British descent.

Sorry – didn't mean to be disparaging, but I am of U.S. descent and I need help.

This post is an appeal to country music fans to please help me figure out the details of a country song I want. I don't know the name of it or who sings it. It's an older song – maybe from the 1980's or '90's... I wouldn't even rule out the '70's. Just about the only lyrics I can remember are “...be your little gringo...” or something like that. The song is uptempo and sung by a male. If you can get me the name and artist of the song I'm looking for, you'll win a prize. Something tells me Carol might know this... or my dad... WHAT IS THIS SONG?