

Wow the wind has picked up

Another very windy night. I'm hearing branches and various nuts hit the house and roof. I'm sure there will be a couple of trees down somewhere with this storm. Guess I will have to leave for work early, just in case something falls over the lane.

Anyway, now is not the time to be running around in the woods, but that is exactly what one little dog wanted to do. I guess when you got to go, you got to go. Being so close to the ground, he is out of most of the wind. He didn't stay out too long, I guess the falling acorns bothered him.

I'm not sure if I will get any sleep with this wind. After seeing one huge tree on the ground this week, I guess I'm just expecting another to fall. Nothing nearly as big as the fallen oak, but there are a few a bit closer to the house, like within 10 feet.

I don't recall many fall days with heavy winds like this. To have so many in a week seems to be really out of the ordinary, but I'm not sure. I usually think of late spring and early summer as the heavy wind days.

I was just thinking about the last time a big tree blew down near the house. We were all in the house that evening, and we were having another big wind storm. There was a loud crash and the house shook, but we could not see what fell. The next morning we saw that the big ash behind our house fell directly away from the house. That was about 18 years ago. My youngest was home and on a breathing monitor. We lost power, and I remember being on a list for a quick restore. Funny how that came to my mind this evening.

If a tree falls...

and it doesn't hit the house, did it really fall?

In the back of my house, some 80 to 100 feet away from the house lived a rather large Oak tree that was at least 80 feet tall. This massive tree was about 3 feet in diameter at 5 feet off the ground. The trunk was a massive 5 feet across at the roots.

I think I was lucky that the wind blew the tree away from the house. Not that it was close enough to hit the house (it would have been close), but there was a good chance it would have knocked down other trees that would have hit the house. This tree had limbs growing out almost as wide as it was tall.

Over the past years I have been worried about it falling in the direction of the house. I wanted it cut down when I sold some timber about 10 years ago. They didn't cut it down. This tree had a 1 foot by 6 foot gash in the trunk made by a backhoe some 30 years ago. This week spot was exactly where the tree cracked as it fell. It took a couple of good sized trees with it too. I should be set for firewood for this winter and maybe next year too. I consider myself very lucky that it fell when there wasn't anyone around. I should post a picture or two before and after I start cutting it.

Anyway, I did not hear the tree fall. We had two windy periods this week, Monday/Tuesday and Friday/Saturday. I'm assuming (since I didn't hear it fall), that I was not in the house during the fall. I'm sure the ground would have shaken a bit when this one hit. I'm also assuming that it did not fall on Monday or Tuesday. I'm fairly observant and I thought I would have noticed this tree when I let the dog out in the

afternoon. My guess is that it fell some time Saturday afternoon, when I was tending the gate at the Oktoberfest. It got quite windy on occasion with some heavy gusts. I noticed the tree on Sunday morning. I was also looking at a great horned owl sitting on another tree. I don't normally see owls out during the day, so I wonder if its home was destroyed when the tree fell. And that takes me back to the hundred acre woods with Pooh and his friends.

Hooked on Foniks

The English language is a glorious hodgepodge of a variety of mother tongues. There are bits of Welsh, Dutch, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Latin and a bit of original English in this language. This is why there are so many ways to spell the same sounds. That and of course people would always spell the way they wanted to before dictionaries were invented. ☐

Since I have a very hard time remembering how to spell certain words, I am in favor of scrapping the current way of spelling things and coming up with an alphabet that allows us to spell words the way they sound.

I'm sure we could get rid of the C, Q and X. These can be replaced by S, K, KW, KS and EKS. Should there be multiple letters for the long and short vowel sounds? What about those the Th and Sh sounds? New letters? Maybe. The easiest to teach would be 1 letter per sound. If we keep everything close to the current looks of the alphabet, it would be easier to learn than the metric system. ☐ Just think no more I before E except after whatever... No wondering if that was spelled with a C or an S or maybe a K. What are we waiting for. So to experiment, I give you the following (long vowel sounds will be replaced

by double vowels and the Th and Sh and Ch will remain – No new letters on this keyboard.)

II was up laat tuuniit beekuz II fel asleep direeng aa balgaam. II wook up direeng thu last ineeng. The Tiigers won. If thaa win tuumoroo, thaa wil bee the Sentral leeg champs. Goo Tiigers!!

Dang, that was difficult to type. Maybe the learning curve is steeper than I thought... ☐

Don't I get half?

I was driving along one of the back roads of NW Ohio yesterday minding my own business. Of course I was looking for the deer that will run out of the fields as soon as the harvest starts, but I didn't see any of those. Now in the normal course of driving one usually expects to have their own side of the road. For some strange reason the driver of a grain filled semi decided he needed to drive down the center line. There was plenty of room for him on his normal side, seeing that I only had to get my passenger side tires in the grass when he flew by. As Maxwell Smart says, "He missed me by 'this' much". The 'this' happened to be about 2 feet at most. Not an enjoyable experience at all.

So after sitting on the side of the road for about 1/2 an hour or so, I continued my drive to see my daughter. I really was hoping that I could relax enough to enjoy the evening and then maybe drive home. As noted in my last post, I was able to relax.

In my years of driving, I've only had a few close calls. Each one affected me in the same manner. My nerves were a tangled

mess for at least an hour or two. Only one of the close calls was my fault, and my reaction to it kept me from repeating my mistake. Now I am talking about life/death close calls, I've had my share of little fender benders, but the big ones scare me. And there I was taking the back roads hoping to avoid the traffic on the more populated routes.

Well, today there are three drivers that avoided a major accident, because of the alert action of two drivers (me and the guy following me). I wonder if the truck driver even saw us. I doubt it, since he kept right on truckin'.

So, I guess I'm just saying, "It is great to be blogging today, heck it is great to be doing anything today."

Drive safe.

Wickedly blogging this evening

I just got caught up with the news for today (All the news I need to know anyway) and I noticed an article about [Gmail being down today](#). The article stated that there was some anger directed toward Google for the outage. Really anger? Wow, it's free email folks get over it...

I'm wondering why people would complain when something was free. I've heard complaints and more when the 'free' wi-fi is down at the coffee shop. People have complained in the supermarket when the free sample isn't big enough, or not the right flavor. That free hotdog at the car dealer, comes with its very own car salesman?

I've been told that nothing in this life is free. We always have to pay something for it. Free TV, you get a lot of advertisements or in the case of PBS fund drives and commercials (usually between shows). You also get 'product placement' in the shows. Was that character really drinking that famous soft drink? Free email – Check the ads attached.

Even then, the price is usually something we consider inconsequential. But some people complain anyway. And you still get exactly what you pay for.

Of course this is a free blog too, unless, of course, there are ads attached... ☐

The magic directional box

I've been using my GPS in a rather mundane way recently. I know the route I want to take, but I turn the GPS on anyway. Even though it never takes me the route or direction I normally go, it does keep very good track of my arrival time. That way I know if I have time to make a stop before I get to wherever I am going. Neat trick that.

This morning on my way into work, I noticed that I wasn't getting yelled at as often. Wow, did this thing learn my pattern overnight? Then I noticed it wasn't telling me when the turns were coming up. The only thing I heard from it, was "re-calculating" every time I deviated from its intended route. The route would show up mapped, but I would only "hear" about it when I made at least a 90 degree turn from the intended route. Something strange was happening.

Then I noticed something odd. My little blue truck on the screen was not driving on the mapped road. In fact, it looked

to be about 0.2 miles off the road. If the GPS was correct, I was driving through fields, houses, trees and over creeks (all at 55 or so). No wonder it didn't talk much, it didn't really know where I was.

Apparently, I'm having some trouble getting satellite reception. This is the second time this happened in a week. I can't find any news articles on GPS disruptions, so it may just be a local thing. I wonder....

Just strange ads

Something weird is going on with the ads I see on many sites. I've been getting bombarded with ads for 'bidets'. Now I would understand this if I had been making comments about toiletpaper, toilet humor, bathrooms, plungers or the like. Or even if I was doing a search to replace various plumbing fixtures. The only site I know of that had something to do with bathrooms, was the [repair blog over at taylhis's site](#).

Seeing the things I'm interested in, or places I frequent, I would expect ads about widows/widowers, maybe dating, single parents, college information, comic books, geek stuff, movies, books and a few other things. Bidets were at the bottom of my list of things I thought I would be interested in.

The other strange ad I've seen is for Ugg boots. While a fascinating site and the boots are quite comfortable (I had a pair of Ugg slippers once), I'm not currently in the market. But then again, I did write about finding boots for my college daughter.

Hmm, does Vet Tech talk suddenly bring up ads for Bidets and Ugg boots? I wonder. For now, I guess I will just be followed

by these strange ads. (Check the tags, I'm in for it now)

And the rain comes down

As I sit here and type this blog, it seems that there is a bit of rain falling. I can hear it hit the windows, roof and echo on the metal chimney. To me, this is a comforting sound. As long as the wind isn't too strong, or the lightning too intense, I enjoy hearing it rain at night. I'm warm and dry in my house, and I know that we are receiving needed water.

It also brings back memories of walking in a warm summer rain with my wife. Not really worrying about getting wet or cold. Feeling relief from the summer's heat. And feeling the warmth of our relationship.

I also remember hurrying from building to building of our local zoo when the cold spring or fall rains hit during one of our many excursions. Maybe stopping for a warm drink at the cafe or spending extra time in the warm tropical exhibits. And finally getting back to the van and putting the heat on.

Or back at the zoo during the Christmas Lights exhibit during those bitter winter rains. We actually enjoyed those evenings more, since the crowds would be much thinner. We would be dressed and ready for the rain with waterproof or repellent outerwear and umbrellas. We would look at the lights and the raindrops falling would reflect a variety of color. Of course the evening would include hot chocolate, coffee or tea.

And of course there are always those first spring rains that bring the green back to the area after the long grey and white winters. Memories of fun, love, laughter and light remind me that even during the coldest times, the hope of spring and new

life can be found in the same rains.....

Comfort foods

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

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

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

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

2- Pancakes, Waffles or French Toast. At home is good, but for personal reasons I really like I-HOP.

3- Sausage Gravy and Biscuits with Scrambled eggs.

4- Oreo Cookies and milk. Usually the Double Stuff

5- Mashed Potatoes and Gravy

- 6- Meatloaf
- 7- Gingersnaps
- 8- Good Coffee and Cheesecake
- 9- Pumpkin Pie
- 10- Yellow Cake with Chocolate frosting
- 11- German Chocolate Cake – I like the frosting with nuts, but the coconut is good too
- 12- Good Chocolate (Usually this would be imported and expensive)
- 13- Lemon Meringue Pie
- 14- Key Lime Pie (not with a meringue)
- 15- Red and Black Raspberries (in anything or fresh)
- 16- Chili
- 17- 'Lil Smokies
- 18- Sloppy Joes
- 19- Kielbasa
- 20- Bill Knapp's Chocolate Cake (If you know where to find this let me know)
- 21- Chocolate Frosted Donuts (Fresh made are best)
- 22- My Mom's BBQ sauce on just about anything
- 23- Dried Apricots, Fresh Apricots and even Canned Apricots
- 24- Fried Onions and Potatoes with Sausage
- 25- Fried Baloney, Onion and Ketchup sandwich (Thanks Dad..)

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

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

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

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

Those Beautiful Fall Days

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

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

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

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

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