

The Pampered Chef

I hosted a Pampered Chef party last night – it was just for fun. I do like their products, but I find them extremely over-priced. My experience of working for a company that imported goods from China doesn't help these opinions; that's when I got to see how inexpensive plastics can really be. But anyway... we did have fun. And an interesting note for all you stoneware fans out there – stoneware is an imposter! If you're not familiar with Pampered Chef parties, I'll give you a run-down of how it all went down...

When you agree to host a party, you choose one recipe to make with all the victims, I mean, friends, you invite to your party. I, being pregnant, could not resist the sound of the chewy caramel brownies. We were having a grand old time, measuring things, chopping things, and spilling ingredients all over my living room, until the consultant proceeded to burn the brownies to a **crisp!** The smoke alarm went off and scared the kids and everything! Which brings me to the subject of the mythical stoneware, noted for its ability to cook things evenly. Guess what? The brownies did burn **edges first!** So much for that theory. My husband, ever the conspiracy theorist, was wondering if she didn't burn the brownies on purpose trying to gain sympathetic orders from my victims, errr, guests. But, once we saw the effect of the stoneware, this theory was proven incorrect by the sheer failure of the purpose of the stoneware. Needless to say, I will not be choosing any stoneware items with my party-hosting credit! And I have to admit, the brownies were a big disappointment. Not at all cuz they were burned, but because they were TOO sweet and rich for my tastes, however pregnant I am. I did feel badly for the consultant; but stuff happens, gotta chalk it up to gaining experience. Overall, I would recommend hosting one of these parties. It's fun to get together with your victims, I mean your friends and family and

cook. You have to be a little bit willing to stand up for yourself though – the consultant WILL pressure you to invite tons of people, call them all constantly to remind them to come, and will also try her darndest to get YOU to be a consultant yourself! And since my “excuse” of having 3 kids 8 yrs and under PLUS 1 on the way wasn’t really good enough – I had to “just say no” in the end – good luck to you! So as long as you can deal with the peer pressure involved, it is definitely worth a try to host a Pampered Chef party. And thanks to all my suckers, I mean, my guests who ordered things – that was really nice of you and I appreciate it – we had fun!

The Price is WRONG, Bit...

You know I’m not going to finish that sentence... if you’ve seen Happy Gilmore, you know how it ends, anyway. If not, rent it if you like comedies, it’s a good one. In case you haven’t noticed, I watch a lot of tv. Actually, I don’t really watch it, I just leave it on to listen to while I putter around the house doing various chores and tending to children all day... it’s nice to hear adults talking, even if they aren’t talking to me – I can pretend. Anyway, I usually have The Price is Right on in my laundry room for my parrot – it’s his favorite show. He likes to imitate the AWWW noise the audience makes when they get something wrong. I’m getting used to Drew Carey. He’s no Bob Barker, but he is finally becoming less nervous and getting in the groove of the show – or so I thought. The other day when I started this post – it got POSTponed (HA) because the baby and I have been under the weather – Drew was a little “off”. The opening prize was a train set, and he goes, what do you want to bid for that chainsaw? As he admitted, he didn’t even look at the prize!

Then later on, he called one of the models Rachel Ray. Funny stuff – and though it might seem like I have too much time on my hands, I beg to differ.

Snakes... Why Did There Have To Be Snakes

Since this is to be a blog concerning movie reviews, I suppose I should start reviewing more. On May 22, one of my favorite movie franchises will be resurrected with *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. Let me take a moment to deal with the previous 3 movies in turn. All four movies contain two essential elements: Harrison Ford and director Steven Spielberg

Raiders of the Lost Ark was one of the top grossing films of 1981, if not THE top money maker. It is here we meet the great archaeologist and follow him around the globe on his quest to find the Lost Ark of the Covenant. Along with his female companion Marion Ravenwood (played by Karen Allen), Indy battles Nazis, a treacherous rival treasure hunter, and the bane of his existence... deadly snakes. However exhausted he may seem, Dr. Jones rises to each challenge with courage and at times a bit of a swagger. In one scene, Indy shoots a menacing swordsman with one bullet fired from his gun. However, his favorite weapon of choice: his trusty bull whip.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom was released in 1984. The second installment was considerably darker than its predecessor. In fact, Spielberg had to lobby for a new movie rating in order to avoid getting an R-rating. Thus, the PG-13 rating was created. *Temple of Doom* concerns our intrepid

adventurer searching for the lost sankara stones which were stolen from a small village in India. These rocks may have meant “fortune and glory” to Indy but to the village they meant their very livelihood. Some of the highlights in this epic are a speeding mine car chase, a rickety rope bridge, and a sumptuous feast consisting of snake surprise, beetles, eyeball soup, and for dessert...**Chilled Monkey Brains** (a tasty treat anyone would enjoy).

The third part of the saga, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), had a lot to do with the background of the character: why archaeology, where his whip came from, and why the name Indiana. In a very brilliant piece of casting, Sean Connery was chosen to play Indy's father. Who else but the world's greatest superspy could play the world's greatest adventurer's father? After rescuing his father from Nazis, they set out to find the Holy Grail: the cup which held the blood of Christ at the Last Supper and gives everlasting life to anyone who drinks from it. In a flashback at the beginning of the movie, the late River Phoenix plays a young Indy on one of his teenage escapades.

Now, comes the next chapter. Very little is known about the new movie aside from the title and who knows what the purpose of the crystal skull is. Karen Allen is returning as Marion and Shia LaBeouf is cast as a young man who speculation suggests has a familial tie to the hero. Watch the trailer [here](#)

Pamper Me

NO... do not put me in a diaper. I was invited to attend a Pampered Chef party at the house of my very good friends. It

was very entertaining. Everyone there got to help make brownies... (which ended up being slightly burned but with a little ice cream, were quite good). I ACCIDENTALLY spilled a smidgen of brown sugar on the floor as I was filling the plopper thing. THEN, I gracefully dropped a scoop of ice cream on the floor.... sorry.

After the demo, we arranged an Oscar night party. I have not seen any of the movies nominated for any of the major awards. I have heard that *Gone Baby Gone* is not all that great. Only that it is Ben Affleck's directorial debut and has his brother, Casey in it. We briefly discussed *Little Miss Sunshine* which I have not seen but hope to. And while we were on the topic of Steve Carell movies, we mentioned *Get Smart* which will be coming to theatres this summer. I will say that I have seen *Norbit* on DVD which is up for Best Makeup. That movie should be a contender for WORST MOVIE EVER. I wonder how many movies have ever won both Oscars and Razzies.

Unexciting day

There's not really much for me to say today. I was with 3rd grade, which is about the bottom of my comfort zone. I have done lower grades, even preschool, but 3rd-7th is what I prefer. The day actually started out not looking so good with a **lot** of chit-chat while the kids did their morning work. Fortunately they improved throughout the day. Right after morning work was silent reading time and I have to admit they did very well. When we got to math I had the pleasure of teaching a lesson I had a chance to teach twice before, believe it or not, in the previous weeks so in a way it was like teaching the second or third class in a middle school after getting the "practice" time with the first class. Not

much to say about reading and writing. Another teacher came in to do a couple of writing assessments, which wasn't planned, so I only taught part of the original lesson. Reading was one of the "just give them this independent work" times where no lesson was involved.

Specials, read "break time for subs" are sort of a hit or miss thing with elementary school- some days you may have two, other days none. Today there was one at the end of the day, giving a little time for me to write some notes so I wouldn't have to stay a half-hour after the kids leave as I occasionally have to do. Rather than the kids going out as to music or gym, a social worker came in with a lesson. This unfortunately meant that I *still* couldn't leave the room, but at least it gave me that note-writing time. All-in-all the day wasn't too bad.

Interesting coincidence- the team name of the school I was at was the wildcats. The middle school, actually junior high as that district still uses that term though they run the schools like middle schools (there is a difference), where I will be tomorrow has the same team name. Nothing big, just interesting.

Superman 2x2

When you are 8 years old sitting in a movie theatre watching one of your favorite characters on the screen, you have no idea how much turmoil goes into putting that action on film. Richard Donner directed *Superman the Movie* and simultaneously his version of its sequel. However, following the release of *Superman*, Donner was fired and a new director for *Superman 2*, Richard Lester, was hired. The funny thing is nearly 80% of

what was seen in theatres in 1981 is what Donner had filmed. So 25 years later, Donner released his version of *Superman 2* from the rolls of film shot while making *Superman the Movie*.

Richard Lester's version is a good film. However, it does have many problems. In the Fortress of Solitude battle scene with the three Kryptonian villains, the Man of Steel is given powers that he never had before and were cheesy powers to begin with. From his "S" shield on his costume he pulls out a cellophane shield which he hurls at the evil doers.

Also during the Fortress battle, Superman and General Zod participate in a game of hide and seek. They apparently were endowed with the power to magically appear and disappear anywhere within the fortress. Or maybe it was a trick ice crystals within the fortress. But that was meaningless as well.

Richard Donner's version had no such new powers for Superman. However, it also has ONE BIG FLAW!!!! The same thing that plagued the climax of *Superman the Movie*. I will not spoil for the uninitiated.

Personally, I prefer Donner's version. Both are flawed, but Donner's version also has a brilliant scene with Superman and his father Jor-El (Marlon Brando) at the Fortress. Both do include the diner scenes which are some of my favorite scenes from the movie.

Richard Lester's version also led to the ultimate demise of the Christopher Reeve starring movies. The final two films of the series took a horrendously comedic tone. Richard Pryor was added to the cast of *Superman III* as a comedic foil. *Superman IV* was just an awful mess which spelled the end of the Last Son of Krypton on the big screen for 20 years .

The Lion Roars

☒ So... the “Disneyfication” of Broadway continues. There have now been 5 Disney movies made into Broadway shows (*Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, *Tarzan*, *Mary Poppins*, and now *The Little Mermaid*). Many critics suggest that these will be the downfall of the musical itself because the shows are not original and are only tailored to little children. I feel that any chance to introduce a ten year old child to a theatrical experience is well worth the critics panning. After all, there are more than 5 theatres on and off-Broadway.

I was fortunate enough to have seen *Beauty* on stage during its final previews on Broadway. It was an excellent spectacle (which is something else which has been another favorite critical complaint). The set draws the audience into the world of a small French village and to the dark castle in which the Beast resides. All of the characters from the movie are there. The music is fun along with a few new numbers added to the show. “Be Our Guest” is a show stopper with the dancing plates, cutlery, and other enchanted household objects. “If I Can’t Love Her” is sung by the Beast at the end of the first act as he falls into even more despair. Actually a fun show which will delight everyone.

The touring cast of *The Lion King* is coming to the [Toledo Stranahan](#) theatre this weekend through March 30. I do not know of any other show that has been performed for that long at this theatre. Apparently, they are expecting sell outs the entire run.

From everything I have read and heard, this production is supposed to be magical. Realistic puppets for background characters while other actors perform behind masks and other

costumes. Again, all of the songs from the movie are featured as well as new songs such as "Morning Report" and "Endless Night."

Beauty and the Beast and *The Lion King* are just two of the 5 Disney movies turned into musical extravaganzas. I do think that there should be some point at which more original productions are created which introduce children to theatre as well as entertain adults. Beginning with the **END OF HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL** (but since that is already a stage show... UGH!!!!). But I do not think Broadway is in any danger of being overrun by Disney. What would be next... DisneyYork?



Silver Spoon

Ok... so there are 10 days until Williams County Community Theatre presents an evening of MURDER and dinner, too. Our first show is for a group of Kiwanis members at Orchard Hills Country Club on March 1st. We also have two performances at Rita's on the Square in Bryan, OH for the general public on March 7th and 8th.

I have never before been cast in a dinner theatre performance. I saw a performance of *Nunsense* in which the actors interacted with the audience between dinner courses while on my high school senior trip and it was fun. The performers kept picking on ME?!. That may have been because I called attention to myself and was sitting in the front row.

Murder with a Silver Spoon was written by one of our own community theatre members. It is just a fun, very light bit of theatre. It involves a 3rd rate (or maybe 4th rate) novelist

who comes to a small town in order to promote her new book, *Murder with a Silver Spoon* (ironic, isn't it?). During the course of the play and meal, there is a murder and everyone is a suspect. The bumbling sergeant and his ever-reliable, very intelligent, and quite dashing deputy attempt to solve the case.

SO.... for an evening of dining, murder, singing, and comedy be sure to call for reservations: 1-888-569-9228.

All In The Family

Ok, OK, **OK!!!!** Some people may get sick of me talking about this (hopefully not many) but for the past month the [Bryan Times](#) (a newspaper in rural Northwest Ohio) has had a feature entitled "The Love of My Life." Various people have commented on their spouses, families, other people, and a few have described activities they enjoy. While I have yet to find that special female, I would find it very difficult to distance myself from the theatrical world. There is just something so magical about stepping onto a stage and transporting an audience into another place and time and allowing them to see into that world for a brief moment. I believe that the goal of any performer should be to entertain. However, there are times when the people on stage have the power to move and to educate an audience.

The magic of theatre is not limited to the performance. The sense of camaraderie people feel who have been in multiple shows together creates a sense of family. There is set building, set unbuilding, rehearsals, show planning committies, and countless other aspects of preparation to undertake. Most important of all (well.... maybe not) come the

parties!!!! There does not even need to be a reason to have a party just a chance to get together and play games (Balderdash is a good game, “spizzerinctum” anyone?). The spizzerinctum at the party emitted a very strange odor. I dunno... can spizzerinctum have an odor? Yes, but of course.

But no matter if you are willing to stand upon a stage in front of 10 or 10,000 audience members, work behind the scenes, or just sit in the audience there is always a place for everyone in the theatrical family. Not all of us can paint a wall and make it look pretty.

Finally, a Walking Baby!

She finally did it! Tonight was Disney’s first serious attempt at walking! Well, she has tried before, but tonight she was doing it over and over, 5 steps or more at a time! I tried to get it on video, but as soon as I took out the camera, she got all distracted and started crawling toward the camera saying “cheese, cheese” – it was really cute, but I had to put the camera away and get back to walking! It’s like she knew the deadline was nearing, because we have a Dr. appointment on Monday just because the Dr. wants to make sure she’s walking – she was really surprised she wasn’t walking at her 15 month appointment so she asked to see her again in a month to make sure... Now she has until Monday to practice, and her sisters are a big help with that! Since tomorrow is her 16 month birthday, I was wondering, how late is she? Beyond average, I know, but I’m curious about how late kids start walking... let me know if you know of any lazy late walkers – it’s kind of like a poll, let’s see the latest we can find, hope it’s not Disney though ☐