

What a way to end an afternoon...

Nice afternoon at the theater, and nice company. All was well until my drive home. Some jerk in a old white pickup decided he didn't need to pay attention to the local road signs. Apparently the red octagonal signs mean to speed up and go faster instead of stop.

I ran through many things as I came to that intersection. I was traveling somewhere near the double nickel speed, and I had a choice of stopping very fast, or trying to get through the intersection quicker than the other guy. Funny how fast you think in those situations. I hate being in them, but I am glad that I have been blessed with a fairly quick mind.

I decided to speed up, a collision was avoided by a few feet. I'm not sure the other guy really ever saw me until I passed him on the road. And he blew his horn at me. Hmmm.

Other thoughts passed through my head during those tense moments. Time spent with family and friends. Time that I should have spent with them. Flashes of the past, thoughts for the future. Strange how fast you can think of things.

In thinking back to that event, I was wondering why I decided to speed up instead of slow down. All the years of driving experience, past Physics classes, Statistics/Probabilities all rushed to my head. A vehicle even the size of my truck does not stop on a dime. But thanks to a feisty little five cylinder, the truck accelerates just fine. I knew this, and was proven correct. (Thank goodness!!!)

I'm very glad to say that I had a wonderful afternoon. I'm glad I have the chance to enjoy more of my life.

My little truck is showing its age...

Normal wear and tear on my poor little truck. The little beast that helped move a man-eating plant to our local theater. The one that moved things for all of my daughters. Moved firewood to keep me warm in the winter. Carried my dearest family to their home in Florida. 6 years and 175000 miles of travel and hauling. Last week some of its age showed up.

There have been the little things like worn out tires, slightly balky windows, a worn out battery. But last week the poor little beast lost its muffler. Nothing prepared me for the sound that the little 5 cylinder engine made without that noise reducer. It was hard to hear myself think. So of course I needed to get it replace/fixed before the big trip Friday evening (more on that later).

Started out as a nice simple fix, no problems. A loose joint welded together and everything would be back to normal. Except that after they did that, they noticed something else was wrong... Hmm more time and money gone.

I drove off with a new muffler and fixed Then something else in the exhaust came off. Back the the shop.. Grumble... More time spent, but at least this time no money... Most of the day shot.

Except, I was able to memorize were everything was in our local WalMart. But they moved everything now, since Halloween is over.... ☐

Breathing is Necessary

One more rehearsal and then I will have the Thanksgiving break. All is Well. I got to my lesson today and there was an anthology of Christmas favorites on the piano. Oddly enough, I have been getting in the festive mood just a bit.

Perhaps it is the facebook friend who has taken up the mantle left by Emily who always had her house ready by the beginning of November (not exaggerating). On to the lesson:

I decided to focus on some of the more serious songs this week. The first went well... some lyric problems but nothing monumental. The second is one of those traditionally, deceptively simple pieces... beautiful but deceptive. We decided that this piece is a study in when and when not to breathe. More of a pick the song apart and put it back together. I can't breathe in the middle of the word "loooong... iiiing" when it is held for 6 beats. Phrasing, breathing, don't forget to breath... fill up the belly. HEHEHE!

"No Breathe... No Life." Wise words Miyagi-san.

You're telling me I missed Halloween?

Last year I was unable to celebrate Halloween with friends due to some ailment. I was all set to bring some 'frightening' festive holiday food to a party, but was unable to make it.

This year was going to be different. There as another party to go to,. More festive food to prepare. And I had a choice of many costumes. But somehow I missed the entire weekend plus a day or two.

Harumph No party, no costume, but one heck of a cold/flu/sinus infection.

Too make things worse, my oldest was moving and I was unable to help. I think that made me feel worse than my flu. Well, I understand there may be more to move, so as soon as I have my strength back, have truck will haul again.

Oh well, maybe I'll just have to make my next get together with friends my own personal costume night, complete with bloody fingers and toes. Yes, that may be on my list. It isn't like me at all to miss two Halloweens in a row.

My Poor Little Bird

JJ, my parakeet, is very sick. I had parakeets when I was younger, and I know enough about them to know that we are lucky that he's still alive. His chirping and squawking gradually decreased until I realized the other day that he doesn't vocalize at all anymore. He is very lathargic, and sits puffed up on his perch where he loses his balance every few minutes. His tail is bobbing when he breathes, which is a sign of respiratory distress, and he has some discoloring around his cere (nose), which indicates discharge. The other day, I noticed that he was sitting on the bottom of his cage, which is a sign of imminent death in parakeets. Based upon my research (past experience, the internet, and bothering the heck out of the local pet store), JJ seems to have a respiratory infection – something that is often fatal for

small birds.

But he's hung on a few days now from when I first believed his death was imminent when he was at the bottom of his cage. After all, parakeets' instincts are to hide their illnesses. If they show any sign of being sick, wild birds will be cast out by their flock, so if captive birds allow signs of illness to show, it's often too late to save them. I got some birdie antibiotics, and I'm hoping that he is drinking his water where the meds are. He is still eating, and that's a great sign. We put a blanket over the cage, and are trying to keep him warm and calm so he can rest and get well. It's just touch and go at this point, so I'm praying for my little bird. I got so attached to the little guy! I got him right after my beloved dog passed away, and seeing my happy little bird helped me feel at least a tiny bit better. And now I'm watching him suffer; it's hard. I want to move him back upstairs where it's a little warmer and quieter, but I'm afraid of stressing him out too much, which is basically the same reason I don't want to take him to the vet. I guess I'll wait for him to improve a little more before moving him upstairs; that's the only plan I have right now.

Like I said, he does seem to be improving – the loss of balance on his perch seems to have subsided anyway. But he still does not look well, and he is not vocalizing. He is less than a year old, so maybe his youth is keeping him strong and resilient. Poor JJ! He is just a little parakeet, but he means a lot to me. If you could send out a little prayer for JJ, we'd appreciate it. And pray for my husband while you're at it; he's fighting a nasty cold. Obviously, Hubby's health is a billion times more important than JJ's, but if I wrote a blog post every time Hubby got sick... well, I wouldn't have time for that! Besides, Hubby's illness is not life-threatening. I wonder if Hubby and JJ have the same thing? That's one thing that stinks about this time of year – all the illness! Wish I could transfer some of my super-immune system

over to Hubby, who seems to get EVERY single thing that comes our way...

Chicken What?!

Halloween... my SECOND favorite holiday. I guess you could say that it began last Monday when I ran into my very good friend at Wal*Mart where we decided to get coordinating costumes. I'll share a photo or two later.

Friday evening was the quite festive game night... ALWAYS A TON OF FUN! My niece and nephew have had a pretty tough couple of days so I invited them to come along with me. Alex was his normal crazy self in his "professor who just graduated" costume. Poor Shelby, I think, finally came out of her shell as the games began. Later, I took them back home and returned in time to enjoy the very haunting *Exorcism of Emily Rose*. A very good mix of *The Exorcist* and courtroom drama.

Saturday night (or SUNDAY morning) I was awakened about 4am by my cell phone. Oh, great! What joker is playing around when I am trying to get my beauty sleep. Somehow after I found out who the culprit was, I did manage to get a few more hours of shuteye. All good! I did get a good chuckle out of it ☐

After getting off my shift on the big day, itself, Dad, my second oldest brother and assorted nieces and nephews ventured to a relatives yard of terrors. Year after year, they transform their house and yard into a fun, family-friendly fright fest complete with touring train. After having your fill of frights, you are invited into the house to sign the guest book and each family is invited to take a plate of treats and goodie bags for the kiddies. All this for the exorbitant amount of \$0. Certainly is amazing that they can

operate this year in and year out for the entire month and not charge a cent. Most of the items that are on display are generously donated. In fact, just the other day, a tombstone was given that had some defect which caused the original buyers to turn away. Visitors even bring along bags of flour and sugar for baking help. But leave your checkbook at home. They may take donations in form of decorations but never monetary.

Even more amazing is the number of people who have signed the book in just the last month. Over 2000! From word of mouth and flyers passed around the area. We were shocked to learn the distance travelled by some of the visitors: Louisiana, "New" England (from "across the pond"), France, Germany. WOW! So... when next October creeps its spooky head around... be sure to visit the Geren's. I have not visited the site after daylight hours for more than a few years but I do remember that after the sun sets is when the real frightful fun begins. Unfortunately, some of the little ones are a little young for that. Even some of the older ones were a bit fearful of the maze in the daylight. OH, Puh-lease!

Hope you all had a Ghoulishly fun holiday weekend!



What WAS I Thinking?

AHHHH... Thursday! It is my favorite day of the week (After I get done at work, that is... today's 6 hours is another blog entirely). My voice lessons are progressing quite nicely and my coach and I are REALLY pleased with the progress I am making. I just have to wonder what the heck I was thinking in choosing some of the songs I am quickly perfecting. I think I

have three (maybe 4) serious selection... the rest are my favorite types: CHARACTER driven pieces. Not only character-driven but requiring different accents. I think we counted three different distinct accents. What do you think... should I reprise a love/hate character?

We have also been brainstorming a bit about staging these songs and some of the ideas we have make me think that a slightly larger stage is going to be needed. I'll leave those ideas on the drawing board for now and mull them over to see if any of them are viable. But the possibilities intrigue me.

So while I am memorizing, polishing, and otherwise perfecting each piece the pictures in my mind are beginning to take shape.

But **3 DIFFERENT ACCENTS! WHAT WAS I THINKING!** ☐ Ah, well... if I didn't think it possible, would I have done it? Probably.

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.

my life in 144 characters

I did say that I may blog more, but I'm living a boring life and nothing is happening. So here is my life in 144 character bits. More or less.

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I can't understand why twitter is such a big deal. Even the place I work has a twitter account. I don't like the character limit, it seems to g

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I'm not one to use word abbreviations like lol and l8r, so the character limit on twitter would really slow down my fluid writing style. It woul

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So I decided to try my hand at this 144 character stuff. I was just wondering how coherent I could actually be. It seems to be a bit of work to

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I am fairly certain that the character counts on all these little snippets is 144. And with that, my thoughts are getting cut off. I could cont

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My youngest and I went to the Hut today and they had wings for 50 cents each. I liked the wings, but they didn't like me, so I am up at 3:30 am.

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Ok, this is getting a bit silly, even for me. I will say that I am under the influence of a late night wing attack, and a brain that doesn't kn

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Twitter asks the question: "What are you doing now?" To the logical soul I am the answer would always be the same. I'm writing drivel on twitte

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Never give a blog to a slightly crazed brain after midnight. You will never know exactly what you will find there. Tonight I was on a twitter

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I think that the wind is what really woke me up. We've had heavy winds for the past few days, but it seems to be gusting a bit more this evening

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Good night all, or is that good morning. My life is boring, even 144 characters at a time. I think that is a good thing.

RIP Oreo

This post is a few weeks in the making – my daughter Sammie's favorite rat died on October 11. She took it pretty well; I was dreading having to tell her when she got off the bus that day. She got off the bus and promptly handed her younger brother and sister each a piece of her candy. 'Oh great', I'm thinking – she gets off the bus and immediately does something really nice for her siblings, and I have to tell her that her favorite rat died. But I didn't have to tell her – she asked me first if he had died. I said yes and asked her how she knew – turns out that big sis had taken it upon herself to tell Sammie on the way to the bus stop that morning. What are big sisters for? ☐ But like I said, Sammie was ok with it, but now that just leaves us one pet rat: Buckeye. We began with 2 rats, Bobby Jack and Oreo, and then we took in 2 more from a friend who was unprepared for pets, Mater and Buckeye – 4 rats at once was a bit much, but we didn't want to see them wind up as snake food, so that gave us 4 pet rats.

Bobby was the first to pass away in June of this year,

followed by Mater in August, then Oreo in October – every 2 months we lose a rat, I guess. That's the only downside to these otherwise great pets – they only have a lifespan of 1-3 years. Otherwise, they are like mini dogs: affectionate as can be and very trainable. My girls love their rats and do very well at feeding them and giving them water every day, cleaning their cage, giving them baths, and taking them for walks. The rats would always seem depressed when my girls spend their week with Grandma in the summer, and they get really excited when the girls return. The only thing that keeps ME from getting too close to the rats is my allergy – what a bummer. I found out I am allergic to rats right after we got them as cute little babies. I would play with them and wonder why I broke out into hives on my forearms and sneezed like crazy and had itchy eyes for hours afterward. In a way, it's a good thing, otherwise I would be more sad than the girls when they die, and at this rate, we are poised to have to say goodbye to a long line of pet rats!