

Now It Can Be Told

This past weekend, one of my dearest friends graduated from the area community college. Weather permitting, I WAS going to attend the ceremony. If weather did not permit, she was only guaranteed 4 tickets so I would not be so bold. However, the weather held (cold and windy as it was but well worth it). After the commencement, a group met for a party. I'm so glad that I was not the only person to bring a gift. We discussed whether I should bring the gift to the restaurant or wait until later. Who am I to listen? I brought it along.

Purchasing the gift was stealth at its best! Easter Sunday before [Wicked](#), my family and I arrived at the theatre before Megan and [Carol](#) so I had time to peruse the souvenir stand. I picked up a few things and then saw something that totally caught my eye: a musical snow globe featuring Glinda and Elphaba that plays one of the musical highlights of the show: "For Good." WHAT AN EXCELLENT GIFT IDEA! I bought it and got it to the van before my friends arrived. Megan asked me why I kept texting them to see how far away they were... now she knows! I'm pretty good with secret keeping but even I was getting antsy because I thought it was such a great idea.

A few days later, Megan posted something to the effect of "Hmm... what to get myself for graduation." on her facebook page. To which I replied, "What can those of us who are not you get you for graduation?" HAHA!

Isn't it great to surprise your friends sometimes!? Congratulations Megan! I hope the next step of your journey is filled with joy and fulfillment!

Expanding on a theme

There are times we recall those we have lost. These times can cause tears or laughter. Don't fight the tears, don't live in the laughter. Doing either will cause us to forget the past and ignore the present and then we will miss the future.

A facebook post for today. These thoughts and the thoughts of my children this weekend push me to expand on the above. (Somebody push Froggy to read this!!) ☐

I'm almost certain it was a tough weekend for all of my daughters. I was with the youngest all day yesterday, so she did have a bit of comfort on mothers' day itself. The other 3, well I still have a hard time being in multiple places at once. I did make the effort to see the 3 I could, but not enough effort to talk to number 4. Sorry K.

With all of the heartache from the past year. All of the Joy felt. And the new situations we found ourselves in, I am offering some of my thoughts and words.

On mother's day, my daughters found themselves 6 years without their mother. They were all too young to lose someone so important in their lives. I am not, and will never be a suitable replacement. I just try, with all my human failings, to be the best Dad I can be. Remember her in your hearts. Share your stories with each other. You share that common loss. If there is anyone that you should talk to, it should be your sisters. You know each other, and could comfort each other if you wish.

Don't fight the tears, the anger, or even the joy you feel when thinking of those you lost. Yes, you should curb your responses to some feelings. Good social contact almost demands it. But try to recognize those feelings. If you need to yell and scream, be open about it. Tell people why you are mad. Try not to take these feelings out on others, but share them. Let

the tears fall, if someone asks why, share the reason. It is much easier for us as people to share the good times. WE MUST make the effort to share the hard times with people. Good friends will support us in that. Of course you may not want to share those hard times with the wrong people (social graces, covering your back, ect.).

Don't be totally consumed by the past. This is a very hard one (I know from experience). At some point the past has to become the past. For each of us that is a different time. In fact, from day to day it may be different. Let it go when you are able. Again, look for help.

I don't pretend to know all you are going through. You are all different. You are all in different situations. I know what it is like to lose my parents, but that came after I had many years to share with them, and I was on my own. I don't know what it was like to have a depressed widowed father responsible for me. I don't know what it was like for you not to have your mother there for you on the important days of your life. I only know what it was like not to have 1/2 of me available at those same times.

Know that I will listen and offer advice (unless you tell me to just listen) and I love you all. I'm only a phone call or two away. And one more thing, ask your sisters if they have read this.

Fool Me Once, Strike One

My kids have been totally crazy lately. End of school year I guess? Great, let's take a look at the irony in that... end of school year makes kids act crazy, which makes me dread the end of the school year when I will have 4 crazy, bored,

unstimulated kids 24/7. Nice irony, that. But anyway, today it's been one thing after another. So much so, that I've decided to use my spare minute to blog it instead of doing one of the other many and more productive things that I had planned for today.

I guess it began when my son pooped and smeared it all over the bathtub. He somehow managed this while his sister was watching him so I could run to the kitchen for a minute to stir lunch which was on the stove. I had to turn down the stove and delay lunch while I cleaned up the mess. Don't worry, I washed my hands (many times), but lunch was late, giving my daughter less time than usual to eat it before school. I took extra time today to make their favorite mac n' cheese, but no one ate anything. So that also cancels my make-your-own pizza sandwiches I was planning for dinner. Like I'm going to allow the extra mess and time it will take for the kids to make their pizza sandwiches when they wouldn't even eat lunch. Besides, I have my end-of-the-year MOPs meeting to get to, and I'm not taking 4 hungry kids into MOPs childcare if they don't have time or refuse to eat. Let's take bets on whether or not I will actually make it into the shower before my meeting... I could go now, but then I'd have the company of my 3-year-old, who's been wanting to take showers with me lately. It's nice to have a buddy, but my showers used to be my downtime, especially needed on a day like today... By the way, did anyone see the [nice article about MOPs](#) in the latest American Profile magazine? I enjoyed the few paragraphs I've had time to read...

Back to today – I finally got my 3-year-old to eat her lunch (had to drop what I was doing to chugga-chugga-choo-choo into her mouth), so she was rewarded with Cheetos. Next thing I know, she and her brother had stomped the entire bag into the floor.



While I was cleaning that up, they were playing in the bathroom sink and flooded the floor. In the words of Michael Scott from my favorite tv show The Office – “Fool me once, strike one. Fool me twice, strike three.” So rather than leave them unattended, even for just long enough to clean up yet another mess, I put the little guy down for his nap before I cleaned up the latest mess. Thought that little Office quote would make me smile, so at least I was right there ☐

And if you think that my 3 and 1-year-old kids were actually helping with the cleanup, you must not have kids because they only succeeded in spreading the Cheeto crumbs around further. But at least they thought they were helping, and they had fun while doing so. Plus, note my gorgeous Mother’s Day bouquet in the background of the one pic – It’s from the kids (yeah right). I ♥ Hubby!

I’m just extra stressed since I’m trying to keep the house nice since we’re having a birthday party this weekend. Don’t ask me why I’m trying to keep a nice house while waiting for 22 five-and-six-year-olds to run wild around my house celebrating my daughter’s birthday... that doesn’t make much sense, does it? Maybe I *have* finally lost it...

Remembering

Today was a hard time for me. It is the sixth Mother's Day without Mommy and this is one of the hardest days for me. Today and her birthday are the two days I need Tony with me. Of course, Tony had to work today, since everyone had to work at KFC today. Mother's Day is a very busy day at KFC, so the rule is that everyone works. I had to sit in front of everyone, hearing how we should honor mothers and make them special because it's their day and my mother isn't here. I know taht it has almost been seven years, but I still miss her.

My wedding was another time I wanted my mother there, but I think from now on, I'll be fine because Tony will be with me on my anniversary from now on! Right now, I am watching Bride Wars and I know how Liv felt. There are just some days I miss my mom and I don't even know why, well besides that she's not here. It isn't always for a specific reason or anything, but I still miss her. I wish Tony could have met her, but apparently God had other plans. Well, my movie is almost over, I am almost ready to cry, so it's time to close this blog. I love you Mommy!

Dark Thoughts???

I do have a 'Facebook' account. Yes, I have joined the evil dead some time ago. I have yet to play any of the games or join groups. I try to keep up with some friends and my children.

Anyway, I will occasionally post things to the status. A few (very few I think) friends have said to me that my updates on

facebook seem a bit dark. I did tell them that they need to read some of my blog posts if they want dark. Hee Hee. I doubt that they will read them. I just wonder sometimes.

Yes, I have put a few quotes from Edgar Allen Poe. They could be considered dark, Poe is dark at times. But for the most part I have 'happy go lucky' little comments. Quotes from movies and little jokes. I wonder if my humor is being missed?

Oh well, it was just something I wanted to comment on.

Sorry...

Regular program to be continued soon... One thing about no longer subbing is that I no longer have a lot of time to pass reading books as I did during specials (elementary) or free periods (middle school). I typically don't even take a lunch break- I just eat while driving to the next dealer. For the last couple of weeks I have been heavily reading the tome from Robert Jordan known as book one of the Wheel of Time. Yep, many more will follow, but I will take a break between books.

So besides skipping out on reading my friends' blogs which I will remedy soon, I have missed out on some topics to blog about, like first week of May holiday crunch with three celebrated days in a row. We all know about cinco de mayo, but bookending May 5 are Star Wars Day (May the 4th... be with you) and the National Day of Prayer which a liberal judge recently decided was "unconstitutional," but in his graciousness set aside his Judgment while appeals are made. How nice. Yeah right it's unconstitutional- as if asking people to pray is advocating one religion over another. How

many religions pray now? Of course I personally advocate only one and believe only prayers to our one God are heard and answered but that's beside the point of this day set aside for our nation.

Dandelions- all over the place. This menace to lawns everywhere is really bad, at least in this area. One of the guys in my small group runs a landscaping business and has personally testified to this Spring 2010 epidemic. Mow 'em over, they are back in less than two days, spewing their poison as little white puffs in the wind. Pick 'em, and the next day they are back with a vengeance. I would readily believe after this week that the Greek myth about the Hydra started with these small yellow creatures- cut off one head and two take its place.

So what does the future of posting hold? Well, I still have a couple of yearbook posts in me and I haven't started on any retrogaming posts. Those will be starters. And I am hoping Saturday the 15th will bring a post, when we try again to do a small group outing for our young 4th-grade boys. And there is yet another holiday approaching this Sunday. Well, time to pick up the pizza- gotta go!

PS. For certain OH readers, it looks like I am good to visit Memorial Day weekend- I am 95% sure I can stay through Monday. I have cleared it with my boss, but I still have to mention it to the two dealers I serve that day. I'm sure they will be happy to not have me come on Memorial Day though.

I Am Published!

It doesn't take much to amuse me, I guess, because today I'm happy that my local newspaper printed a picture I sent in of the baby doves that resided in our tree. You have to subscribe to the paper to see the picture, so if you're local, pick up a copy to see my picture; it's on page 5 ☐

For the rest of you, [follow this link](#) and you can read my post about the baby doves – the photo that was printed in the newspaper is the middle picture.

Not a review, but a recommendation...

IRON MAN 2 – Let's see... Comic book movie? check. Cool FX? check. Decent story line? check. Some humor? check. Believable comic book action? check. Downey plays Stark as a Jerk? Check.. Bad guys, good guys? Check. Cool fights? check. Entertaining for me? Double check.

Ok, it had everything I wanted in a movie tonight. With most comic book movies, I don't really care if it follows the storyline in any comic before. Heck, most of them have had multiple dimensions, timelines, worlds anyway. What is one more? When you go to one of these movies, you should know what to expect. All you need to ask is if the story you just watched was fun. That's what comic books are all about, and that is what movies based on comic books should be.

Iron Man 2 was fun. That's it! No terrible acting that made me remember it was a movie. No strange bad effects to ruin the believability. The CGI was integrated into the live shots well. 2 hours of escapism. Fun stuff.

Full review comes later with spoiler alerts but not here. Just my recommendation. This is a movie I will go to the good theater to see again. Maybe more than once. And then when it comes out on home disk, it is coming home with me. Can anyone say Marvel Comic Movie Marathon?

Weird Wednesday

Wednesday nights have been really strange at work as of late. This past Wednesday was no different. A female customer (who sorry to say looked as if she was a few Aces short of a full deck) asked me if we carried fresh cranberries. Legitimate question. I politely explained that we did not. After I was asked the reason for this, I came up with the most logical response I could: I really do not think fresh cranberries would be a popular item in a small store at any time of year except for the holidays.

She then asked if we carried canned cranberries. Those we do have! She was not done. Do you have cranberry juice in a glass bottle. Unfortunately, we don't. The plastic bottle contains harmful chemicals that the glass does not. She finally decided on canned cranberries.

I won't go into the ordeal that the cashier went through as the customer attempted to purchase her cranberries with her electronic food stamp card. But she did successfully make her purchase and proceeded on her way. Interesting lady whom I had never had the pleasure of meeting before. Hopefully, she

enjoys those cranberries in whatever form they are. It did bring back memories of a customer whom I actually know quite well who asked if we carried sun-dried tomatoes. My former employer laughed at the audacity of such a question! I'll make a point to check on the availability of fresh cranberries and glass bottled juice on my next trip to Wally World.

Zoo Snoozin' – Part 2 – And Then Some

Bright and early at 7am last Friday at the Toledo Zoo, we were gently awakened by one of our guides (or not-so-gently awakened at 5am by the screaming parrots if you were in the Michigan group sleeping in Nature's Neighborhood) after hitting the pillows at 1am just hours earlier. No problem, what better motivation could I have to get out of bed than already being IN the zoo? We got dressed and packed up our gear and headed to the Carnivore Cafe for a generous breakfast of bagels, cereal, yogurt, applesauce, juice, and coffee (thank goodness for that, and I chugged two cups for fuel). Oh yeah, if you're not a regular reader and happened upon this post unintentionally, then you probably don't know that I'm talking about the Zoo Snooze my daughters and I went to last week – [see installment one here](#).

After breakfast, we headed over to the gorilla exhibit, but we got stopped halfway there because there was mis-communication – we were supposed to be at the primate exhibit instead. So we did an about-face, and headed over to the primates to watch them play with our tubes we had made the night before. THEN we headed over to the gorilla exhibit, and we had to take the long way since they were re-doing the sidewalk between the

primate and gorilla exhibits. For those of you who aren't familiar with the Toledo Zoo, there is A LOT of walking. Not as much walking between exhibits as other zoos, such as Brookfield Zoo near Chicago, but still a lot of walking. As frequent visitors to the Toledo Zoo, we've found ways of cutting down the mileage, especially when pushing the double stroller. But on the second day of the Zoo Snooze, we were all over the place. And I loved it. It was a nice day. My kids were tired, but I was rarin' to go, so I didn't even mind any of the detours. So we watched the gorillas play and tussle over their enrichment treats, and we listened to the gorilla keeper tell us about their personalities. The gorilla troupe of Toledo holds a special place in my heart – their silverback (male gorilla leader) Kwisha, was born at Brookfield Zoo in 1988 – right about the time when I was a frequent visitor there as a child. I remember ogling the gorillas and especially the babies in the (then) new Tropic World exhibit, and it's quite probable that I admired Kwisha (who is the youngest and last son of Samson, a famous Brookfield silverback) way back when he was a gorilla tot.

After the gorillas, we had to walk across the zoo to the elephant exhibit (the long way, remember, because of the construction) to watch Louie play with our enrichment treats. Louie is the zoo's baby elephant – well, not so much anymore... he was celebrating his 7th birthday last week when we were there. I have a video of Louie popping our treat bags into his mouth – whole thing, bag and all without even opening it – but I put that in my previous post, so refer to the link above if you'd like to see it. And then it was time for the Zoo Snooze to end, and the gates to open and let the real visitors come into the zoo.

So we hiked back to the car, and we got many a strange look from regular zoo-goers who were wondering why we were carrying sleeping bags and backpacks and pillows. We stashed our stuff and spent some time in the gift shop, which is not normally

something I do on zoo trips, but it was a nice change of pace. Besides, I was missing my little ones so much, and I had that zoo membership card burning a hole in my pocket – I just had to buy them something. At this point, it was starting to get rather warm outside, and my kids were exhausted. The rest of the group was going quite well, but my kids kept asking if we had to go back into the zoo. Keep in mind that we come often, so they were old hats at the zoo who were extremely tired. I patiently explained that we were going to do whatever the people who we were riding with were going to do, and that was that. As it was though, everyone was exhausted and the people we rode with seemed to be asking us for permission to **not** go back into the zoo. FINE with us! I explained – not because I had had enough of the zoo – that would never happen, no matter how little sleep I'd had... but I wanted to be on their schedule, plus I had the potential for two very tired and crabby kids on my hands AND a trip to Illinois scheduled for the next day. We ended up staying on the side of the zoo where our car was parked (Toledo Zoo straddles the Anthony Wayne Trail – a major thoroughfare, and the zoo has a walkway above it. But it requires a lot of walking to get from side to side, and most of the exhibits are located on the opposite side of the parking lot), so stayed on the one side and still got to see the Polar Bears, Wolves (who were passed out because of the heat), giraffes, and zebras. And then it was time to go.

During the entire Zoo Snooze, I had planned on napping the whole way home, but I found myself having an intriguing conversation with our drivers instead. We arrived home about 5pm, and I unpacked and then I re-packed for the trip to Illinois the next day and made up some lost time with my little ones. By the end of the night, I was seeing things and not making much sense because I was so tired, but it was well worth it!

We awoke bright and early Saturday morning and left at 8am

headed for Chicago, and wouldn't you know it – a traffic snarl. It was too early for the kids to nap, and they were awesome in the car – at least until we hit stop and go traffic just outside the Loop. An hour and 4 miles later (yes, you read that right – it took us an **hour** to go **four** miles!), we discovered the reason for our delay – a bridge had begun to crumble, so they had to close down 2 lanes to repair it, which left all the traffic to merge into ONE lane. Ah, Chicago traffic, don't you love it? NOT!!!

The kids were pretty great during all of this, as was I for running on fumes – I think I was still high off my Zoo Snooze. They did start to lose it a little, but luckily I had some powdered donuts packed, so between those and the Veggie Tales dvds I put into the car's player, we managed to not kill each other. We arrived at my mother-in-law's house 55 minutes late, even after Jill the GPS had predicted us getting there an hour early all morning. This would have been fine, except that my mother-in-law had previous plans, so we got to see her for a whopping 15-minute-hi-goodbye-here's-this-here's-that-I-love-you-hug-kiss-goodbye session while my husband's sister and brother-in-law managed to avoid us completely... long story, there's bad blood there, but I thought we were over it by now. Guess not. Whatever. We moved on to a local Chicago beef place (NOTE to non-Chicagoans – just because you call it Chicago Beef, **a French Dip IS NOT CHICAGO BEEF** no matter how hard you try!!) where we shared great food and even better conversation with a friend from way back, Derek – SO glad he called us and that the traffic jam didn't ruin this part of our trip!

Our next stop was my Grandpa's nursing home, and that was awesome. It's pretty much on the way from my husband's family's house to my family's house, and I wouldn't dream of going to Illinois without seeing him, especially since my grandparents do not travel and have never been to our home in Ohio. Going to ~~Hellinois~~ Illinois is the only way I can see

them and so every time I'm in the area, I make sure to stop by and let our kids have a visit with their great-grandparents. My little boy, who will be 2 in July, had a special buddy in my grandmother; it was really sweet, and I don't even know why. But we were there for over an hour, and the whole time, he kept saying "Grandma! Grandma!" making sure that she was doing everything right along side him. My grandpa made me a bet – will the Chicago Cubs (my team – he is a St. Louis Cardinals fan) or the Chicago Bears (a football team, also a favorite of his and my husband's, for that matter) win their respective championship first – World Series or Superbowl? Stay tuned to find out... ☐

Next it was on to my sister's house, where there was a birthday party for my nephews who both have April birthdays - they turned 2 and 7 this year. It was a great party; a wonderful chance to see family; immediate and also my sister's in-laws who are very nice and interesting people to chat with. My sister's nephew is my oldest daughter's age (10), and he has been interested in the weather since he was about 3 years old. His hero is Tom Skilling, a local Chicago WGN weatherman, one whom I've always liked also. Tom always teaches about the weather and its systems and patterns rather than just simply forecasting it. But anyway, my sister's nephew has his own weekly weather newsletter that he writes and send electronically himself, so I put myself on his mailing list. When I got the newsletter this week, I was impressed – just as I was when talking to the little guy and being dwarfed by his weather knowledge. As is usual, my kids had such a wonderful time with their cousins that they hid when it was time to leave, and we had to dig them out, this time out from under my sister's bed. I'm done with being embarrassed about this; especially since my sister dug up some memories of us hiding from our parents while playing with our cousins! I don't remember this, but I'll take her word for it...

Anyway, time got away from us, and we left my sister's house at 9pm – which was 10pm Ohio time. Arrived home at 2:30 in the morning and had two crazy dogs and some kids to put to bed, and we begrudgingly gave up our church dreams for Sunday. But lo and behold, we were all up and ready for church on Sunday, so we went, and almost one busy week later, I'm still catching up on sleep as I write this, no surprise there. But thanks for reading my rambling, and may this Mother's Day find you blessed, happy, and healthy – hope you have a good one!!