

Of course I want to be a superhero

Derek (another Tangents' Blogger), posed the question ["Who wants to be a superhero?"](#) in his blog. My first thought was about the Saturday evenings I spend with my oldest daughter, her husband, and a few friends. For the past few months, we spend Saturday being superheroes. A fun little [role playing game](#) based on Marvel Comic book characters and settings. Yes, there are mutants, armored, magical, or insect-bitten superheroes running (flying) all over the place.

Our game master has a wonderful gift in the design of the stories/settings the players face. We designed our superheroes and try to bring them to life during our Saturday games. Now as with most groups like this, sometimes the game gets set aside for a while and we have idle talk about this or that. I'm not sure if she knows it or not, but my eldest invited her dear old dad into part of her life she wasn't expecting. On Saturdays, I am not only her father, but I am a friend of her friends. By extension, that does make me my daughter's friend.

Hmm. I think that is a place any father would want to be. She still calls me and talks to me about her troubles. In her eyes, I can still make things better with a hug or the right words. By any other name, I am still her Daddy. And she is still my darling girl. During the past few months our relationship grew. I am more than her Father and maybe a better Father. Maybe I am a superhero in my own life? And by all counts, I will be an important factor in the life of my soon to be grandchild.

Who would have thought of that 25+ years ago...

All I could think was WOW!

This past weekend I was fortunate enough to see my daughter in her wedding gown. The gown was not quite finished, but she was very beautiful in it. As a father, I am slightly biased when it comes to how beautiful I think my daughter is, but I'm sure most will agree when they see her on her wedding day.

The exceptional part of this, is that the gown is being made by my oldest daughter. We all like to tease her on how long it takes her to finish this project or that project, but we don't usually complain about the work done. The gown looks to be almost a work of art. I'll know more when it is finished.

Well this is the third wedding out of four daughters. I do hope the youngest waits a few years (more than 2+). My oldest and her husband are celebrating their 3rd anniversary tomorrow, so in just over a 3 year span, I've been or will be the father of 3 brides. I'm wondering if they can think of any other way to torment me. ☐

Count down in earnest.

Safe at home

Kind of a double content post.

My youngest made it back from her competition in Myrtle Beach. A superior rating was given to the dance choir. They scored 95 out of 100 in the competition. I will need to wait until tomorrow to get more information, it seems the trip tired

someone out.

The other thing, one of my 'other' favorite teams (anyone playing the Yankees – Sorry Jamiahsh) had a player steal home. A rare feat in baseball. A matter of timing, skill, and a bit of luck. Not done too often now. Major league record holder for most swipes of home was a former Tiger, Ty Cobb. Just for Jamiahsh, Lou Gehrig is on the home steal list with 15 and even Babe Ruth had 10. No it isn't something that happens very often. More pitchers staying in the stretch when there is a man on third. Managers not wanting this to happen. Ball players a bit more cautious. Any and maybe all of those things contribute.

I'm trying to find the active player with the most steals of home, but it is hard to find. I'll keep looking.

By the way, I didn't mention Ty Cobb stole home 54 times. 50 times for the Detroit Tigers and 4 for the Philadelphia Athletics.

Tevye No Longer

I had my ultrasound yesterday, and something occurred that has left me in shock; that's why it took me a day to blog about it...

My doctor is a female who has 3 sons. Actually, 2 of her sons are the exact same age as 2 of my daughters, because our dr. was 9 months pregnant when she delivered my 4-year-old, and she was on maternity leave when her replacement doctor delivered my 19-month-old. But anyway, during my ultrasound yesterday, she was talking about how her other dr. friend came to visit over the weekend, and he has 4

daughters. He was wistfully throwing around a football with her sons and she was talking about how into sports girls are in this area, trying to console her friend because he didn't have boys. She was telling this story because we have 3 daughters and one on the way, and my husband is starting to feel like the character Tevye from Fiddler on the Roof who is famous for having 5 daughters. So anyway, the dr. gets to the point in the story where she's talking about lots of girls in our area being active in sports. All of a sudden, she kind of pauses, then she goes, "wait a minute... what's this?" Seems the ultrasound had picked up a certain little "bleep" on the radar that hadn't appeared on the February ultrasound... Seems our little Lyndsey or Evangeline is going to be Christopher Vincent instead!!!

It's especially funny because my dr. has a reputation in the area for being wrong about these kinds of things. I've heard stories of at least 5 of her patients' babies whose gender was predicted wrong; including one from the delivery room nurse I had when I delivered my second daughter. I am glad this "misdiagnosis" happened now rather than at birth, otherwise our firstborn son would be going home in pink – after 3 girls, pink and purple onsies are all I have! And in the past 24 hours since I found out, I've been looking around the house, noting how easily and unnoticeably we've emerged ourselves in pinks and purples over the years. We have pink blankies, bedsheets, clothes, stuffed animals, doll's clothes, furniture, carpet, curtains, pillows... the list goes on and on and on.

We are ecstatic; we've never had a little boy in our house, so it should be interesting to say the least. And my greatest wish of course is for a healthy baby anyway, gender is not a concern. But now that we know he's a boy, I do feel kind of lost. I've never had a boy baby before, and I had gotten into a sort-of comfort zone with my girls... I even had a nice system worked out with their clothes. The clothes that my 19-

month-old was growing out of weren't even getting packed away in the basement – I was just keeping them around for the new baby to use! My girls are close enough in age where I was just putting all their clothes in one closet, and they would make the transition to the next size seamlessly – I thought I had it all figured out! The good news about the clothes is that my sister has graciously offered us the use of her boys' clothes. She has a baby who will be 2½ months older than baby Christopher, so if we can keep the transportation line open between her home in Illinois and mine in Ohio, we shouldn't have to put our baby boy into any pinks or purples.

And that reminds me... I got my husband to promise me (somehow, we have both forgotten how!) somewhere between the last 2 baby girls that if we were to ever have a baby boy, I would get to name him Christopher after my husband. Now that it's a reality, he is getting cold feet about the name, but I am not letting him out of this one! People have suggested using Christopher as a middle name, but Vincent was decided upon way back in 1999 when my husband's father fell ill and passed away – I was pregnant with our first child when he was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease), and we agreed that when we had a boy, he'd have the name Vincent... little did we know it would be 9 years later!

So anyway, I just wanted to share our happy news with everybody... Doctors can be wrong, and it seems our family is the latest victim of our doctor's reputable gender inconsistencies. And here is the poll we took way back when in February (before our first "gender revealing" ultrasound – or so we thought!) of some of our family and friends' predictions. It was just for fun, no prizes or anything, but the people who thought they were right really were not (including our whole family except Taylor – good job, T!), and vice versa!

Gender Prediction – Feb. 2008

GUESSES:

Mommy – g
Daddy – g
Taylor – b
Sammie – g
Mary Beth – b
Great Grandma and Great Pa – b
Shirley – g
Keith and Trudy – g
Linda – b
Jamy – b
John – b
Elizabeth – b
Jenny – g
Tracy – g
Gerry – g
Tim and Kim – g
Austin – b
Sharon – b
Lilly – b
Vickie – g
Kristen – g
Sue – b
Megan – b
Carol – b
Grandma B – g
Cathy – b

12 guesses for girl – 14 guesses for boy

FEB 11, 2008 – ULTRASOUND / DR. says IT'S A GIRL!!!

JUNE 3, 2008 – ULTRASOUND / DR. says IT'S A BOY!!!

Name Origins

With the revelation that we will be parents of a baby boy for the first time ever, I guess this puts the great 'Frances' debate to rest – at least for now. Since we already have 3 lovely girls and have gotten to name them all of our favorite names, I thought I'd like to name our fourth girl after my deceased grandmother Frances, even though neither me nor my husband really like the name itself. But, since we're now having a boy and I got my husband to let us name the baby after him and his father, we don't have to worry about the Frances issue anymore – but I wonder if getting to name the baby Christopher has me losing leverage if we were to need any baby girl names for the future? While thinking about all this name business, I searched through my email for our arrival announcement of our third daughter who has quite an unusual name, and if you're wondering, here is the email we sent out when she was born about how we came up with it:

How did she get the name Disney?

Well... We took our honeymoon (back in 1999) at Disney World in Florida and

a few weeks after we returned we discovered we were pregnant with our first-born Taylor!

The next time we would go to Disney World in 2003 we would return home to

learn that there was again some "Disney magic" and baby Samantha was on her

way! In late 2004 we decided we wanted another baby but we were

disappointed month after month; it seemed we were having trouble getting

pregnant for the third time... But wouldn't you know it – we took a trip

to Disney World in early 2006 and guess what? MAGIC – AGAIN!

So in October of 2006, we welcomed Disney Alyssa!

As I've said to people many times, her name seems to have worked, because it truly fits the child. Disney is our most mild-mannered, sweet, and happy child so far. But it makes me wonder, since little Christopher is the only one who was conceived without Disney World magic, could this be the secret to us finally having a boy?!?

Yes, there is another daughter...

Number 3 out of four. What can I say about this one... The first things that pop in my head are peanut butter, chocolate, frogs and of course Star Wars.

While she still lives at home, I tend to see her only on rare occasions. She is in college and has a boyfriend. Those two things put together seem to negate any family time. For years, I was able to spend a lot of time with this daughter. I was a coach on most of her softball teams. When I wasn't a coach, I was always helping out. Then after she turned 14 she played a couple of years with me on the Church Softball team. And at barely 5 feet even and under 100 lbs, her favorite position was catcher. She was a good one too. Never showed any fear waiting for that ball to come on close plays at the plate. In part I was afraid she'd get run over, but I was also proud of the way she played the game.

My greatest joy were those few times we have been on stage together. I'm hoping that we will be able to do more in future shows, but the few times she has been on stage with me, are very special to me.

And let's not forget the Star Wars. My very first date with my future wife was a dinner at a Chinese restaurant, Star Wars – Return of the Jedi, and then a stop at Dunkin Donuts. This young lady definitely likes Star Wars, and donuts, so 2/3rds of the time she reminds me of a wonderful first date I had with her mother... ☐

Daughter #1

My oldest daughter and I have a different history. I met her when she was around 18 months old. I was a big [Dungeons and Dragons](#) player when I first met my future wife and her daughter. This charming little 18 month old helped me roll the dice so necessary in the game. I sat on the floor behind a 'fortress' of a coffee table with my books, and bags of dice. She sat with me, playing with whatever toys she had, and rolling the (according to her) color balls. Didn't matter to her that they were pyramids, cubes and other solid shapes. She really made an impression on all the gaming folks. Somehow this got in her blood, because now she is in her own gaming group. They are good gamers, and they even allow the "Old Man" to pop in from time to time.

Now, because of the wishes of my late wife, my eldest did not know that I was not her bio dad until after my wife's death. We were going to answer her, if and when she ever questioned her heredity. Things came up, when I thought that it was time to tell her. I'm not sure if my wife would have agreed, but I didn't have her to ask. Apparently, I was as good a father to her as I was to her sisters. She thought I was kidding. Seeing that I'm a big prankster on the 1st of April, I guess I can understand where this comes from. She was a bit (maybe an understatement!!) shocked. I recall her wondering if this

changed anything. My response to her was simple, "Our relationship will only change if you want it too, I've always known. I will treat you the same as always. I was the lucky one, when I got married, I not only added a wife, but a daughter at the same time. It wasn't hard to love these two precious people."

Now my eldest didn't always follow the rules of the house. Her life was spent trying to push the limits. Not that she was ever a bad kid, but she did seem to want to push her parents as far as she could. I always thought she did this because she was super intelligent. I know she kept her mother and me on our toes.

Again I will say, I really don't have a favorite daughter. They all stand out in many ways. I love them all dearly, but the eldest does hold a special place, she is the one I chose to make mine.

My little girl

My second daughter is the one most like me. She wanted to do the things I did, and wanted a working tool set when she was younger. Somewhere between then and now, she grew up and became a young woman, wife and mother. She just had a birthday. She lives many states away. I couldn't be with her.

I called her "my little girl" from the moment she was born. While her sisters wanted Mom, she wanted me. I was the one to put her to sleep when she was a cranky baby. I looked after her early cuts and bruises. I carried her on many outings. Her sisters think that she is my favorite child. In that they are mistaken. I really don't have favorites (surprise girls!!). They are all very near and dear to me for reasons as unique as

they are. The thing is, K will always be Daddy's Little Girl, no matter how old she gets.

I hope she had a happy one.

I was planning on writing something about each daughter some time around a birthday. That would take until December to finally get to the last one. I think I'll just pick a random daughter tomorrow and write again... And then around each birthday, I can write something different. Maybe this can give them more insight as to how their old man thinks... If they read this at all

SPLASH! It's Mr. Woodcock in Real Life

We went kinda crazy with the movies this weekend... We watched the 1984 classic [Splash](#) with the kids, and we also took in [Mr. Woodcock](#) and [Dan in Real Life](#) (for the adults). [Splash](#) is a [Tom Hanks](#) and [Daryl Hannah](#) movie about a mermaid who leaves the ocean to come to New York city and fall in love with Tom Hanks. It sounds dumb, but it's actually pretty well done and a movie with substance and heart. The special effects of her fins aren't bad either, considering they're over 20 years old and most likely made without computer assistance. Since I haven't seen the movie since I was a kid, I was wondering this time around about how many takes it took to film the underwater scenes... mainly the one where Daryl Hannah's character looks on a map in a sunken ship to find where Tom Hanks lives. Also, there's a scene in the movie where they are trying to choose a name for the mermaid, since her name is unpronouncable in English. They're walking down a New York

street, and Tom Hanks mutters, "where are we, Madison..." to which Daryl Hannah replies, "Madison, I like Madison." That was a joke in the movie at the time, that the mermaid was named after a street in New York, but nowadays, the name Madison is almost TOO popular. We had about 4 Madisons or Maddies in a play we directed last year out of 21 kids! Anyway, I would recommend this as a good family movie, especially for little girls. There is actually some nudity (female rear end), and I could have done without a few of the kissing scenes, but overall, it is good family entertainment. I wonder if it would have gotten a PG13 rating if it had come out a few years later? I know there is a [Splash Too](#), but judging by the lack of returning actors, I haven't bothered to check it out. After a quick lookup on [imdb.com](#), I found that it got a whopping 3.0 rating with only 170 votes. Also interesting is that Madison the mermaid in [Splash Too](#) is played by [Amy Yasbeck](#), who is nowadays best known for being [John Ritter's](#) widow. She was good in her bit part in [Pretty Woman](#), but still... I wonder if I should bother getting it from the library for the kids? Also in the original [Splash](#) is [Eugene Levy](#), who plays the bad guy trying to expose the mermaid – literally, by throwing water on her in public. This must be one of his first movies; I think he was a relatively unknown actor back then... Also, the late, great [John Candy](#) is hilarious as Tom Hanks' party animal brother, and those two have great chemistry in the movie... but on to the adult movies... ahem, I'm talking about the movies we watched without the kids...

Mr. Woodcock is a comedy starring [Billy Bob Thornton](#), who came no where near to reminding me of his character in [Sling Blade](#) – that's probably why he was nominated for an Oscar for that performance. I wasn't expecting much from this movie, but it was actually worse than I thought. It wasn't horrible, and I didn't feel like I wasted my time watching it, but it wasn't very funny, and there wasn't much to get from it. For one thing, I thought they would make the Mr. Woodcock character a

little more nasty. As it turned out, he was really only nasty to little kids, which is still pretty bad, but I thought we'd catch him being nasty behind his girlfriend's back. Let me back up for a minute and give a plot synopsis – Mr. Woodcock is a horribly nasty gym teacher who terrorized kids so badly that a former student uses his experiences as fodder for an inspiring self-help book he wrote. This former student returns to his hometown in Nebraska to receive the “corn key to the city” only to find that his mom is happily dating Mr. Woodcock – his childhood nemesis! The successful author is played by [Seann William Scott](#), whose acting I wasn't thrilled with. His mother was played by [Susan Sarandon](#), and she was pretty good in the movie, given the character she had to play, who didn't have much depth. Like I said, I didn't feel like I wasted my time on this movie, but I don't know that I'd watch it again either. It definitely wasn't one of my favorite comedies.

Dan in Real Life is a touching comedy (just falls short of a dra-medy, I would say, not quite sad enough, thank goodness) about a columnist widower named Dan (the ever-awesome [Steve Carell](#)) who is raising 3 daughters alone. The girls seem to be about 16, 14, and 9. For starters, let's just say that this movie had me dreading my life in about 10 years – the movie depicted teenage girls as frightening challenges for parents! Anyway, Dan takes his girls to visit their extended family for a few days, and when he first arrives, he really falls for the 'perfect woman'. He gets to his mom and dad's house, and wouldn't you know it, the 'perfect woman' turns out to be his brother's girlfriend. After a few days of torture... well, I'll let you watch the movie, I don't want to spoil anything for you. It's a really cute romantic comedy. If you have sons, you will be amused at Dan's daughters' antics. If you have daughters, be afraid, be very afraid! On another note, Steve Carell has beaten out Tom Hanks as my favorite actor – he is just amazing and so fun to watch, whether it's in [the Office](#), [Evan Almighty](#), or Dan in Real Life. His

characters never remind me of each other, and it's not like they're mentally impaired like Billy Bob Thornton in Sling Blade or Tom Hanks in [Forrest Gump](#) – sometimes those types of characters are actually easier to play since they have a very specific demeanor about them. Steve Carell plays 'regular' guys, yet he gives them such depth and character that it really helps draw you into the movie and / or show. I never watched the tv show [Get Smart](#), but with Steve Carell playing Maxwell Smart in the big screen version of [Get Smart](#) due this summer, you can bet I plan on checking it out! Dan in Real Life is funny and heartwarming, and it makes me look forward to having huge family get-together weekends at our house someday with the kids and their spouses and kids... providing we survive the teenage years of course – that remains to be seen!

The Mayor and the Macarena



We went roller skating tonight for the first time in... well, ever, for most of us. My husband and I have never been roller skating together, and we go back 11 years, so needless to say, none of the kids have tried it before tonight. The kids had a great time, and I was surprised to see how well our 3-year-old picked it up! It doesn't surprise me too much though – she's always been the "physical" one. Our 8-year-old is more creative and into arts and crafts than physical stuff, but she did well too... I was surprised that when she kept falling, she didn't get frustrated or upset or cry (for the first hour

anyway) because she is a perfectionist with a VERY low pain tolerance. Sure enough, by the end of the night, Taylor (the 8-year-old) was “hurt” and crying. It was still lots of fun though. And, living in an area with a small population is where the title The Mayor and the Macarena comes in – The mayor is the owner of the skating rink, and was spinning the tunes tonight. When he played Macarena, hilarity ensued – I think he has the skating rink so he has a place to blast his '80's and 90's music.

