

Trickle-Down Crabonomics

Sunday is usually my favorite day of the week, but our last one ranks low on a list of my favorites. First, the kids started out the day by being terrible. Our 4-year-old Sammie was excited to see the snow – all 20 flakes of it that fell that morning – and she asked her still-half-asleep parents if we could go sledding. My husband groggily mumbled yes, apparently thinking she was saying something else. Later when we were up and about, I told him what he had agreed to, and so we then had to find something else comparable in my daughter's mind to sledding. Giving them an outside toy, we bundled the 3 oldest kids and sent them outside, the oldest of whom wanted to stay inside – which began *her* downward spiral. She went outside reluctantly, but as soon as she came in, she threw a major tantrum about who-knows-what. This set off the other two – our toddler was upset because her almost-9-year-old sister was acting totally out of her mind, and our 4-year-old... well, I guess it's just that she never misses an opportunity to act like a nut. My husband dryly called it "Trickle-Down Crabonomics", which I find the perfect term to describe the volatile cause-and-effect relationship between siblings in a large family.

Somehow, we were ready to leave the house for our favorite Sunday brunch, and we were only 7 minutes past schedule, not bad. The kids cheered up in the car, and they were good during the entire meal, but unfortunately, I can't say the same for the quality of the food. It seems our favorite brunch has gone down a few steps in quality, to say the least. They used to feature an all-you-can-eat brunch buffet with delicious selections that varied from the usual scrambled eggs and bacon usually featured at these things. They even had a little table with chicken nuggets, peanut butter and jelly, and pizza for the kids. They had a make-your-own-omlette bar, which had a variety of ingredients, from spinach

and feta cheese to onion and green peppers. Our favorite was the pasta bar – the chef makes fresh pasta right in front of you, and the alfredo is simply delicious – something even all the kids agreed upon. We've been visiting this brunch for about a year now, and slowly over time, there's been a downgrade in quality. At first it wasn't that noticeable – cloth napkins going to paper, the end of the kids' table, little things here and there. But now, it's down to a line of silver servers containing things like scrambled eggs, bacon, biscuits and gravy and a make-your-own omelet bar with about 4 ingredients: one kind of cheese, bacon, mushrooms, salsa. No more onion, no spinach, no feta... and certainly no pasta bar, our favorite part. And I never even got to try the marinara. Well, anyway, that's enough about that – another victim of this economy, I guess. I know their menu is based upon the number of reservations they get, so maybe if the reservations somehow increase, so will the quality of the food again.

So after the disappointing buffet – which usually means I don't have to worry about cooking the rest of the day since we're all so full, this was not the case today – it was time to watch one of the biggest Chicago Bears games in recent years. It was for first place and against their rivals, the Green Bay Packers. The Packers scored more than 12 times as many points as the Bears did, and my kids weren't very good during the game, so it was difficult for their father to even watch the slaughter. Our 2-year-old fell asleep early, which we thought was a good thing, but she was woken up by her oldest sister during the battle we had about her cleaning the bathroom that was trashed during the sleepover she had had Friday night. So now we had a late-napping toddler, and we spent the rest of the day fighting about the bathroom with our oldest. Next thing I know, it's time for bed for everyone, and we never even got any parent-alone-time, ugh.

Oh, well, just because the day wasn't all I was looking

forward to still doesn't make it a "bad day". It was a weekend, which means family day, and I don't think those could ever be bad... not like yesterday when I got to Walmart, unloaded two little kids, did some shopping and realized I forgot my credit card. Had to set my stuff aside, bundle up the kids and go out to the car, but it wasn't there either – it was at home. So after re-loading the kids, going home, and re-unloading the kids at Walmart, I was more than a little irritated, not to mention *extremely* rushed now because I had to get to the school to pick up my oldest. So no, I didn't get all the shopping done, I was late to pick up my daughter, but at least I got her to Brownies on time. Then I went to my meeting for 20 minutes, then left for a Brownie patches ceremony, then back to my meeting, kid in tow... it was a hectic day, and I'm glad today is date night so I can spend some quality time alone with my husband and unwind. Only problem there is that no housework gets done on date night, so big surprise, I'm behind yet again, sigh... But then again, you probably guessed that based upon my lack of blog posting!

When the Turkeys get you down

remember your recipe for gravy.

Thanksgiving is just around the corner. Usually a time to spend eating too much and watching football. I'm kind of wondering about that this year. The two games played on Thanksgiving usually feature the Detroit Lions and the Dallas Cowboys. This year is no exception. I realize that nobody was saying the Lions would be 0 and 8, or that Dallas would be 5 and 4, but isn't it time for the NFL to give these two prime football slots to different teams? What kind of deal did the Lions and Cowboys make? Kind of wondering is there a college

game on? How about the NBA? NHL? I don't think I'll be watching the Lions. Maybe the Cowboys, we'll see if they start playing football again when Romo gets back in. The Lions haven't played much football this year, I don't expect them to start any time soon.

Unless someone else does it first I'm going to try to find out about the NFL Lions Cowboys deal.

Selling Chili

My youngest is in the High School's Show Choir, and they had a Chili sale during the Homecoming game to raise money for the group. I 'volunteered' to help sell some of the chili. My first official chore was to help set up the tables needed to put the many crock pots of chili on. The next was to taste all of the different chili to make be able to tell all the customers/donation specialists if a specific chili was too spicy or something like that.

I can say that all of the chili was very good, but there wasn't a lot of spice in any of them. On my grading scale of chili they all would have been a zero. On the normal people scale, (those who don't tolerate the spice as well as I do) I guess there would have been a 1 in the group. There were not a 5 alarm chili in the group.

The number of different chili recipes is astounding. I was amazed that each chili had a specific flavor. It would appear that each cook had their own secret ingredient. I didn't have the time to be able to cook a chili for this event, so I just brought the shredded cheese and crackers. Not sure on the money raised, but the chili was gone before half-time. And there was a lot of chili.

Now for a quick and easy (and not bad tasting) chili recipe.

1 1/2 lbs ground beef browned with 2 cloves of garlic (drained)

4 – 16 oz cans of Brooks Chili Beans (I like the 16 oz cans for this so I can use different 'heats' if desired – I like the HOT)

1 can of Campbell's Tomato Soup (Progresso is good too)

2 tbls chili powder.

Hot sauce to taste at table.

Combine browned meat, soup and beans and chili powder. Heat through. Done that's it. Told you it was quick and easy.

The best bean chili I've had starts with tomatoes and dried beans. I'm surprised the recipe didn't call for you to butcher your own cow. I think I supplied a version of a beanless chili to the WCCT cookbook. I can't remember...