

Chasing The Frog

When friend and fellow blogger Derek came to visit last weekend, he brought along his blu-ray player. For those of you who don't know, that's a type of movie player which plays a special kind of dvd in high definition – hope I explained that well enough; it's not like I know that much about it myself. So anyway, we chose the movie 21 – even though I've seen it, it was interesting to see it in superior visual quality. I really didn't think I'd notice a difference – it's not my style to care about such things, but I actually did notice the clarity. I could actually see the grain on the paper of the deck of playing cards. And the opening scenes of the movie are sweeping views of the city of Boston, which were really enjoyable eye candy on the blu-ray.

So anyway, while watching the movie again, I began to wonder exactly how much of it is a true story. I have my laptop right in the living room, so I looked it up while watching the movie. It was interesting because Jeff Ma, the “real” Ben Campbell (the main character in 21) actually makes a cameo in the movie -and I found this out in enough time to be able to spot him. I found out a bunch of other interesting info as well, and [here is a cool site](http://chasingthefrog.com) called chasingthefrog.com where you can compare famous movies with the stories upon which they were based. Here I found out that Jack Dawson's sketches in the Oscar-winning movie Titanic were actually drawn by the movie's director, James Cameron. Not that I can stand that movie – it think it's horribly exploitative to invent a romantic plot not even remotely based on reality about an historical disaster which claimed thousands of lives. I decided to give it a shot once, and I tried to open my mind a little, but I still didn't like what I saw – it seemed cheesy, hokey, and unrealistic, not to mention that it almost cheapened the very horrendous event whose story it attempted to tell. Anyway, I also found out from this site that there

was only one black victim of the Titanic disaster – a second class passenger named Joseph Phillippe Lemerrier Laroche. As the website tells it, he loaded his wife and daughters onto a life boat and went down with the ship. Even more sadly, his wife gave birth to their son later that year. Here is a family picture:



The site only has a handful of movies to compare to actual events, but its comparisons are very interesting and insightful; including a picture to picture comparison of people and the actors who portrayed them – very cool, check it out!

The Plays The Thing

Our community theatre, in it's infinite wisdom, has decided to limit the number of musicals to one per season. I suppose that I can see the need for this. A good, well-known musical is much more expensive to produce than a play. However, it has been pointed out time and again that musicals are the bread and butter of most theatres and if the right musical is chosen and performed well, they generally bring in more money

than most plays. Most of the musicals I have either been involved with or heard about have done well (with one exception but the reasons for the financial loss were many).

The problem is... trying to find plays that will bring in audiences. It has been suggested that we attempt to focus on seasonal shows. In October, I cannot wait to be part of the all cast production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. In December, we are performing *Miracle on 34th Street*. Both shows would appeal to the seasons.

For next season, we already have the musical locked in. *Taffetas* is going to be done in October 2010. I suggested doing another Christmas show like *A Christmas Story* (yes the movie has been turned into a stage play that I think would be a riot to perform). There are also any number of versions of Dickens' perennial favorite, *A Christmas Carol*. I also mentioned via email a suggestion given to me for future October shows: *Dracula*. Are there any other shows that would fit into other seasons? A good romantic comedy for February. Something like *Honk!* for future spring shows?

Or another possibility, our theatre has within it at least two people who have the fantastic knack of playwriting. Many times, these are given spots entitled "independent projects." I think that if someone has a piece ready for performance it should be included as part of the season.

So, if any of my readers hiding in the shadows have any suggestions, please come out and suggest them. I still think that it would not hurt to do *Romeo and Juliet*. I know most people cringe at the idea of bringing Shakespeare to a small stage, but I say why not take a chance?

An aluminum weekend

Sing with me... *"Friday night I crashed your party, Saturday I said I'm sorry..."* Okay, so I was actually invited but then the song doesn't quite fit. Oh well. Anyway, this story starts before Friday, actually earlier this week. I was given advice to see what represented a 10th wedding anniversary. So I did a web search and found [this site](#) with information on anniversaries. We all know about silver and gold wedding anniversaries, but the years leading up to them are rather short of the glamour silver and gold bring, with things like paper, cotton, leather, and wood. 10th anniversary is tin or aluminum, so I got the idea to purchase them some snacks in tins. Well, apparently stores only sell snacks in tins around Christmastime- they were nowhere to be found. I finally found something kind of lame at Meijer, but it was in a tin. I would be giving them another gift along with it so I figured as long as the idea got across the tin would be fine. Next day, I had a job in 8th grade and I noticed the teacher had a tin in his room- full of puzzles. Ding- of course. *Games and puzzles can come in tins, and my friends are wild for games!* So, back in Meijer after school I found some options in domino sets (double 6, 9, and 12), and *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader* Disney edition. I leaned toward the dominos, but decided to check Walmart across the street first. Good thing, as their domino sets were half the price of Meijer's! But wait, they had several more items in tins including a classic game set, a couple of jigsaw puzzles, and a *Phase 10* card game. It took me awhile to decide what to get, but C & L know what the final selection was. So, I wrapped them up, found a half-day job for Friday AM, went to bed, couldn't sleep, canceled the job at about 4:30 after only short bursts of sleep, went back to bed until 9:30, then got up, finished getting ready, ate, and headed to Ohio, stopping only once for gas and a snack (what a sentence, whew!). Once I finally gave the gifts away later in the evening C guessed something about

me wrapping the gifts in tin foil and I had to kick myself for not thinking of it. Well, the paper was the color of tin anyway.

Backing up just a little, I arrived at 3:45 and checked into the motel. \$25 per night- even better than the amazing \$29 C told me on the phone! Not too many frills, but I wouldn't be there except to sleep so I didn't care. I finally arrived at the theatre around 5:40 and discovered several people were already there and I didn't really need to delay at the motel as long as I did. I saw C's mom for the first time in a long time, as well as the rest of the family and friends there. Once they started it was short but emotional. One of the two (I won't say which, though most of you readers already know!) broke down while reading which only added to the powerful sincerity of what s/he said. Then it was off to the reception across the street where I had my second meal of the day (I skipped lunch) and, well I'll just skip ahead since this part is already in my friends' blogs. We all had a good time. When we went to their house afterward, they graciously allowed the few of us to stay for a short time and we had a fun few rounds of a Tribond game before we all retired for the night.

The next day they gave me some options for a fun, family activity- drive an hour to the Toledo Zoo or even longer to an animal park. Umm... Since I drove four hours the day before and would drive four hours again the next day, the animal park was really a no-go. The zoo might have been an option, but I had seen the zoo just a year before around the same time of year so we finally decided to go to town. It wasn't bad. The important part was just hanging out together, so it really didn't matter much what we did. The kids enjoyed some playtime at Menards, and then we went to a couple other places, including a few runs of go-karting (their eldest was visibly upset when she was asked to sit out first since not all could go at once, but I think she got over it after going twice in a row. Everyone- including us adults as we had to

watch their youngest who couldn't ride- rode two out of the three runs) before having dinner at a pizza buffet. Since it was a Chuck-E-Cheese style (somewhat) place I wasn't expecting much from the pizza, but it was actually pretty good. Not Gino's East or Giordano's good, but for sure better than Dominos or Little Caesar's. They even took requests, so I jokingly asked for something with jalapeños, and they actually obliged- not an unusual request I guess. Well, when they have peanut butter and jelly pizza I guess nothing's unusual! The kids had their fun at the games there, and then we rented a blu-ray movie to watch through my computer on their HDTV. Unfortunately, due to draconian copy protection and software issues it took some time to get the movie going, but we were glad when we finally did.

Hmm. This post is getting a little long so I think I will chop it here with a:



Why Your Dog REALLY Goes Outside

I really hope I'm not condoning cruelty here, but I found the following video I got in an email forward so amusing. I figure in this era of photoshop and trick videography and the like, no one was harmed in the filming of the video, right?

Why your dog REALLY goes outside:

I'm still alive

I think...

New post coming soon- I hope. I have a couple of things I want to post, but I'm really tired just now.

Bird Meet Hamster

In earlier days, my family had quite a menagerie of pets (just not more than two at a time. When we moved to town when I was the tender age of 6 months, we got MY dog, Buffy from the wonderful friends who sold us the house. I loved my poodle a lot. The summer after I completed the 4th grade, Buffy had to be put to sleep. She was really ill. Arthritis had set in so badly, that she could not walk upon or down the porch steps. The poor girl would not eat and shivered all the time. So one day, my parents took her to the vet, unbeknownst to me.

In addition to Buffy, we had a total of three cats (not all at once, but one in particular that I know I have posted about). The poodle would go crazy when approached by the felines. I don't think it was the stereotypical dog vs. cat scenario but more like playful chasing around the house.

The Christmas after Buffy was put down, we received a blue parakeet from our "grandparents". We named her Corky after "Grandma" Margaret. One summer while on break from college, my brother brought home Skippy the hamster whom he "saved." The parakeet must have become jealous because he would imitate

the hamster by walking around on the floor and following it. I remember going so far as to put the bird inside the hamster's ball and seeing her attempt to roll it.

There's Always Tomorrow

I see by the ol' [tangents](#) homepage, that there are two blogs which have yet to see any posts. I am certain that these two very talented and resourceful individuals can come up with brilliant things to pique our curiosity. One of them has vowed to make her first posting AFTER April 1st. It is now nearing April 7th.

As for my day, I spent a few hours typing the script for a new version of [Seven Brides for Seven Brothers](#). The only things I know about the original movie musical is that it featured the original Catwoman (Julie Newmar) as one of the brides and there is a lot of dancing involved. Obviously, it deals with a group of seven brothers in search of seven brides. This version transports the action to twenty-first century Alaska and the age of laptop computers among other phenomena of the day. There is music and very little dancing (none that I could not handle, anyway) involved.

Then, I WAS looking forward to opening day. The outcome was not pleasurable at least for the Bronx Bombers and their multi-million dollar lead off pitcher, C.C. Sabathia. Four and two-thirds innings. Six runs, eight hits, five walks, two wild pitches in one inning, and no strikeouts. The Yanks' second big money hopeful, Mark Teixeira did not fare well either going 0-4 at the plate. Teixeira was also eyeballed during the off-season by the Baltimore Orioles and the Orioles faithful showed their disapproval as they booed the Maryland

native unmercifully at each at bat. The pressure for any new Yankee must be immense. It was a good thing that opening day was not at the new stadium because I am sure that the reaction would not have been pretty by fans in the Bronx. Ah, well one game down. Can only go up from here. At least the Cubbies were victorious. Sorry j, I see the Tigers were unsuccessful on opening day as well.

Ann Vows To...

Ok... I think I'm safe. Last weekend was extremely fun and wonderful. I had been telling my friends that if they needed any help with their anniversary celebration to let me know. Friday, I was pleased to get the call to action. I was asked to undertake the daunting task of printing the vows which would be read for the renewal. Not really daunting, but I had to be careful to find the right place to tear the paper. It would not sound quite right to have them read part of the other's vows. I did not want to read the words on the paper so it would not spoil the moment. After making contact with my lovely escort for the evening and deciding to meet each other at the theatre, I set out to help.

When I arrived, there was a note on the door indicating that the couple was at the local China Garden. So, I drove over there instead of waiting for them to come to me. When I got to the restaurant, I saw no sign of the burgundy vehicle I have become so accustomed to. So, thinking that I must have missed them, I drove back to the house. As I was making the short walk from the theatre's parking lot to the house, what should appear but the vehicle I had been hunting.

After the groom and I checked out the reception area, I headed

to Wal-Mart to pick up the cake and pick out some flowers for a bouquet as well as pick up some ointment for the little guy. I did not hear any complaints about my choice so I will say I done good.

I have never been to a vow renewal ceremony. But I will say that I don't think that any couple deserved to celebrate their ten years of marriage more. The more I am around these two the more I see how much genuine love, respect, and admiration there is between them. Their vows were very beautifully written. The entire ceremony was magic.

The reception was a blast. I once again was able to demonstrate my phenomenal dancing ability. I do a mean Hokey Pokey. And dancing beside a nine year old in the Macarena was priceless to say the least.

So... Thank you for allowing me to be a small part of your 10 Year Celebration. May you both live to see your children's children's children and may your love continue to grow even more abundantly every minute, every hour, every day.

Celebrating A Decade Of Love

Well, more than a decade, actually – Friday is the 10th anniversary of our wedding day, although we were together for a few years before we got married. We would actually have celebrated our 10th anniversary over a year ago if we had gone through with an elopement at the chapel in the Mall of America we contemplated back in the day, but we had a beautiful wedding a year and a half later instead. At the time, I was sure I had the man of my dreams, so it wasn't cold feet stopping me, but I guess I was just too immature to get out from the parental nest at the time to get married after only

knowing my husband for a few weeks – I was only nineteen, after all, twenty by the time we actually tied the knot – not even old enough to legally toast my own marriage – hehe! But anyway, back to the awesome weekend here in 2009...

We had a wonderful anniversary celebration. Our family and friends are so awesome; we had a great time and got lots of lovely gifts, including a brand-new top notch microwave – now I just have to figure out how to work it! But seriously, that was so nice; they didn't have to do that – we were just glad they came to celebrate with us. We had a little ceremony at the community theater that's become such a huge part of our lives, and I was SO nervous for WEEKS beforehand about getting on stage and talking in front of people. The Sunday before the ceremony, my husband and I actually had it worked out where HE would read the vows I wrote to him. But as the week went on, I just couldn't rest with that decision – I wanted to say how I felt and be the one to read my own words – and I'm really glad I found it in myself to do so. Besides, my anxiety about the event actually calmed as the day went on – the miracle I was praying for, maybe? A small miracle; no one's life or health was at stake, but I was far from my normal "freak out", and that was new for me. So maybe I will find it within myself to audition for Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, ha. I do love the show and could probably handle being in the chorus, but I don't think I'd be able to sing in front of the director to try out. And what if I actually did that and didn't even get cast in the chorus – YIKES! Just not worth it to me – I'll have to settle for taking my usual role as "groupie" and seeing every performance if my husband makes it into the show.

So anyway, back to this weekend – after the ceremony, we went across the street and had dinner, which was very good. There was dancing, ahem, "dancing" – better put it in quotes because, well, you'd understand if you saw the video, hehe. But the usual party dances were fun as always – The Chicken

Dance, YMCA, The Macarena – though time has allowed me to forget how to do that one – I'll have to practice for the next party! It was awesome to spend the evening with family and friends and to watch my little ones dance in their gorgeous matching outfits my mom had made for them – here's a pic of my two middle girls, Disney and Samantha with their cousin Austin:



And it was super-fun to be able to slow dance with hubby again – been awhile since we got to do that too! Thank you sweetheart, for the best 10 years of my life – I love you!

And for all the guests who attended and are reading this, thanks SO much for coming – it was a BLAST!!! See you in 10! Well, ok, see you before that, but we do plan on doing this again for our 20th anniversary!

My Bad Day

I'm taking yet another diversion from writing about my great weekend to write about a bad day I had today – I need to vent. And yes, it involves Walmart – when *don't* my bad days involve Walmart?!? First, my husband's business clients blew him off, yet again. We were on the verge of a big business

deal, but now the clients are stalling and becoming difficult to get ahold of – not a good sign. So I took the kids to Walmart to get them out of the house so my husband could have some peace when he called the clients – not that it mattered; they “weren’t home”. Sigh. So anyway, at Walmart, I discovered that they finally did it – raised the prices on diapers. I knew it was just a matter of time; the diapers have been the same price since my almost 5-year-old was a baby. So after absorbing the reality of the price increase on diapers (I have two kids in diapers! Time to rush the potty training, I guess.), I go to check out, and I’m next in line, ready to put my stuff on the counter, and an employee says “I can help you on lane 6”. So I went over to lane 6, but it turns out, the employee was wrong. They wanted her to take over on lane 5 instead of **open** lane 6. So I went back to lane 5, right where I had started, and now someone has gotten in the line with a SUPER-full cart in front of me. Of course. And I had hungry kids who now had to wait in a line with all that candy at eye level. Have I mentioned that I hate Walmart?

Then I get home and starting making dinner, and I have a crying baby underfoot – I don’t know why he *always* cries at home. He’s the happiest little guy everywhere else, but when we’re at home, he only wants to be held, and I can’t hold him while I’m cooking, doing laundry, cleaning or blogging, so... he cries a lot. I guess I can get rid of most of the toys that are starting to take over my living room since no one plays with them! And all day I’ve been looking forward to a nice hot relaxing shower, so after dinner, I went to do just that. But apparently running the dishwasher, giving the kids a bath and hand-washing a dinner pot drained the (new!) hot water heater, and my shower was lukewarm with a cold rinse at the end. Of course it was. I can only hope that my day turns around when the Cubs begin their season-opening game tonight – I’ve been looking forward to this for months, so hopefully my bad day wasn’t a precursor to the tone of tonight’s game. To

quote Tom Hanks from A League of Their Own: "May our feet be swift, may our bats be mighty, may our balls be plentiful..."
GO CUBS!

Earlier this morning, we ruined our chances of sleeping in (since our oldest daughter is on spring break) by signing up to bring a pet to my second-oldest daughter's school – we forgot about spring break when we signed up for pet day for first thing in the morning, oops – so adding to everything is the fact that I'm tired today also. We let our little ones play at my daughter's preschool; they had a blast, and we had fun watching them. My husband read a book to the kids, and we brought the rats for pet day – and it was SO fun to see certain teachers pale and shriek with fright – hehe!

So I guess the day wasn't all bad; it was just Walmart getting under my skin, AGAIN. Oh, and get this – I saw the store manager (I'll call him Mr. Palindrome, since his last name reads the same backward and forward) park in one of the handicapped spots right in front of the store. To be fair, he does have a handicapped tag, but I know from my sources that the handicapped tag is not for him but rather his elderly mother whom he cares for. But I still think he should only be able to park in the handicapped spots when she is with him, and I definitely don't think he should take those spots away from his customers when he is perfectly able-bodied. Well, just my opinion, the guy irritates me because of all his dirty price games he plays at the Walmart and the small businesses the store pushes out of the way. Not that it's a small business, but Kmart is the latest victim of Walmart in our town – it's closing for good in May. What a shame – and to think the Kmart in our town was opened as the test store to see if Kmart would work in small town America. The test was successful, but that was decades ago, and times have changed – just like Walmart's prices!

UPDATE – The Cubs are on, and they're winning – YAY!
Soriano opened the game with a home run **on the first pitch of**

the game! How cool is that? But, for some reason, the game is not on ESPN 2 like tvguide.com said. My husband bought me mlb.com, but that seems to be broken at the moment – they're showing video during the commercials and nothing during game play. Not only that, my husband's clients have called (but I guess that's a good thing), leaving me with the two little ones at their crabbiest time of day. So I have 2 screamers and no Cubs game. At least they are winning (I think). When I put the little ones to bed here pretty soon, I'm tempted to join them just so I can start over tomorrow – every attempt I make at relaxing tonight has just made things worse!