

It is official....

I have a friend... At least for now. As a way to keep up with some of my daughters, I finally opened a facebook account. I opened this because someone else invited me. My oldest does not have a facebook account, so this won't help with her, but I'm only going to open one social networking account. And since a number of people I know from work are on Facebook, it just makes more sense, if it makes any sense at all.

Really, I don't know that I will put much up on Facebook. It links to my blog, and that is where my words flow.

Do I need to add more Friends?

Dogs and Suds

On the way home from Ft Wayne this evening, I stopped at a place for a hot dog. I ordered a Chicago Style dog, not knowing exactly what I would get, but I was in the mood for something different. It was an OK hot dog, I think. It was covered with so much stuff, I was pushed to even taste the hot dog.

Ok, you Chicagoans (is that correct?), what is it with the BRIGHT GREEN sweet relish? Is this normal? I was curious as to what exactly was in that, but it tasted like a sweet pickle relish, so I just ignored the color. Anyway, I'm not sure how close this was to an authentic Chicago Dog, so here is what was on it. Diced onion, bright green relish, a kosher dill wedge, tomato wedges, mustard, hot dog, poppy seed roll and some celery salt (I think?? that is what it tasted like). Anyway I think the dog was a beef hot dog, but like I said, it

was smothered.

The root beer at Dogs and Suds is really good. The medium size is served in an ice cold mug (just the way I like it). It was a less sweet, more bite root beer. Sort of like Barq's and it may have been draft.

Good place to eat, just north of I-69 in Fort Wayne exit 111.

Halloween Whosits

Well, Halloween is just around the corner, and I have yet to pick out a costume. Err, costumes... um, for the kids, of course... Ok, I'm caught – I dress up for Halloween. However, I don't go all out. I take pride in wearing cool costumes that I can obtain on a shoestring budget. For example, I've wanted to reprise my Kindergarten Halloween costume for years ("Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz"), but I have yet to find the dress for free in my size (I'm not about to spend money on my own Halloween costume when I have 4 kids I'd rather see dressed however crazily they wish). I'm not too worried about my costume though; I always have a back-up Halloween costume plan. I have a witch's hat, complete with orange hair. And I can wear almost anything clothes-wise, which will ensure that I'm warm and comfortable, no matter what the Halloween weather up here in Bufu Ohio. Being a witch also means that my kids can do my makeup, however madly they would like to do it – all the more fun to add to one of my favorite holidays. So, my Halloween bases are covered... now I just have 4 little kids to deck out...

My oldest (going on 10) wants to be a 'bloody prom girl' (her words). I say, go for it. It may not be the most innocent of costumes, but it could certainly be worse (have you seen Mean

Girls? Remember the quote that begins, “Halloween is the one night a year when girls can dress...” This is not the type of blog where I would want to continue the quote, but let’s just say that I both celebrate and am thankful for my daughter’s kid-inspired creativity.

Our second-born, who is 5, wants to be a princess. Being a family with 3 little girls who love to play dress-up, that should be a cinch. We have a couple of tiaras to choose from, as well as princess dresses. The key will be to find one that she will agree to wear **over** her other clothes so she doesn’t freeze!

And our youngest daughter, who will be newly 3 by the time Trick-or-Treat rolls around, wants to be “Dora, and Boots, and Diego, and the Marshmallow Monkey.” I don’t think she remembers what it’s like to dress-up for Halloween – I don’t have the heart to tell her that she can only be one character. For now, we have a Dora costume ready and waiting, and we also have a back-up princess dress in case she decides she wants to be like her sisters.

The little dude will wear whichever costume I can find in the basement that is in his size – I’m thinking it’s a lion. I know I also have a size 18-months Minnie Mouse costume, but I am **not** going to dress my little man as a female character – poor guy has 3 older sisters and is already concernedly obsessed with headbands and necklaces. But that’s another blog altogether...

Happy Halloween!

How long does it take to open a road?

Since early this summer, the powers that be have been building an extension on the street where I work. The paving appeared to have been finished late last week. I thought that the road would be open early this week at this week. I'm looking forward to it, since it will cut off 2 miles from my daily trip to work. On top of that it will be one less light. I'm still waiting.

It could be that they are waiting to paint the lines on the road. This would be easier to do on a closed road. I can understand that. This week has not been the best for paint. Cool/cold and rainy most of the week. Maybe next week. I know it won't be tomorrow, the road crews don't seem to work on Fridays.

DON'T READ THE POST...

unless you have seen WCCT's extremely fun-filled production of *Little Shop... Little Shop of Horrors*. Megan and I checked it out tonight since I figured a Thursday night showing would need more help filling the seats than a Friday night. I must say that it was very well done. The set took you to Skid Row, U.S.A. full of bums and trash laden streets. Someone mentioned that the first weekend shows were a bit loud in the musicians area, but I did not notice it. The man with the fingers and the gal with the sticks must have toned down a bit?

The entire cast was great, but I will pick on a few remarkable

standout performances. I have to say that Travis **is** Seymour. He had the bumbling, nerdy, inept orphan turned flower shop attendant down to an art. So many great scenes that it would take an entire post to detail it all. **SUPERB PERFORMANCE**, my friend! I can't wait to work with you again. If it were in my power, you would be the Willie Award winner!

I must say that I was extremely taken aback by Shelley's performance of Audrey. She usually has this great, big, powerful voice that truly commands the stage. This time, she backed off the power to give a touching, sincere persona to the meek, "semi-sadist" dating character.

Finally, the trio of Mary, Amber, and **PEGGY!** They very nearly stole the show and for good reason... they were incredible. I'm running a bit long here, so I will comment on the young lady whom I have known since the 5th grade on her stage debut. I couldn't be prouder! Where were you !& years ago in high school?! For her first time on stage, Peggy had to deal with some truly powerhouse stage veterans but she held her own brilliantly. I was asked to tell her if I could hear her. Going against my trained experience, I tried to hone in on her voice during the trio numbers and yes, I could hear you. More importantly, the mixing of the three voices was great! The attitude was dead on. During the scene changes, the three divas kept things lively by ad libbing which brought some chuckles from the audience.

So.. if you are in the area this weekend, take a few hours down on Skid Row. You will be in for a treat!

Zip Line Zaniness

Autumn brings about a whole new breed of fun family things to do: pumpkin farms, hay rides, apple picking, playing in the leaves, corn mazes, haunted houses... the list goes on and on. A few weeks ago, during a visit to a local farm which boasts such fun fall activities as a corn maze, petting zoo, hay ride, and haunted corn maze amongst other things, my kids had a blast with the zip line. It's all fun and games, as they say, until someone gets hurt...

And while no one was seriously injured during the filming of the following video, my 2-year-old daughter has decided that the zip line is no longer for her. When you watch the following video, you'll see why. Her 5-year-old sister goes first and has a blast, but poor little Disney didn't fare so well. Don't worry if your instinct is to chuckle – she wasn't hurt, just a little frightened. After all, people must find these types of things funny. Isn't that the reason why America's Funniest Home Videos became a show filled with video clips of people getting injured?

He Is A-Ok!

Our little guy had his 15-month check-up with the pediatric nurse the other day. Yes, this is the same nurse who can be a harsh critic when it comes to things like sippie cups, bottles, and anything else she perceives as leading to bad oral habits in adults; namely smoking and drinking alcohol.

She gave our little Beeber a few age-appropriate skill tests, such as stacking blocks (he stacked them ALL, which is very impressive, even to the experienced nurse – might I consider sharing my Lego collection with a certain little builder in a few years?), following a flashlight with his eyes, and throwing and catching a tennis ball. He did really well with all of them, but I felt badly for the little guy because he did everything that was asked of him, but after he performed the test with each toy, he seemed to assume that he would then have his turn to play with them. But nurse Judy swiped them all away before he knew what was happening. It all became too much for him when she started poking him with that nasty wood-tasting gag stick – who can blame him for crying; I could never stand that thing either! And, in a true kid's toast to irony, he began to cry the moment the nurse asked, "Is he always this mild-mannered?" Then, "WAHHHH!". Hilarious!

Our 15-month old (and first boy of the family) is 31 inches long and 22 lbs. 11 oz. He is in the 40th percentile for height and 25th percentile for weight. This means that if you take a sample of 100 15-month-olds, my son is shorter than 60 of them and lighter than 75. He is the first one of my kids to be under the 50% mark. Two of the girls were around the 90-100% mark, so Beeber is a little guy! That's cool; you can be good at baseball if you're on the smaller side ☐

Overall, he checked out very well and impressed the nurse with his development. Although he gets into so much trouble at home with his constant climbing and desire to spill liquids and throw things, it's still a blast to witness this stage of toddler-dom. Case in point:

What telescope should I buy?

After quite some time, I'm getting back to this question. Since the holiday season is approaching and fall is one of my favorite times to get the scopes out... Here are my opinions on telescopes to buy.

If I'm on your list and money is no object here are the scopes I want. ☐

[The Questar 3.5 inch anniversary model](#). This has a lot of sentimental value for me, and if money were no object I would own one.

[Any really large reflector](#). This one is from Orion Telescopes.
[A good sized goto Scope](#) and an observatory to go with it.
[Or maybe a dedicated Solar Scope???](#)

OK, I understand you are not buying one for me, but if you are a first time telescope buyer, you may see those prices and just stop your shopping. Or you will go to Walmart and buy the telescopes they have during the Christmas shopping time with all the pretty pictures on them.

In shopping for a telescope, size matters. You want the biggest scope you can afford and move around. Magnification power however does not matter. I don't care if the telescope at your local super store is 150 power or they say it will magnify 200 times. You'll never use it. Most of the time, even with the best telescope, you can't use it. So are you going to be able to with the \$30 – \$40 scope from the super store?

Even though my first suggestion would be binoculars, I won't go there, you want a telescope.... I know this, because I was there once. I still don't have my binoculars....

Second suggestion a 4 to 8 inch reflector on a Dobson mount. The mount is very simple. It moves Up and Down – Left and Right. Very stable and inexpensive. An 8 inch reflector would probably be more of an intermediate scope, but it may be the only telescope you ever need. (want is another matter). The 4 and 6 inch scopes are excellent for beginners.

3rd suggestion a 60 or 70 mm refractor on a good mount. These tend to be more expensive. The mount design makes the cheaper models almost unusable. But they do look like the telescope everybody expects to see. This may be important to you.

4th suggestion.... Stay away from computer controlled models for your first scope. You really don't want to have to learn how to use the computer end of the telescope when you are just starting out. That just adds to the frustration.

So here are some actual telescopes that fit my suggestions. I'm using the Orion Telescope company site, because they have nice pictures, many different scopes, and a lot of other good information on their site. I don't own an Orion Scope, and I'm not suggesting they are the only place to get telescopes. In fact, I will add links for other sites main pages.

Refractors (lenses)

[80mm table top model](#) Nice looking little scope with what looks like a very nice mount. A good solid table will be needed to use this. A used end table from a garage sale would work nicely. A solid picnic table (that nobody is sitting on) would work well too.

[70mm refractor](#) The mount looks nice, but the tripod looks a bit on the flimsy side. This may make an shaky mount. Weight can be hung from the center support to help stabilize it.

Reflectors(mirrors)

[100mm tabletop scope](#) This mount is the same as the first refractor I mentioned. Nice size, looks easy to move around.

[4.5 inch tabletop scope](#) Slightly larger mirror than the one

above. I've actually used this scope once. It is an excellent first scope.

[4.5 inch equatorial](#) Same scope as above, but a different mount. Adds to the cost, but you don't need the table.

Some Telescope web pages

[Orion](#)

[Meade Telescopes](#)

[Celestron Telescopes](#)

[Optics Planet](#)

[Anacortes](#)

[Discovery Telescopes](#)

The Dark Night & Man Of Steel Public Enemies

Bats and Supes doing battle against other superheroes.... President Lex Luthor... a kryptonite meteor on its way to Earth. These are just three of the major plots in the new animated PG-13 rated movie from the D.C. Universe: [Batman/Superman: Public Enemies](#). And as far as I am concerned, the best so far.

Following a country-wide economic collapse, the megalomaniac, billionaire is elected leader of the United States, apparently he was in the right place at the right time and promised prosperity for all (HEHE). The movie, nor the comic stated such, but I have a feeling ol' Lexy was more of the problem surrounding the collapse than the recovery. After taking over the Oval Office, some of the Justice League for some reason came to join Luthor to make the country "safe."

In a scheme to lure Superman into a trap, the president asks

to meet to discuss working together to destroy the approaching meteor. Instead, he has the cybernetic, kryptonite-hearted Metallo lying in wait. During the battle with assistance from Batman, Metallo is “murdered” and a billion dollar bounty is placed on the Man of Steel. This draws out almost every greedy minor villain conceivable. Not only the supervillains, but also those heroes who are somehow blinded by Luthor’s machinations.

There is non-stop action throughout the movie which was really cool... definitely more suited for an animated feature. My one complaint: where are all the major villains besides Luthor (no Joker, Catwoman, Bizarro)? Instead, we get cameos by Gorilla Grodd, Solomon Grundy, and a bunch of others I barely recognized. But that is only a minor quibble. I also liked the return of Luthor’s battle suit.

So... I highly recommend this movie to anyone who enjoys the animated world of D.C. Comics. I read the graphic novel a few years ago and still greatly enjoyed the movie! Plus, Allison Mack joined the list of *Smallville* cast members to voice another animated D.C. character.

You Haven’t Heard Of Bulbo, The Wicked Witch Of The West’s Dimwitted Son?

I found a big behind-the-scenes book about my favorite movie, The Wizard of Oz. I remember getting this book as a kid, but I read the juicy parts (many of the rumors about wild Munchkin behavior are true), skipped the rest of the book, and forgot about it. So I came across it as an adult; it’s one of the few

things that somehow clang to us through more than a few moves throughout the midwest. I've been enjoying reading many Oz secrets lately, and I'm currently on the chapter about the script. In the '30's, MGM (the movie studio that made the Wizard of Oz) had salaried writers, so they would assign a few to write a "treatment" of a project, or a sample of script. Several of the writers had some interesting ideas for L. Frank Baum's Oz project; including bizarre characters. For example, one writer created a son for the Wicked Witch of the West – a dimwitted guy named Bulbo. She wanted to attack Oz with "ten thousand armies, 2 thousand wolves, and 200 flying monkeys" to defeat the Wizard and make Bulbo the king of Oz. In another treatment, the cowardly lion was actually a man who was to marry a girl named Sylvia. The witch wanted Sylvia for her son Bulbo's bride, so she turned the man into the cowardly lion. A couple of the writers who were working as a team decided that there shouldn't be any death in their family-friendly picture, so they decided that when the house falls on the Wicked Witch of the East, she should turn into something less threatening; like a parrot or a white tabby cat. That would have been silly!

While all of these possible Oz variations are fun to read about, I'm really glad that the Wizard of Oz ended up as the movie its legions of fans are familiar with – we love it just the way it is!