

# Keeping things random

I've written about many things. Family, friends, food, pets, acting, theater, movies, books, blogs, computers and other things I can't remember. Today I think I will write about something else, Politics.

Most of the time, I will avoid the topics of religion and politics on this blog and in real life. I've seen more friends almost come to blows when discussing these topics, so I generally keep them out of my daily conversation. Recent events just beg for some discussion.

I'm very concerned about the number of Obama nominees have trouble paying taxes. Not to just pick on them, this started me wondering how many Federal politicians have the same problem. The nominees didn't pay their back taxes and penalties (if any) until after they were nominated. If they knew about the tax problem, they should have paid as soon as they knew, or at least filed paperwork to get this taken care of. From everything I've read, this has not been the case. And the politicians doing the approving didn't think this wasn't enough to keep them from serving in their appointments. Heck, one has already been approved.

It seems to me, if these amounts had been owed by a 'normal' citizen, that citizen would have been on trial at least, and maybe even thrown in jail. And the politicians in Washington don't think this is anything big. Could it be that they also have something to hide? What would we find out if their taxes and backgrounds were scrutinized? This is a very troubling condition in Washington. They are the ones that pass all the tax laws, shouldn't they be the most careful in filing their taxes.

I guess this is one more reason to try to get a flat tax or even a national sales tax to replace the income tax. Make it

real easy to pay your taxes, and even easier to find out if you didn't pay the taxes you owe. That is probably the reason we don't have an easy tax system, it would make it harder for all those politicians to hide there missing payments.

Grrrr... Can you tell I'm filling out my tax forms... ☐

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## Pets we've had in our house

I've said many times how many pets we've had in this house, but I haven't really posted any pictures of them. Here is a small sampling of the many different pets that have lived here. I am missing pictures of the guinea pigs, hamsters, bird, turtles, frogs and hedgehog. If I find any I will post them.

First up, Colin. He was my wife's "Hearing Ear Dog". Not formally trained, but he did a very good job at alerting her to sounds in the house.

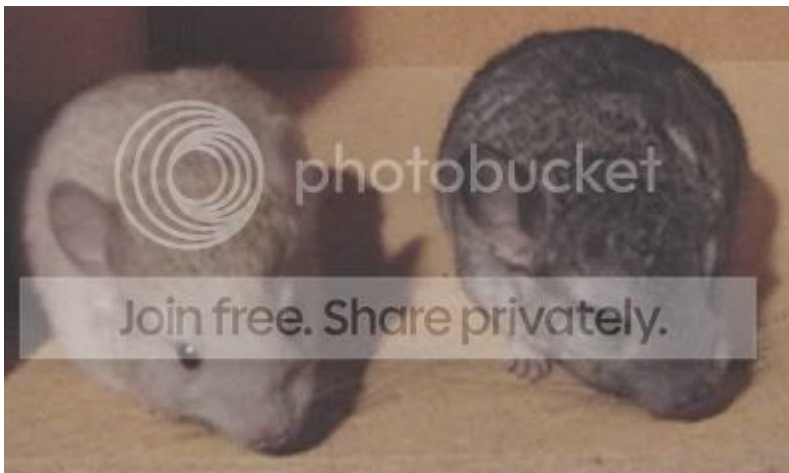


Next the rabbits, the black one was Samantha, the grey was Clover, and the brown flop ear rabbit was Freddy.



And of course some of the many chinchillas we've had through the years.





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# Groundhog Day

Feb 2, Groundhog Day. Any excuse to look for spring. Here we are, just a few days past mid-winter in Ohio, and everyone is looking forward to spring. We've had plenty of snow, ice and cold temperatures, and we will have quite a few more before winter is through. It seems like winter just goes on and on.

Of course, I do have a custom for groundhog day. I put in the movie [Groundhog Day](#) and watch it again. Since the movie came out in 1993, I think I've seen it at least 16 times. I know it is more than that, because some years, when the mood strikes I do watch it over and over again. Seeing that this movie is a looping movie anyway, watching it over and over again is an interesting experience. I wouldn't recommend that for everybody, but I enjoy it on occasion.

So tonight, I was able to watch Groundhog Day again. I had to split it up into two sessions, since I had play practice this evening, but the custom continued. But this got me thinking. I know there are a lot of movies I will watch again and again at a certain time of year. I will read certain books at certain times of the year. It would seem that I never have time for new books or movies, but I get those in too. Books are easy, I read very quickly and I can get through most novels in a day or two. Movies are a fixed length, so I have to make the time. I do this by not watching many television programs. That gives me time to watch a few movies every week.

So any movies or books you watch over and over again.

[poll id=6]

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# How much...

I like to play with computers. Both hardware and software. I like to take them apart and then put them together again. My first computer was one I put together from bits and part. I've added this and that, played with software and hardware. And since I work in the computer field, it is like getting paid to practice my hobby.

Many times I've helped friends with their computers. I've replaced hard drives, installed software, added memory and video cards for friends. There are times when they want to pay me for the things that I do. I feel a bit strange about taking money for helping my friends. I never know how much to ask or accept. After all, I am again getting paid for something I would do for fun.

Funny as in strange, my wife had the same problem. She was very good with everything involved in thread, yarn and material. She enjoyed working and creating with these things. Again she would help out friends when they needed a bit of sewing, knitting or some other needlecraft done. She often wondered about how much to accept or charge when friends wanted to pay her.

I have no such worries when I go to work. I know what I get paid to do my work. Why would I think that something less than my hourly rate is to much too charge for computer work. Someday I may figure it out.

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# Goodbye to an old friend

My wife had chinchillas for pets. She worked in a pet store and brought home many rescue chinchillas from owners who no longer wanted them. Today the last rescue chinchilla died. We've been calling her old lady for at least the last 6 years. Our best guess on her age would be 18 years. Not quite a chinchilla record, but not bad for an animal with a 'normal' life span of 12 to 15 years. For the past 6 years, this little girl was acting her age. The inquisitiveness normal in chinchillas was almost absent in her. We kept her comfortable and fed.

Today she left this world. I like to think she is now with the lovely lady who saved this little chinchilla from a much earlier death. We got her as a retiree of a pet breeding program/business. They don't keep them very long after they stop breeding. We were very luck to find her. She was the second chinchilla in the house. Many more followed, but the first two were my wife's favorites. They are both gone now.

I found a couple of pictures of this little chinchilla, so I though I would share those.





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## You've got the what?

I now have permission to write this blog. The news has been spreading and most of the people that needed to know, know. So with this post we will all be more knowledgeable.

Last weekend, my oldest left a message on my cell phone for me to call her. Her news was that she had three bars. Being bit dense, I thought 5 bars was good for cell phones. She was talking about different bars. Apparently my oldest is expecting her first child. So I have a grandchild coming into the world. Great news for this grandfather. I'm rather looking forward to being able to spoil a grandchild within easy visiting distance.

Those who know me, know that my two oldest daughters both have step-children. As far as I'm concerned these are my grandkids too. Unfortunately, I do not get to visit with them as often as I would like. Two of these children are many miles away, and I don't have the time or cash to be able to take off at the drop of a hat to visit. I surely wish I was able to, but right now I can't. My other granddaughter doesn't get to visit very often, situation is complex, as often happens. So now I

will have a grandchild only 1 hour away. Great for the child, but I'm not sure how the parents will react. Hee! Hee!

Now for the fun part. My future grand child already has a nickname. When darling daughter was calling people to let them know about the future happenings, she called her grandparents. They were involved in this or that, and wondered if my daughter could call back. My daughter, with her usual humor, responded: "Sure, I've got 9 months." Her grandmother heard: "Sure, I've got the mumps." It apparently took a bit of explaining to get across the wording of "9 Months". Grandma kept hearing mumps. I really would have liked to be a fly on the wall for that conversation. Anyway, my future grandchild's current nickname is Mumps.

It should be a fun time in NW Ohio for the next few months, or even years.

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## **peanut butter**

Recalled peanut butter and peanut butter products are in the news. Another outbreak of salmonella. Salmonella in spinach, lettuce, carrots and other salad fixings, but now in peanut butter.

What got me on this is that I heard about the recall right after finishing off a box of nutty bars. No, I didn't eat they box all at once, I just ate the last one right before I heard about the recalls. Quick check of the recall list, and I found out these were not on the list. But what kinds of foods that I eat are on there? Peanut Butter Cups? Cookies, Ice cream, candy?

So far, the things I normally buy are not on the list. Unlike

the recall of the baby spinach last year. I guess I will have to keep an eye out as this recall expands or contracts. Peanut butter is in a lot of things I buy. I sure am glad I don't have peanut allergies.

More about the [peanut butter recall and list of products not recalled.](#)

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## **It was some day**

First one big cheer!! I finally got my truck back from the body shop. It looks great and I can't even tell a deer hit it. 1 week without my truck and driving around in a mid-sized car, grump, grump. Even though I have a mid-sized truck, I missed the higher ground clearance and view. What really surprised me, was that I missed the gas mileage. The car I was driving got around 20-22 miles per gallon, my truck on the other hand gets 25-28 miles per gallon. This is mostly highway driving, I'm sure the in-town driving is much less for the truck. Since I usually drive highway miles, that is what I need to measure. The 3+ extra miles per gallon made a difference in the driving I had to do last week.

For those who aren't in the know, I use my truck as a truck. If there had only been dents and dings on the body after the deer hit, I would probably have left it alone. But I was without my front driver side head lights, and that needed some attention. I was 1 week without my truck during the coldest/snowiest week of our winter. So it was a bit harder moving firewood and driving through deep snow.

The other part of my afternoon was spent with a Doctor. Turning 50 early next month has prompted my Dr. to want me to get all sorts of preventive procedures. Today was a meeting

with the Dr. who will perform the first of many procedures. I won't go into what will be involved in the procedure, just need to say I will be sedated through the whole thing and then need a ride home. I really don't like being driven anywhere, and it gets worse when I am in an incapacitated mode. My daughter should have fun!!! This will be the first of many such tests and procedures I will have over the next few years. Can't wait. ☐

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## Off goes the beard...

Ok, not quite yet, but soon. To prevent too many facial hair similarities on stage, I volunteered again to shape, shave or grow out my beard. The final decisions by myself and our esteemed directors is for me to have a full goatee. Do I mind? Not really. I tend to view the hair on my head and face as part of the character I present to the audience. I've grayed my hair, shaved my beard and even offered to shave my head for one show. Almost anything for the arts. There are a few things I won't do for community theater, but so far no one has asked me to do any of those things.

My only real concern with shaving of the facial hair is the current temperatures in NW Ohio. I am going to have to remove some of my natural insulation. It is amazing how much more warmth I have with a full beard. Why oh why didn't I always have it? The answer to that is simple, I couldn't grow one for many years. My youngest is now 17 and she doesn't remember too many times when I've been beardless. I have what I call a lazy man's beard. I don't shave because it saves me time. Plain and simple. Now that I've had this beard for most of the last 17 years, I am comfortable with it. I feel more comfortable when I have a beard. It has become part of who I am now. As with

the characters on the stage, my beard is part of my character.

When it is shaved and trimmed I may have to share a picture with my wonderful readers....

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## Talent in a small town

As [jamiahsh](#) so aptly put in his blog, the talent show last night was exactly as advertised. I won't say it was too much prayer, since a local church was the host, facilitator, and the final say in all things. It was their show. Also most of the talent was from local church groups, it was bound to be a religious event. That being said the talent supplied a very good show.

My bias to my youngest and her group does not prevent me from saying they were not the best group out there. I do believe one member of the group was the best talent in the event. A wonderful performance on the violin. My musical skills are almost nonexistent. I tend to notice flaws in performances by watching the face of the performer. If this young lady made a mistake while playing, her face and body language never showed it. For me it was a flawless performance.

The young lady who sang the selection from "Phantom of the Opera" also blew me away. I don't care for that type of music, and really never appreciated the show, so this is saying something. She would have been my second place finisher.

The praise group that performed an inspirational skit to music was also very good. I could acknowledge the hard work and talent that went into the performance, but it did not have the spiritual affect on me that it had on so many others in the audience. A fine performance, surely in my top 5, but not my

first place choice at all. Number 3, sure I could see that. They did have home field advantage and I'm very certain that threw them into first place.

This was a mostly entertaining show. I do feel the judges have watched too much reality TV. It was as if they thought more of their commentary than they did of the performance. So many times I was very confused by the commentary and following scores. Like I said, I know very little about music, but I do understand human nature. I feel they wanted to give each performer a sense of worth, but then gave their real feelings with the scores. I can't help but feel that this confused the performers as much as it did some of the audience.

This was a 3 hour show, and it could have been cut down to two hours without some of the judges banter. They were family, friends and community members in the audience. I'm sure they really couldn't have cared less about the judges' opinions. They wanted to see the performance.

Now one final thing. This was definitely a way to showcase the talent in the area, but it was also a fund raiser. A perfect formula for a fund raiser too. Lots of talented young people of High School age and younger given a chance to appear in an individual showcase of talent. This brings in a lot of family and friends. The auditorium was full. At 6 to 10 dollars a head, this was a very good fund raiser. One suggestion for them in the future. Open up the try outs for a good will offering. Many groups did not get in to the final show. I'm sure many more family members would have wanted to see that.

As for the YouTube... I would need to check on that. Too many minors in the acts. Trying to get permission of the talent and/or parents involved?? We are a small community, and I'm sure many parents would be against having their kids on the internet. If I can talk my youngest into letting me, I can get her vocals on YouTube, but only with her permission.

Fun evening except for the judges...