

The Question Phase – Already?

My daughter Disney is not yet 2 and has already entered the question phase – a time of life when a child asks questions about anything and everything. It seems a little early for this; I don't seem to remember her two older sisters entering the question phase until about 3½ or 4 years old. Heck, at Disney's age Samantha was busy painting with poop!

But as we know, all kids are different (thank goodness for that because we already have a Sammie), and so we welcome Disney's transition into the question phase. Since it's just beginning, she doesn't yet ask questions about how things work, but rather about where her favorite people are. It's really cute since she gets this little inquisitive look on her face and because she's not even 2 yet, her questions aren't very well formed. We know what she means though, and try to answer the best we can. Some of her favorite questions are: "What Daddy doin'?" "Where Taywer (translation: big sister Taylor) go?" "What Sammie doin'?"

I guess most of her questions do revolve around the whereabouts of her loved ones... an example of her super-sweet nature. Disney truly cares about other people and she is such a sweet little girl – always saying please and thank you even when it's not expected of her. So this isn't a full example of the questions phase – that title will be reserved for the sometimes difficult-to-answer questions that revolve around "why"? Like... Why is the sky blue? Why does Sammie get more candy than I do? Why can't we have a kitty? Why do I have to go to school? Why is Mommy's hair turning gray?

Disney's inquisitive face:



Is Lakeview Terrace Fireproof?

I saw the movie [Lakeview Terrace](#) yesterday, and I decided to merge it with the title of another movie, Fireproof, for my post title because Fireproof almost stole the show.

An action thriller starring [Samuel L. Jackson](#), Lakeview Terrace is about a tough Los Angeles cop who does not like his new neighbors, seemingly because they are an interracial couple. He makes indirect threats, among other things, and the couple has trouble at first determining whether or not they're making something of nothing. As the tension escalates however, it soon becomes clear that their neighbor is in fact mentally unstable, and as he comes closer and closer to cracking, the couple has no one to call for help because of the camaraderie between police officers known as the "blue wall of silence". The movie was entertaining to watch; it wasn't as good as I had hoped but just as good as I expected – one of those movies where they showed most of the good parts in the previews. It was very predictable yet also very good at establishing mood throughout. For instance, at times, the

tension that was built in the movie – and the theater – was so thick you could have cut it with a knife. They did a nice job of setting the mood of the neighborhood also; a nice homey-like cul-de-sac, complete with barking dog nestled in the California hills gave it both a nice family feeling and also played up the isolation factor. I thought Samuel L. Jackson was really good in this movie – the way he delivered some of his lines was effective in subtly portraying his disdain for his neighbors. And the reason for his racial prejudices was surprising and an interesting addition to the plot. The movie did put the spotlight on many racial issues in a thought-provoking manner.

Overall, a very entertaining movie, even though some of the events that I think were meant to surprise the audience did not because the movie was predictable. The other criticisms I have with it are that none of the characters were likable – it was difficult to root for the couple who was being picked on by Jackson because they each had some serious character flaws. Also, it was not believable that an LA cop would have enough money to be able to afford the house where he resided – nestled in the hills outside of Los Angeles, the houses featured in the movie had spectacular views, gorgeous landscaping, and the neighbors had a beautiful in-ground pool. How the neighbor could afford what would probably be a multi-million dollar house as his “starter home” on a grocery store management position’s salary, I do not know. Hey, Jamiahsh, when you get your house in the hills of LA with your in-ground pool and luxury patio furniture, can we visit?

Another thing I found strange about Lakeview Terrace was the impending wildfire that threatened the neighborhood – I didn’t see the point in it. Maybe to further illustrate the isolation the couple felt as their neighbor tormented them? I don’t know, but it fits in well with the title of my post because of another movie that’s coming out called [Fireproof](#). As we bought our tickets, the worker at the movie theater

asked if we had heard of Fireproof and gave us a flier. We hadn't heard a word about it, and she said that some church bought up all the vouchers they were selling for the movie. They weren't going to get the movie if they didn't sell enough vouchers, but apparently they sold well over what they expected. I was intrigued because I hadn't heard of the movie before and wondered why it was getting so much underground buzz. Since we got home late last night and went right to bed, before I had a chance to look it up it was talked about on the Dr. Phil show this morning. Apparently it stars [Kirk Cameron](#), and it's about a firefighter who tries to save his marriage by doing a 40-day experiment called "The Love Dare". Hmmm, I still don't really get it, but I think it's neat that it's getting so much buzz without being a mainstream movie and showing previews and all that jazz. It's supposed to be a really good movie, thought provoking and well-written, and that isn't just coming from Kirk Cameron – it's on [imdb.com](#). Hopefully it will be at the theater for longer than its limited run so I can check it out. A bit of interesting trivia I found out about it – Kirk Cameron made a promise to [Chelsea Noble](#), his wife of 17 years that he wouldn't ever kiss another woman, on screen or off. So in the part of the movie where they needed a shot of him kissing his movie wife, his real wife was a stand-in so they could get the shot of the husband and wife kissing. I think it's sweet, but some people used it as a reason to pick on [Cameron saying he doesn't understand acting](#)... Oh, well, you can't please everyone!

Williams County Murders

The other night some friends and I had a conversation about local murders that have taken place in our county. Because we are a rural county, murders here are few and far between.

A resident city council member who is also a local historian gives a yearly presentation, usually on Halloween, detailing the murders in Williams County, Ohio. Because many people know everyone else, he doesn't cover anything past the 1950's, but I was able to find some information on my own. For the incidents that did take place a long time ago, many of the circumstances are interesting as they reflect the moods and cultural attitudes of times past. Being both a researcher of local history and a true crime buff, I've attended several of these presentations and decided to share the notes I've taken for those who are interested:

Williams County Murders

6/20/1847 – W. Unity – David Schamp murdered by Andrew F. Tyler and Daniel Heckerthorne. Buried in German cemetery on Cty Rd. K. Botched ransom kidnapping – family farm is 1/2 mi. W of US127. 4 pg article in Bryan Times on 150th anniversary. In 1939, Ralph Gall wrote several articles in Inside Detective Magazine (June, July, Aug) about the crime.

3/23/1865 – Bryan – Conrad Rutman murdered by unknown – found hung in outhouse

12/1/1868 – West Jefferson – Unknown female infant by unknown

12/3/1873 – Bryan – Peter Himes by Ben Evarts

4/8/1875 – Bryan N. Main St. – unknown infant found in cigar box just N of RR trks

5/17/1877 – Denmark – unknown male infant

2/21/1878 – Bryan – unknown male infant

7/25/1878 – W Unity – Infant Loveless by mother, Lucy Loveless. Father of infant was mother's brother in law.

4/7/1880 – Edgerton – Unknown f infant

6/3/1880 – Edgerton – James Marshall by unknown

9/11/1880 – Bryan, dwntwn, N side of square – John Burchell, Jr. by William Everett – gut cut in fight

5/2/1883 – Melbern – Jacob Nihart killed with ax by mentally ill wife, Saloma Nihart. Both buried in Brown cemetery.

7/21/1889 – Edgerton – Sarah Hoadley (71) and Christian Newman

(72) by Hiram Hoadley, Jr. (45). Murder / Suicide – in process of divorce, didn't want to pay \$2,000. Divorce announcement in same issue of newspaper as the murders.

8/26/1891 – Montpelier – Milton Hogue by Perry Yoder

1/11/1892 – W. Unity – Infant Hayes – female, by Dr. Frank O. Hart

2/20/1892 – Bryan, SW corner of Beech and High. Tom Murphy age 63 by unknown

5/4/1892 – Bryan. Alley next to Christmas Manor went thru to High St. before Central School building was there. Arthur Brown, about 22 yrs old, was at a saloon bragging about having a lot of money. He was murdered by George and Michael Burchell, Walter Plummer, and William Elkins. Witnessed by little girl from window of her house on W Butler. Story featured in "Native Sons Gone Wrong" booklet. Victim buried in Old Pulaski cemetery across from Winery.

5/8/1898 – Florence – Unknown Male infant

7/2/1904 – Bryan, just N of overpass. Noah Schartzer shot by unknown. Buried in Brown cemetery. Case of mistaken identity. Stopped and checked every train between S Bend and Toledo.

6/7/1905 – Montpelier – unknown infant

9/21/1905 – Montpelier, E of Bryan on RR trks – August Julius by unknown

2/7/1914 – Bryan, W side of Portland St. 2nd blk. Portland and Mulberry – murder/suicide – Blanche Stauffer by Charles Stauffer. 12 pg suicide letter – "She was a hard person to live with."

11/10/1914 – Pioneer – Joe Varada by Joe Dohon. argument over wheelbarrow, shovel over head, both Hungarians.

3/14/16 – W. Unity – Mrs. Andre by Wilson Andre

6/12/18 – Montpelier – Alex Grant by James Morgan. Morgan (Afrcn/Amer.) wanted to get from Chicago to Detroit, didn't have any \$, so he hid in the btrm on a train where Grant was conductor. Morgan was executed in Columbus, picture from OH Dept. of Prisons

9/29/27 – Montpelier – James Andrews (Afrcn/Amer.) by unknown

12/11/27 – Stryker – Celina Huber by Camiel Clark who was fined \$125 for liquor violations. Huber, age 39, was cut during fight, went to lay down, bled to death.

1/4/32 – Bryan – Fred Wonser, Jr. and Margaret Wonser by Lewis Wonser

12/28/36 – Bryan – Frank Lewis by William White

12/1/38 – Edgerton – Vern Eck, age 42 by Nona Goeltzenluchter. Murder-suicide. Having an affair, though both married to other people. She was accusing him of seeing yet another woman.

6/14/45 – Pioneer – Murder/Suicide. Mary Jane, Earl, Alice May, Betty Lou, Alva Stoner by their father, Alfred Stoner, age 38, just gotten back from WWII, distant cousin of Mark Kelly (murders in Wms Cty speaker). Drove himself and kids into gravel pit S of Pioneer while wife was in hospital giving birth to baby 6. Over 1,000 people showed up to watch the search for the bodies.

9/19/46 – Bryan – Emily Abernathy, age 30 by James Engle, age 21. Jim was drinking a coke across the street at the bowling alley when the body of his victim was found in the library – rumor has it he watched them secure the crime scene as he was sipping his coke. She had been strangled, beaten, and cut with a pen knife, died from strangulation. Jim confessed – said he wanted to see what it was like to kill someone. Paroled in 1974, moved to Bryan in 1989, currently resides in local nursing home. Crime was chronicled in tv show “The Big Story”, but the show upset Bryanites.

5/5/1948 – Bryan – John (age 56) and Pearl (age 63) Gabriel by Ervin “Bud” Ingle, age 14, “King of 8th grade”. They were his neighbors, and he wanted to borrow their car. There is a rumor that Mrs. Gabriel liked young boys, and John did the killing. Years later, Bud was a chauffeur for the governor, and the governor thought highly of him and wrote a book. There was a photo of Pearl’s body in the newspaper.

1/2/50 – Edgerton – Helen Bigger by Vernon O. Bigger – father in law of victim, possible molestation.

5/5/50 – Melbern – George and Evalina Fisher by their

grandson, Jack Hartman.

9/12/51 – West Unity – Celia Walters by Edwin Walters

8/18/59 – Pioneer – James W. Elliott by unknown

9/11/59 – Blakeslee – William Bigger by Harold H. Bostater

12/29/61 – Blakeslee – Howard Tanner by Ned Eugene Tanner

8/18/63 – Montpelier – Dean Allen Nichols by David W. Nichols

6/22/64 – Pioneer – Dr. William Crall by Frank Patalon

5/21/66 – Montpelier – John McCamis by Raymond Burgess

8/31/68 – Stryker – Eben Henry Harney by William O. Bolster

10/12/71 – Stryker – John F. Meisner by Thomas E. Elliott

9/30/72 – Stryker – Judi Hagerman by Jon Garber

4/28/76 – Edgerton – Deborah Unger by Jeffrey Ailiff

3/15/77 – Bryan – Danny Hanisko by Lawrence E. Finn

6/19/90 – West Unity – Genieve Willene and Orlo E. Ansley by William Ansley

2/2/91 – Montpelier – Travis Pospeshil by Timothy Kelley.

Invol. mansltr. released from prison 9/11/06

2/7/92 – Montpelier – Torilyn Contreras by Jonathon Leggett – Invol. Mansltr.

9/30/96 – Melbern – Brenda Sue Kafai by Rocky W. Kafai – invol. mansltr. released 9/23/06

2/15/98 – Edgerton – Beth Garber by Shane Frisbie

12/6/98 – Edgerton – Terri D. Swearengin by William M. Swearengin

12/7/00 – Holiday City – Mary Kosier by Jason Crawford and James Jones Jr. – they kidnapped Mary who was an employee of Econolodge near toll road for robbery, killed her near covered bridge

6/30/01 – Bryan – Thomas G. Flint by Linda Ames (**NOTE** – a reader left a comment below containing additional info about this event. I have not verified the source and am still in the process of research)

Psychic or Fraud?

I don't really believe in psychics. I believe that some people may have a gift where they are psychologically in tune with others and / or nature; leading them to be able to predict happenings or events with some accuracy. For instance, I used to be able to tell who was calling when our phone was ringing (in the days before caller ID). It's not that people called us at regular times or intervals, but I could just "feel" who was on the other end of the line. Not that I think I'm psychic or anything; I think I just learned the behavior patterns of the people who called our house. So I believe that people can have what could be called psychic abilities, especially if they practice and hone their skills, but I don't believe anyone can see the future or anything like that. And I don't believe the self-proclaimed psychic Sylvia Browne possesses any special skills other than the abilities to defraud and manipulate people, if you want to call those things abilities.

While flipping channels and feeding the baby the other day, I came across the Montel Williams show. Apparently Montel is on his way out after 17 years of being on the air. During the episode the other day, he got teary-eyed as he bid his weekly guest Sylvia Browne good-bye. It got me to thinking; does Montel believe that Sylvia is psychic, or did he just like his audience's reception of her? After a few internet searches on wikipedia.com and youtube.com, I was armed with evidence that Sylvia Browne is a fraud (not that I really needed any, but I found plenty anyway). Here is the first example where Sylvia tries to tell a greiving woman that her missing boyfriend is in water. The woman is confused because her boyfriend was a fireman killed in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, and no trace of him was ever found. Watch as Sylvia tries to cover her tracks, backed up by Montel, I might add, with some lame excuse about how the boyfriend might have

drowned when they were extinguishing the fire at the World Trade Center. What?!? That doesn't even make sense!

Not only that, but she was on Larry King Live a mere 8 days before the September 11 attacks and didn't say a word about the impending doom. After the attacks, she claimed that she had dreams full of fire in the weeks before the attacks – yet she failed to mention such premonitions on her September 3, 2001 appearance on Larry King!

One more example is the case of Shawn Hornbeck, a preteen who went missing in 2002. Sylvia Browne told Shawn's devastated parents that he was abducted by a dark man with dreadlocks and murdered, and she also provided details about where they could find his body. Four and a half years after his abduction, Shawn was found with Michael Devlin, a white man who had abducted Shawn – a far cry from the so-called "dark man with dreadlocks" who "murdered" him. In this case, it's a very good thing she was wrong – those parents got their son back alive, but one can only imagine the pain they felt when this so-called psychic told them that their son was dead.

There are plenty more examples of this woman's fraudulent behavior – I'm just not going to waste my time writing them nor your time reading them. If you want to see more, go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and do a search for "Sylvia Browne". For fun, you can add words like, "wrong", "fraud", or "lie" to your search and see what you come up with. There is also an interesting site called stopsylviabrowne.com that's maintained by one of her biggest opponents. He talks about his experience encountering Sylvia, how she hired a private detective to research him, and his experience at one of her live shows.

Well, enough of that, like I said, I consider the woman a fraud, therefore she's not worth any more of our time to go through the hundreds of instances that prove she is full of BS. I don't know how she can live with herself when she toys with the emotions of the grief-stricken. I suppose she could tell herself that she is helping to give them closure, but if that's the case, I would say to her, "Stop fooling yourself lady, you're causing more harm than good!"

Burn After Reading

I'm not a huge Coen brothers fan, but I do find their movies interesting. Like many of the Coen's movies, [Burn After Reading](#) is about normal people who come across an illegal way to make lots of money, become obsessed with it, and consequently watch their lives unravel. [Frances McDormand](#), a Coen brothers movie regular (and I found out why – she's married to one of them), was great in this movie. She plays a woman named Linda Litzke, a gym employee who is obsessed with reinventing herself via plastic surgery. She, along with a gym co-worker played by [Brad Pitt](#), come across a CIA agent's (played by [John Malkovich](#)) disk at their gym and bumble through a scheme to use it as blackmail. They are truly a couple of idiots, and Brad Pitt's performance as the big doofus Chad is hilarious – might have been my favorite part of the movie, and this is not coming from a Brad Pitt fan or anything like that. Not that this movie is a comedy, don't get me wrong. I suppose it could be classified as a dark comedy, but I would say it's more of a suspense film with some comedic moments. As with any Coen brothers movie, there are numerous twists and turns, so I'm going to cut my synopsis short for fear of revealing any spoilers. Go see it, watch how the events unfold, and you'll be entertained. Besides Brad Pitt's character, my favorite part of the movie was how they told the story – as a case file being discussed by a couple of FBI agents. If you're a Coen brothers fan already, then I'm sure you'll love it – it is everything Coen: money, foiled scheme, setting – the Coens are famous for making the setting of their movies very integral in the plots, and this one is no exception. Washington, DC and the surrounding area of Virginia is the locale of choice for this one, and it's all very important to the relation of the events and how they

unfold. This movie features a few Coen movie regulars like Frances McDormand, [George Clooney](#), and Richard Jenkins (who also gives a great performance as the forlorn gym manager, by the way – they really make you feel sorry for his character). Better than [No Country for Old Men](#), [The Ladykillers](#), and [O Brother, Where Art Thou?](#), [Burn After Reading](#) is second only to [Fargo](#) when comparing it to other Coen brothers movies in my opinion. An entertaining 96 minutes at the movies – this one goes by fast. And make sure you pay attention; if you miss something, I could see where it would be difficult to catch up – a lot happens in those 96 minutes!

GO CUBS GO!!!

As you've probably heard by now, the Chicago Cubs have clinched their division. They WILL be going to the playoffs in 2008!!!! YAY! It's been a great year; even though with my busy schedule I only got to see less than 10 games. But that's ok – I always said I won't plan my life around baseball. Tempting, but I won't do it, at least not until my kids are grown and I have nothing better to do. A prime example of this is the fact that we've planned a trip to Florida during the playoffs and world series. If the Cubs make it to the world series, I won't get to see that either. Luckily, we'll be home in time for game 4 of the world series, so I'll at least be able to see one game, possibly more if they need to play them. But I'm getting ahead of myself. First the Cubs have to make it to the world series. Given the way the team has played all year, I think there's a pretty good chance, but all we can do is wait and see. For now, it's comforting to know that they've already clinched their playoff spot and I got to watch that happen! GO CUBBIES!!!!

Coollest Coaster

I got an email today called "What do you remember?" – it's a list of tv shows that aren't on anymore. You add your name and a show you used to watch to the list and send it on. It made me think of a kids' show I used to love called, "The Roller Coaster Gang". I wasn't totally positive that was the name of the show, however, so I did a google search – and that's how I found what sounds like the coolest roller coaster ever!

It's called The Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster, but unfortunately for me, it's on the other side of the world at the Warner Bros. Movie World theme park in Australia. It's a haunted house / roller coaster combined, and here is the press release about it that so intrigued me:

November 30, 2002

Guests will be treated to a hair-raising journey complete with laser lighting and sound effects, animatronics and a kaleidoscope of colour, depth, height and trickery of dimension this holiday season thanks to the Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride.

A \$13 million indoor rollercoaster ride inspired by the first feature film shot at Warner Roadshow Movie World Studios on the Gold Coast starring Sarah Michelle Gellar, Freddie Prinze Jr., Matthew Lillard, Linda Cardellini and Rowan Atkinson, the Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride is not a ride for the faint hearted.

Featuring carefully replicated coaster cars from Scooby-Doo the film, guests enter the creepy dimly lit courtyard and move into the heart of Spooky Castle, where ghouls, gargoyles and

the odd talking suit of armour may appear!

Housed in a 25 metre high building, the Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride features two distinctive experience zones, thrilling guests with different aspects of laser lighting.

While the laser lighting embraces and creates the entire illusion, maintaining it throughout the experience and simultaneously performing for multiple audiences moving through three dimensional space at high speed, the ride continuously alters direction, velocity, elevation and trajectories.

Warner Village Theme Park Chief Executive John Menzies explains that Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster is a world first and is a unique combination of two different types of entertainment experiences.

“Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster is completely innovative, no other ride in the world can be compared to this combination of experiences – the classic haunted house utilising the latest technological advances and lighting and sound effects and the adrenalin pumping thrills of an indoor rollercoaster,” said Chief Executive John Menzies.

The first experience zone further develops the Spooky Castle theme into a ghost train ride featuring the best in traditional movie inspired themeing and amusing animatronics.

Just as guests begin to think their journey is nearing conclusion, they find themselves drawn up over 17 metres into the castle’s creepy tower. This unsettling experience heralds their reversed entry into the rides second zone as guests are then pushed into a darkened void.

Disoriented in the dark, riders are now subject to the will and influence of the ghouls and gargoyles that Scooby-Doo warned of earlier.

Then, it's time to be afraid....be kind of afraid!

Perched precariously on an elevated turntable the car is turned 180 degrees to face the fate awaiting its anxious passengers.

Transfixed by an apparently infinite tunnel of emerald green laser light the riders are lurched forward into the shimmering abyss as the Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride propels riders through infinite voids, passing ghost-like through shimmering walls, floors and ceilings of light and speeding into tunnels of green swirling mist.

Finally, plunging over seven meters on the adrenalin-pumping journey, guests are hurtled towards a grotesque creature and the 'ring of life'.

The Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride with its ever-changing web of penetrating green laser beams, bumps, breathtaking drops and special effects thrills and excites every rider.

The multi-million dollar blockbuster, Scooby-Doo, was filmed at Warner Roadshow Movie World Studios on the Gold Coast in 2000/2001 and is the highest budget production ever filmed in Queensland to date.

Join Scooby-Doo and the Mystery Gang for the scariest, spookiest, spine-tingling rollercoaster ever created – Scooby-Doo Spooky Coaster Ride.

Visit Warner Bros. Movie World on Australia's Gold Coast – where movie magic happens everyday!

I've never heard of Warner Bros. Movie World, but it sounds pretty neat. Too bad I didn't make it over there a few years ago – I also found out they used to have a Marvin the Martian 3-D movie, but they replaced it with Shrek 4D. That stinks; I would have liked to see that; I'm a big fan of Marvin the Martian. Oh well, hopefully by the time I get to Australia

they'll still have the Scooby-Doo coaster. If only we could increase the budget we have for the haunted attraction we're building by a few million so we could add a coaster...

And I didn't end up using "The Roller Coaster Gang" as my show to put on the list. By the time I was done being distracted with looking up Australian thrill rides, I thought of another show I put instead – one whose title I was sure about. Belle and Sebastian was a Nickodeon cartoon that was about an orphaned boy named Sebastian and his big white dog, Belle. Each episode would follow the pair (along with a small dog named Poochie who would fit into Sebastian's pocket) as they ventured through the mountains looking for Sebastian's mother. People would always mistake Belle for a ferocious dog or sometimes even some kind of snow monster. I loved that show – wonder if Sebastian ever found his mother?

Kid Rock, Really?

I just might have to start calling myself a Kid Rock fan... ok, no not really, that's going **way** too far.

It all started when I was able to catch a few minutes of country music radio – a rare treat for me because when I'm doing errands in my car every day, I'm usually forced to listen to Kidsongs, VeggieTales, or the like while the kids are watching the car dvd player. But lately, I've been able to catch a few songs on country music radio... I guess it's because my youngest daughter has been refusing to nap at home during the day, therefore she can't help herself from napping once we get in the car, giving me control of the car stereo, even if it is temporarily. But anyway, country radio has been constantly playing a song that I really like – I heard it

again the other day while my husband was getting a haircut, and that's when I decided I needed to look it up, find out what it is and who sings it so I can get it for my own enjoyment. Well, I looked it up, and what I found is that my new favorite "country" song is Kid Rock's latest single called "All Summer Long". For those of you who don't know, Kid Rock is not a country artist – not in my book, anyway... Seems he's been trying to cross over to country for a couple of years now however. His duet with Sheryl Crow called "Picture" hit the top of the country charts a few years ago when it came out. But Kid Rock is most famous for various tabloid fodder; including his relationship with Pamela Anderson and the public brawls he's engaged in. But I think Kid Rock's normal style of music is hard-core. There is a song called "Warrior" by him that is played before movies in the theater, and that song is very reminiscent of 80s heavy metal – I think that's a taste of his usual musical style.

So why the switchover into country? I have one guess – money. It's no secret that country music is the most popular music genre in the United States today. Kid Rock's new song doesn't quite have that country sound, however, but I wouldn't know how else to classify it. It reminds me of late 70's or early 80's classic rock, ala Lynyrd Skynyrd – there is even a tribute to the song "Sweet Home Alabama" in "All Summer Long" – it mentions the song and even replicates its famous guitar lick. But nowadays, I don't know where a song such as this should be categorized, and apparently the music industry felt the same way, so they stuck it in the country genre. It's a really great, feel-good, care-free, summery kind of song... don't know why they didn't rush to get it released at the beginning of the summer. But it's here now, and I'm enjoying it, even if it is sung by Kid Rock. I just wish he'd make up his mind about where he wants to be musically. Being a country music fan, I despise "posers" and "crossovers" who try to take advantage of country music fans just because they're seen as loyal and dumb. The bait and switch didn't

work with me this time – I like the song, but knowing it's Kid Rock did take a little out of it for me. I have a big problem with crossovers – I don't like accepting them into the country music family. I feel that country music is something you either love or you hate, and if these crossovers weren't already involved in country music, chances are they've hated it in the past and should not be allowed to crossover when the time or price is right. You are either a country artist or you're not. Which is why it is to my dismay that this new Kid Rock song is so good.

But all things aside, check out "All Summer Long", it's worth a listen, and let's hope Kid Rock doesn't steal too much thunder away from the real country acts come time for the Country Music Awards that will be airing in November. Judging solely by how much air time he's getting on the radio, I think he has a shot to win some awards for this one – he'll at least get a live performance. I just hope he can behave himself. Surprisingly, given the red-neck reputation of country music's fan base, the annual Country Music Awards is not a place where there is usually scandalous behavior such as fighting or swearing, and let's hope these fly-by-night country crossovers don't ever bring it to that.

A Whole New World

During our community theater's run of *The Nerd*, they designated one of the nights "80's Night" since the play was set in 1985. I enjoyed the opportunity to visit the local thrift stores with a mission – looking for components to complete my 80's look. 2 thrift stores are within walking distance so I just packed up the little ones in the double stroller and off we went. I found things with ease – a gaudy

Mickey Mouse sweatshirt that I cut up to make it off-the-shoulder, a black lacy Madonna-like skirt, jelly shoes, hoop earrings, leggings, ankle socks... I was ready to go!

And of course, what 80's look is complete without makeup and lots of it? I read a hint on a website about dressing for 80's parties – "In the 80's, we didn't accessorize – we "excessorized" and LOVED it!" So I braided my wet hair in the morning, and by evening when I took out the braids, I achieved the "crimped" hair look I was going for. I pulled out the electric blue nail polish (though I ended up regretting that later since I forgot to buy nail polish remover and I was stuck with electric blue nail polish for a few days until I had the time to get to Walmart – OOPS), and I piled on the purple and blue eye shadow. It was lots of fun to get dressed up like a goofball – I may consider being an 80's time machine traveler for Halloween. But anyway, while I was getting ready for 80's night, I had a flock of admirers. My 3 little girls aren't used to me putting on makeup, dressing up, painting my nails, or spending lots of time on my hair (note to self – next time I dress 80's, I need some Aquanet!) – I'm just not the kind of gal who does – or has the time to do, for that matter – these things regularly. It was like a whole new world for them, and they gawked in awe as they watched me get ready. My oldest kept running up to her room to look for jewelry to use – everyone wanted to help, which was like a whole new world for *me*.

80's night was a few weeks ago, and the girls are still asking to have their nails painted and for us to do each other's makeup, much to my husband's dismay. He's never liked makeup and says he wants our girls to be at least 18 before they can wear it. I've tried explaining to him that there is something innate in little girls that make them like dressing up and putting makeup on – it's just how little girls are made. Being a male, he doesn't get it of course, and so I imagine we'll have many a debate in this house once the girls get to

the teenage years and want to wear makeup regularly. For now, I don't have a problem using it as a "toy" once in a while, as long as it's supervised and I can guide my girls to having the right opinions about makeup, especially when it comes to self-esteem issues – makeup does not make you prettier, you do not NEED makeup, it can be harmful to your face if you use it incorrectly, etc. So until they become teenagers, this is a way we can have fun together, and I also view it as an important bonding experience. One of the things I remember doing with my sister the most while we were growing up is her doing my hair and makeup, and I don't remember ever fighting while we were doing that. Anyone who knows my girls realizes how much we need an activity that Taylor and Sammie can do together without fighting! So if you see me walking around with a hideous makeup job someday, just remember that my face was probably painted by an 8, 4, or 2 year old!

****YOU ASKED FOR IT!!!****



The Kindle

While I'm on the subject of reading... I came across a cool looking device on amazon.com the other day – the Kindle. Have you heard of it? I hadn't, but it sounds pretty cool. Basically you can upload books, magazines, and even blogs to this portable device so you can read them anywhere. It appealed to me because I like to read in bed, and it seemed like a good way to get newspapers as well as stuff off the internet into a format that's easy for me to lie down and read. But the more I looked into it, the more I realized it's not really for me. The first clue was its \$350 price tag. No thanks. Maybe for \$50 or so, I'd be interested... The other thing about the Kindle is the fact that you have to *buy* books to put on it. I can't tell you the last time I bought a full price book from a book store. I get my books from my existing collection, friends, or most frequently, the library – all free sources. I could not picture a scenario where I'd be buying a book, even if it was to be put on this device. I guess the thing that appealed to me most about it was putting my town's daily newspaper on it so I could read it in bed. My paperboy delivers at 5pm – just in time for the chaos in the house to peak as kids are coming home and I'm starting dinner and all that stuff – so it's tough for me to keep up with reading the daily paper. But I'm sure the daily paper from my small town wouldn't even be available on the Kindle anyway...

But I thought it was a cool invention and I could see there being a market for something like this for people who travel a lot and love to read. I find it strange that I hadn't heard about it sooner, but they really need to lower the price on it if they want it to catch on!