

I'm Not Rubbing It In, Honest, But...

With ***NINE STRAIGHT WINS***, the Chicago Cubs are the HOTTEST team in baseball right now! I am ecstatic about this and just had to make a remark or two. So I'm sorry to my friends who follow MLB, choosing instead to support franchises other than the Cubs – I don't know how your teams are doing, and I don't mean to rub it in about how incredibly awesome the Cubs are this year, but these days, "How about those Cubs?" is not just a conversation starter, it's a question being asked by baseball fanatics, Cubs fans, Chicagoans, and probably anyone who has ever heard of the Cubs, their 'loveable losers' nickname, and their awesome 2008 baseball skills. Gone are the days it seems when the Cubs were the laughing stock of baseball; the "maybe next year" mantra and when an 8-0 deficit in a game meant certain disaster for my favorite team. The other day, they were able to turn an 8-0 losing game into a 10-9 **WIN** over the Rockies! Honestly, the Cubs have never been known for great comebacks in a game, and this was no fluke – that game was followed by 2 more games where the Cubs came from behind to save the game and declare wins for themselves. Then again, rallies are nothing new to Cubs' manager, Lou Piniella – no manager in history has managed more eight-run comebacks.

So could 2008 be the year for the Cubs? Could 100, a whole century, be the magic number of years us Cubs fans have had to wait for another World Series win? That remains to be seen, of course, it is only June, but keep this in mind: according to the Elias Sports Bureau, the last time the Cubs had the best record in baseball entering June was 1908, the year they last won the World Series. Coincidence or fate? We will find out come October – I know I will be glued to the Cubs website until then!

How about those Cubs?!?

Name Origins

With the revelation that we will be parents of a baby boy for the first time ever, I guess this puts the great 'Frances' debate to rest – at least for now. Since we already have 3 lovely girls and have gotten to name them all of our favorite names, I thought I'd like to name our fourth girl after my deceased grandmother Frances, even though neither me nor my husband really like the name itself. But, since we're now having a boy and I got my husband to let us name the baby after him and his father, we don't have to worry about the Frances issue anymore – but I wonder if getting to name the baby Christopher has me losing leverage if we were to need any baby girl names for the future? While thinking about all this name business, I searched through my email for our arrival announcement of our third daughter who has quite an unusual name, and if you're wondering, here is the email we sent out when she was born about how we came up with it:

How did she get the name Disney?

Well... We took our honeymoon (back in 1999) at Disney World in Florida and

a few weeks after we returned we discovered we were pregnant with our first-born Taylor!

The next time we would go to Disney World in 2003 we would return home to

learn that there was again some "Disney magic" and baby Samantha was on her

way! In late 2004 we decided we wanted another baby but we were

disappointed month after month; it seemed we were having trouble getting pregnant for the third time... But wouldn't you know it – we took a trip to Disney World in early 2006 and guess what? MAGIC – AGAIN! So in October of 2006, we welcomed Disney Alyssa!

As I've said to people many times, her name seems to have worked, because it truly fits the child. Disney is our most mild-mannered, sweet, and happy child so far. But it makes me wonder, since little Christopher is the only one who was conceived without Disney World magic, could this be the secret to us finally having a boy?!?

The Mole is Back!

The Mole is the best reality show ever, I think. And now it is back for another season, starting Monday, June 2. It airs on ABC, and I highly recommend it. A quick synopsis in case you missed my previous post about the Mole – 12 contestants complete various stunts and missions, although one of them is the mole. The audience and other players don't know who the mole is, and he or she tries to sabotage the missions while staying undercover. Each week, the contestants take a quiz about the mole, and the person who guesses the most answers incorrectly must leave the game. About the new season, I must say how much I don't like the new host, but other than that, the show seems to be just as it was before – extremely entertaining, thought provoking, and FUN!

I think it'd be fun to keep a running tally of Mole guesses for viewers who read my blog. So if you're a Mole fan also,

submit your guess to me each week and I will post it. So far after week one, my guess for the Mole would be Clay, and Chris is guessing Paul.

It's fun to see if anyone can guess who the mole is from early on, so stay tuned to my blog throughout the summer for updates on the show, and if you decide to watch it, and I HIGHLY recommend that you do, join in the fun by posting me a comment with your thoughts on the episodes and guesses on who is...
THE MOLE!

The Strangers

Such a busy week this week, we had to move date night to Monday since we have meetings every other day this week. So we traveled down the road to see the movie called [the Strangers](#), a suspense horror film. And I don't really have much to say about it. It was exactly what I was expecting, not a thing more. Lots of suspense, so the movie was good for that edge-of-your-seat anticipation, but there was no background about why the terror was taking place, which I would have liked – just a movie about a couple who are victimized in a remote vacation home by scary people with extremely creepy looking masks. And, this isn't really a spoiler because right there in the film's introduction they tell you that the main characters are not going to make it. So watching these people struggle the whole movie knowing they won't triumph over evil was kind of... well, I guess I'd say almost pointless. There is also another event that takes place in the movie involving someone's demise that you can see coming a mile away. So, while the film was incredibly predictable, it was good for suspense; it's not like I'd say it was a bad movie or boring or anything like that... Just nothing to write home about. [Liv](#)

[Tyler](#) is not a bad actress either, but I'd have to say this wasn't one of my favorite horror / suspense movies. I appreciated the fact that it was done without the gore that seems to be plaguing many a horror film these days, but I really would have liked more story than just people getting terrorized by other people for no reason. If you like suspense, check it out; it is 90 minutes of nail-biting tension, but don't go expecting too much. I like many horror movies better, including the [Texas Chainsaw Massacre](#) remake from 2003 to name an example.

Newhart Nightmare

These pregnancy nightmares I'm having are out of hand. Not only is my sleep interrupted, but the dreams are getting just plain weird! Before this pregnancy, I would rarely have dreams that I would even remember when I woke up, let alone have dreams so vivid that I'm unable to sleep after waking from them. It's funny how a nightmare can make one wake with such an unsettled feeling... I've had a few now where I wake up scared – too scared to even get up to go to the bathroom. And I can't explain why. Some of the nightmares are just plain scary, like the ones involving guns and violence. But some of the crazy ones that have me waking scared actually make me laugh later in the light of day. Last night's was a real whopper – seems [Bob Newhart](#) wanted to steal my husband's organs. He had a surgical setup all ready to go with dishes out for the organs and everything. We packed up our family and fled our house just in time, thank goodness, but the vision of Bob Newhart peering out the front door and trying to not let us leave was a creepy image that I couldn't shake for about 15 minutes until I did finally get back to sleep. I have no idea what caused this craziness to rush through my

head at 4 in the morning. It's not like I've seen Bob Newhart anywhere lately; and I especially haven't come across a scary Bob Newhart – until last night in my dream, anyway. The good news is, scared as I was at 4am this morning, I'm now laughing about this, and I hold nothing against Bob Newhart!

MOTORcycles

Typing in CAPS is considered yelling, as far as computers and text messages go. And I'm yelling MOTORCYCLES because that's what you have to do in order to be able to hear yourself talk or even think while one is nearby. With the horrible reality of gas prices these days (holding "steady" at \$3.99 in my area currently), it seems that people are turning in their minivans and SUVs for more fuel efficient vehicles, especially motorcycles.

This is unfortunate for me because I can't stand the things. Normally I'm all for people doing their own thing; if someone wants to ride a motorcycle, why should it bother me? Because simply put, it DOES affect me. I can't stand when I'm walking down the street, talking to my husband or my girls, only to have one of us drowned out by the awful noise of a motorcycle. Some moron on a motorcycle revving his engine even startled one of my kids so badly that she cried! It affects us even when we're in our own car, and the noise of a motorcycle drowns out our conversations, the kids' movie, or even wakes the kids up. Sure, you can roll up the window, but oftentimes it's too late, unless you want to drive around with the window closed. And why should I have to do that? It's MY car; I shouldn't have to be so negatively affected by other people's actions in my own car! And the fact is, these effects come from just one motorcycle. The situation can be

especially compounded when there are a whole pack of motorcycles, and they do often travel in packs, which means even louder interference. I don't understand why it is that cars can be ticketed for having loud mufflers, yet motorcycles can drive down the road, revving their noisy engines and being as deafening as they please.

The main reason why I hate motorcycles doesn't even have anything to do with the fact that their racket makes their owner seem very discourteous and not aware of others at all... I also have a major beef with the safety issue motorcycles present. It would be one thing for a rider to drive down the road on a motorcycle, not wearing a helmet – as they often do – if it only affected him... But unfortunately, that is not the case. If any type of car accident were to happen involving a motorcycle, no matter who was at fault, any driver involved would have to live with the guilt for the rest of their lives that someone got hurt. And if a motorcycle is involved in an accident, it is relatively easy for the cyclist to get injured – it's a proven fact, plus I've witnessed 2 such crashes – neither were pretty, and one ended with the motorcycle's *helmeted* occupant being airlifted by helicopter to the trauma center. His helmet was smashed almost flat, and If he hadn't been wearing it, my kids and I and whoever else happened upon that scene would have witnessed a fatality, no doubt.

So now that I've sounded off, I feel better. It's not like I think motorcycles should be banned or anything like that... though if my kids or I get interrupted by the clamor of a motorcycle and I'm having a bad day I might feel differently. And in this age of \$4/gallon gas with no end in sight to the price increase, I can't say I blame people for wanting to lower their transportation bill. I just wish it didn't affect other people so extremely! So if you're a motorcyclist, please be considerate, don't rev your engine unnessessarily, it makes kids cry! Please always have safety as your #1 priority, and ALWAYS wear a helmet – not just for you, but for

the rest of us! Helmets and other safety gear a motorcyclist might wear look much cooler to me than the idiots who wear do-rags or shorts while riding... What's a do-rag gonna do for you anyway in case of an accident, soak up the blood from your head wound?

Walking With Dinosaurs

In case you haven't heard of it, [Walking With Dinosaurs](#) is a traveling show that is based on the BBC documentary of the same name. It is in Fort Wayne, Indiana this week, which isn't too far from us. They've been advertising it heavily, and I've been meaning to check out ticket info, but I kept forgetting. Thanks to our local paper who ran a story about it the other day, I was reminded about it just in time! Seems the tickets are QUITE costly! However, my computer-savvy husband went online and found a discount that saved us SO much money on tickets, but only if we went opening night... So, we dragged all the kids to Fort Wayne to see some dinosaurs on a school night. Let me say, it was SOOO worth it!

It's been a really long time since I was really excited about something that actually ended up measuring up to my expectations. I was really excited about this show; I thought it would be a good show, but I will say that it *EXCEEDED* my expectations! Not only was it visually stunning, It was a perfect show for the whole family. There were lifelike dinosaurs engaging in battles, flying, and scavenging... what's not to like?!? We have kids of all ages and bravery levels, and they were all entertained. Our 8-year-old and our 4-year-old did get a little nervous in the beginning, but their fear quickly turned to excitement and awe once the dinosaurs started appearing. Our 19-month-old LOVED everything about

the show. She is getting to the age where it's hard for her to sit still, especially now that she can walk, but she watched every moment of this show, and clapped and laughed so hard that I was even distracted from the dinosaurs at times by my daughter's cuteness. I wasn't distracted too much though, cuz the dinosaurs were totally AWESOME! They were life-size and SO realistic looking, it was amazing. Our seats were great too – best in the house, front row center. These dinosaurs were even better looking than the ones in the movie [Jurassic Park](#)! Walking With Dinosaurs operates on a \$20 million dollar budget, and it shows!

I would venture to say that this is probably the best professional live show I have ever seen, and that includes musicals from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, The Phantom of the Opera, Camelot, and Les Miserables to other shows like Monsters Inc. on Ice, Dragon Tales Live, and dinner shows like Medieval Times, Arabian Nights, and Pirates Dinner Adventure in Orlando, Florida. This was fun for the whole family; probably even most fun for my husband and I! If the tickets weren't so pricey, I would definitely go back and see the show again – even with the \$20-30 it cost in gas money alone. My 4-year-old suffered from what I call “fundown” after the show – a feeling of disappointment when an event is over that is so intense for kids, they usually cry or throw tantrums. But I can't say I blame her. When I realized the show was ending, I had my own “fundown” when I realized there weren't going to be any more dinosaurs!

Totally awesome show – wait, that's not even the right word. It was more of an experience than a show. Even better than the dinosaur-themed rides at Disney World and Universal Studios. As we were leaving the coliseum, the rest of the audience seemed very pleased as well. Everyone was smiling and jabbering about the dinosaurs a mile a minute. They also had one actor – who was upstaged by the dinosaurs, of course! – and some other props and effects in the show that made it

totally awesome. Also pretty impressive were the rows upon rows of trailers parked outside that carry the dinosaurs from venue to venue. I knew it would take a few semis to cart around all those dinosaurs, but there were probably at least 25 semis parked out there! It is understandable that all these lifesize dinosaurs would create such an entourage, since the Brachiosaurus alone was 36 feet tall and 56 feet from nose to tail.

If this live show experience is going to be anywhere near your hometown, I highly recommend that you do your best to get tickets. It is a perfect show for the young and old, dinosaur fans, skeptics, or even those who are indifferent to the world's history; I don't see how anyone could NOT enjoy Walking With Dinosaurs!

OOPSIE – UPDATE

Here is an update on a story I posted last week about a man who was pulled over and subsequently backed his car up onto the police car. Seems the officers did manage to find something to charge him with besides the original speeding ticket:



Police Charge Niles Man They Say Backed Onto Squad Car

A Niles man who reversed his car so that it ran on top of a Buffalo Grove police car Friday has been charged with reckless driving.

Henry Raskin, 70, had been pulled over by a police officer around 11:30 a.m. Friday for speeding. He had been driving 58 mph in a 35 mph zone on Dundee Road, police said.

After the officer wrote Raskin a ticket, he hit the gas while he was in reverse and ended up with his vehicle on top of the squad car, police said.

Sgt. Scott Kristiansen said Tuesday that police determined the incident wasn't purely an accident after watching the squad car video and talking to Raskin.

"It appears to be a little bit more than a mistake," he said. "We think it meets the criteria for reckless driving."

Kristiansen said that most drivers if they found they had accidentally reversed in this situation, would have hit the brakes before driving over a police car.

Raskin posted 10 percent of his \$2,000 bond Friday and was released. He has a June court date in Rolling Meadows.

Did I Miss Something?

We watched an interesting movie tonight, for lack of a better word. It is called [Funny Games](#). It wasn't funny, and let me apologize ahead of time for the vague review – you'll have to see the movie to understand why I couldn't write too much about it. I had never heard of it before, but it was a

thriller, so my husband suggested it. If you like thrillers, see it and then tell me what you think. I don't really know what to say about this movie. It was captivating and VERY tense, so I was never bored, but I was disappointed with the way it ended. For one thing, I did not understand the movie.

Let me back up and give a quick synopsis. [Naomi Watts](#) stars as a mother who, along with her husband and son are held captive by 2 very well-spoken young men in their remotely secluded (of course it's secluded – this IS a thriller movie!) vacation home. As I said, the movie is very intense but only after what is a somewhat slow start. I don't want to spoil anything, so I will just say that are no words for what happened in the last 40 minutes of the movie. Near the conclusion, it took a turn for the confusing, and what happened made me not really understand the entire movie. It's based on an Austrian film, and imdb.com said that the American guy who remade it didn't change much from the Austrian version, so maybe it didn't translate well? I liked the movie, for the time being anyway while I was watching it, but I would really like some insight about a certain event that took place... it might actually be a thriller I would watch again, which is rare, but I might want to see if I can get what I must have missed. Like I said, if you're a big fan of suspense movies, I would try this one, it's definitely different from all the others! And if you have seen it or do see it, make sure you try to fill me in on what I missed, cuz I just didn't get it!

Bring Him Home

We organized a concert in January with our local theater group where we had a collection of totally awesome singers perform

selections from popular musicals. My husband has an excellent singing voice – I’m not biased or anything, I swear! Plenty of other people have said so... If you were to ask *him* about it though, he would say much differently – he has a bit of an ego problem, but it goes in the opposite direction than that of most singers and actors – he does not have nearly enough confidence. So even though there were other songs in the concert, this one might be the only one we actually get to see because I don’t know how to post on youtube – that’s his job and he doesn’t deem the other songs worthy of posting! And if you are a stage veteran or know someone who is, you have had to suffer thru awful recordings of stage performances. It seems that no matter how beautiful a play or song sounded on the stage, it will never translate correctly when recorded and played again – SO GET OVER IT AND JUST POST THE REST OF THE CONCERT ALREADY!!! ☐ My favorite song from this concert was actually Bui Doi from Miss Saigon, and I was PROMISED that I would get the link to that one soon, so stay tuned! Don’t hold your breath though... I was also promised a new altered picture from a show we directed last fall because *someone* ducked out of it at the last second, and a picture in the director’s hall of the basement of the theater should have the show’s director in it, right? But that hasn’t happened yet, so hopefully this will be more of a priority, even though I’ve stated how much that picture means to me...

I feel sorry for all those friends and family members who couldn’t make it to this great event – you really missed a great showcase of talent, especially if you’re a fan of showtunes! Maybe you’ll be able to make it next year if we do it again. This is a clip of Chris singing the Les Mis classic, “Bring Him Home”: