

Not THAT MGM Lion...

Have you seen that MGM lion video? When I asked a friend about this the other day, he apparently thought I was referring to the lion that roars at you from the screen in the beginning of some movies – not THAT MGM lion! I'm talking about the shocking video of the lion turning on his trainer at the lion exhibit in the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Notice I didn't use the word "attack". Animal experts (including Jack Hanna, my favorite animal expert) who have reviewed the footage have agreed that it wasn't an attack, but rather retribution or perhaps rough play from one grumpy lion. The fact is, had the lion been attacking, it would have been over in a matter of seconds with a tragic outcome for the trainer. The trainer escaped uninjured, and watch how the lion follows him out of the enclosure, giving him "yeah, you'd BETTER run" looks all the way out:

Personally, I do think the lion was playing rough. He might have gotten a bit irritated at the trainer, but if he had truly wanted to hurt him, he could have killed him in seconds flat, which is why extreme caution should always be used when handling exotic animals. I wish the video showed what was occurring between the lion and his trainer just before the incident. Seconds before, the lion seems relaxed, but then the camera pans away until the lion lunges for the trainer's leg. What I find truly amazing about the video is the female lion's reaction. She follows the male lion around the enclosure throughout the incident, seemingly trying to get him to stop stalking the trainer. Just after the male lion's first lunge, the female even jumps on his back and gives him a little nip. A penny for... scratch that – I think I'd pay a lot of money for the thoughts of these lions!

Scary as these incidents are, I'm happy to report that this one had a positive outcome – the trainers are fine. I wonder if that trainer will be working with that male lion again?

Are We Playing Politics... Or Preschool?

I check out the headlines on Chicago's suburban newspaper's website, The Daily Herald, partly because that's where I'm from (so I know of the locations of the news stories) and partly because my own small town daily paper is kind of boring because we're... well, crime-less. No news is good news, so they say, and I agree with that assessment for my little corner of the world. But far removed am I, and so reading about the disasters in the Chicago area can be quite entertaining; especially the recent stories concerning this

woman, Lisa Stone, a trustee from a place called Buffalo Grove, which is an upscale suburb of Chicago.



There have been numerous news stories about Ms. Stone, and I didn't really pay attention until I saw this headline:

[Buffalo Grove village president tells trustee to 'shut up'](#)

If you want to envision grown-up politicians behaving like children, read the article, for it's like a play-by-play of a school yard bickering session. If you would like to see the trustees in action, [here is a link to video of the actual meeting](#). It goes a bit long (a whopping 3+ hours – these poor people were at their meeting until 10:30pm!), but most of the action involving Ms. Stone is in the first 10 minutes (after the Pledge of Allegiance) and in the last 30 minutes of part 3 of the meeting, which is where poor flustered President Hartstein has finally had enough.

Causing most of the problem is Ms. Lisa Stone because she doesn't seem to respect the most basic rules of politeness nor eloquence. She interrupts the other board members; speaking out of turn, continuously overriding her superiors and her time limits (time limits which were created, voted upon, and passed by her fellow board members because of her actions at previous meetings), and she just doesn't seem concerned about any agenda other than her own. After watching these little

pieces of political treasure (ah, Illinois politics, gotta love 'em. Isn't this a state poised to have TWO former governors in the pokey at the same time?), I couldn't resist doing some internet research on Lisa Stone. The most interesting thing I found was her election website, electlisastone.com where the very same newspaper who provided a play-by-play of her getting told to 'shut up' by the board president endorses her political career with very encouraging words which are displayed prominently and proudly on the top middle of the page! Also of interest on this site? Check out the little video on the left side – the then-mayor of the same city, Buffalo Grove, also endorses Lisa in the election. And guess who the mayor was during the election? Elliott Hartstein, the same president of the village board who got so flustered with Ms. Stone that he told her to 'shut up'. How about those politics, folks! More entertaining than a 3-ring circus and for free, from the comfort of your own living room!

What Did Porky Pig Ever Do To You?

The following news story caught my eye because well, let's be honest – any sort of physical comedy involving someone in a big mascot costume is funny.

Ok, so it's not funny when someone gets hurt; I stand corrected. Best wishes to Ms. Porky Pig for a speedy recovery. From suburban Chicago's newspaper, [The Daily Herald](#):

Two employees of Six Flags Great America turned against a coworker dressed as Porky the Pig on Monday after posing for a photo with her.

Dmytro Petrychenko, 19, and Taras Sikalchuk, 20, were visiting the park on their day off and were seen slapping a woman dressed as Porky Pig in the front and back of her head multiple times, according to Gurnee police. Both men are from Waukegan, reports indicated.

The men were apprehended, removed from the park and issued local battery citations by Gurnee police.

The victim was taken to a first aide station after complaining of a headache and neck pains. She was treated and released, according to a Six Flags spokesperson.

Kind of reminds me of the Sausagegate incident of 2008...

Tornado – Err, Weather Siren

If you've read my previous blog post, then you know that I wrote a letter of complaint to my local newspaper about our town's policy change regarding the ~~tornado~~ weather siren. Our siren is now activated for any severe thunderstorm warning, a policy which I consider hazardous since we seem to now be left without any warning of actual tornadic activity. Ironically (or not, since the sirens have gone off no fewer than *eight* times this June 2010), today we got another dose of the siren. As has been usual lately, we got an average thunderstorm, nothing more than some lightning, thunder, and rain. I decided to videotape my street as the sirens were going off, with the intention of adding it to my blog to illustrate my point about writing a letter to the newspaper. At the very least, the following video will help my daughter and I – we are getting really good at doing impressions of the ~~tornado~~ weather siren – enough to drive our puppy crazy anyway. □

I'm Published – Again!

The title of this blog post is kind of a joke, just as it was the first time our local newspaper printed something from me. A few months ago, they printed a picture I took of some baby doves in our tree in the front of the house, and today I am happy to see they printed my letter in the public forum! Here is a copy:

Siren Rules Need Clarification

I appreciated your article about the weather sirens called "Siren Rules Given" that was printed on Tuesday June 22, but it seems that further clarification is necessary to ensure the safety of the community. Because the rules were changed regarding when to activate the sirens – they are now being activated for severe storms, not just tornado warnings – what type of warning system does our town have in the event of an actual tornado? When did the guidelines change and why were they changed?

The seemingly constant activation of the sirens lately (at least 6 times in the past month; with 3 sirens in ONE day on June 23!) is very scary for my 4 children. Other local parents are having the same concerns. Today there was a mild rumble of thunder at my daughter's T-Ball game, and at least one little boy began to cry. We can reassure our children, but it's concerning that in an actual tornado emergency that many people might not take it seriously since the now so-called 'weather sirens' are being activated weekly if not more often – it's a 'boy who cried wolf' scenario that could lead to a tragic disaster. I would like to see our city go back to the old guidelines

on the weather sirens – call them tornado sirens once again and only use them when the threat of tornadic activity is severe enough that us citizens should be taking shelter in our basements.

I wrote this letter the other night and sent it in before I learned of [what happened to a town in our county](#). Edgerton was hit by a microburst and sustained devastating damage to many trees and a few buildings. Thankfully, there is only one report of an injury that was not life-threatening. I hope that people aren't confused by my letter; clearly the people in Edgerton should have been in their basements on Wednesday night. Their tornado sirens were warranted (as were ours probably since Edgerton is only about 10 miles away) on Wednesday night, and thankfully the injuries were kept to a minimum thanks to the smart people who took cover. But we did not go into the basement on Wednesday night. As I said in the letter, the sirens had gone off 3 times on Wednesday, and the kids panicked each time. And since the sirens had been going off all month and it had been published in the newspaper that the siren was now for severe thunderstorm warnings, we decided that going down to the basement added to the drama and aided in keeping the kids alarmed and up late. After Wednesday's storm moved through, our town was spared any major damage, but this storm did cause tornadoes to the east in Indiana as well as that dangerous microburst in Edgerton. Looking back, we probably should have gone to the basement, but we have been desensitized to the seriousness of the siren, and it didn't seem like a big deal. Part of the purpose of writing this letter was to vent my frustrations, and I also wrote it partly because I want some answers to the questions I raised. I was hoping that maybe someone from our local branch of the National Weather Service will reply or perhaps we'll hear from the fire chief, who was quoted giving the new siren rules in the original newspaper article to which I referred. If there is any follow-up, I will keep you posted, and in the meantime, we will have to continue to calm the kids any time that now

weekly 'severe weather siren' gets activated.

How To Plug The Oil Leak In The Gulf



Waiting...

It's 1am and I can't sleep. Why? We are right in line for our second round of severe weather tonight. Round one was kind of fun. The two older kids were still awake, and they came downstairs panicked at the Tornado Warning that was flashing on their tv. It turned out to be for a different county, but then one was issued for our county a few minutes later. But it soon became clear that our town would be spared – a few very soft claps of thunder, and we were done. The tornado sirens blared, so we dutifully went to the basement, but before we could even get everyone down there, the sirens were off. So right before bed, I checked the radar again, and round two is headed straight for us. I've had the news on while laying in bed, and after all of the very serious

reports of damage and that which is yet to come, I gave up on sleep. My husband and I came downstairs to watch the radar on the news and... wait.

I've got a comforter and some bottled water and snacks waiting by the basement door; it looks really bad. I hope I'm over-reacting, but better safe than sorry, I guess – and it's 1:30 in the morning so it's easy to panic; I'm tired. Plus, preparing for disaster keeps my mind of the feeling of impending doom from outside. The county just north of us has a Tornado Warning. It feels like a pressure cooker outside – the humidity is stifling, and the wind is picking up. So far they're saying on the news that tornadic activity is heading straight for our town, but weather is very unpredictable. But even if we don't get a tornado, they said to expect winds 80-90 mph. Did I mention we invested in an inflatable pool for the kids yesterday? ☐

I'm praying for the safety of our family and friends who are spread all over this county and the next one over. I'm praying for our old house and for all of the tall trees around it. There are reports of heavy damage (possible tornado) in the county to the east, and we have many friends who live there – praying for everyone.

Well, this thing appears to be in our county now, and no tornado warning for us. The wind is howling, so I better go before I lose power – I have flashlights and battery radios, think we're well prepared... just difficult to decide at what point it's safer to panic the kids by waking them and taking them into the basement... always a tough decision. I've lived in the midwest all my life, but this is so much harder when you're the parent and the one who has to make the calls.

Stay safe everyone... I will leave an update on this post tomorrow, but so far, it looks good for us – the storm turned due east at the last minute...

UPDATE – Yes, the storm turned away from us at the last minute – a miracle. So other than being extremely tired, we are unscathed. Some friends I saw at church today are ok too, so I'll have to do some digging about the rest of the area, but I think everyone is ok! Time to catch up on that sleep...

God's Strong Love For Fools

I came across this article the other day by Janine Dorsey of the Tampa Tribune; it's called "Don't Laugh; It Could Happen To You: Common Reasons For Emergency Room Visits Are Common and Serious"

If that title alone doesn't intrigue you, then go ahead and skip this post. But I found the article to be both interesting and amusing, so I'll share some highlights:

Federal regulators review a sample of those visits for signs a product might need to be recalled. Those records provide a view into the dramatic injuries of Americans who seem able to hurt themselves with almost any product made.

One woman fell from a galloping horse while texting. Another woman's bangs caught fire as she peered into a toaster.

More than 818 emergency room trips in the past four years involved "chicken" – dead and alive.

Boxes of cereal (cut fingers), cans of pork and beans (falling from a cupboard onto one's head), wood chippers (yes, people stick their hands in) and trombones. Hundreds of people suffer piercings gone wrong, thousands fall out of their mobile homes or have objects intractably lodged in orifices.

“Every day, people come in and you just think, ‘You gotta be kidding me,’” said Brian Peckler, an ER doctor for 15 years, now at Tampa General. “I mean, what makes a guy think using a fish hook to clean out ear wax is a good idea?”

Everyone knows by now that talking on the phone is distracting, and now that cell phones have become even cheaper than land lines in many cases, people are finding a variety of ways to hurt themselves while using the phone:

A 19-year-old male, on the phone while lifting weights, drops a barbell on himself.

A 21-year-old male, riding his bike and texting, crashes, scrapes his face.

A 37-year-old male cutting chicken while on the phone slices his hand.

A 25-year-old male, texting, walks into a telephone pole’s guide wire and tells emergency room workers “he might have gotten zapped.”

Hundreds of injuries are blamed on the phone in its capacity as a weapon: They’re used as missiles or as a bludgeon to beat people on the head.

And then there is something that’s become obvious to me ever since I had a son almost two years ago – men are more apt to hurt themselves than women. There are more women than men in this country, yet men account for 56% of the ER visits, according to federal data.

Men suffer injury in 80 percent of pressure washer cases. Nine in 10 injuries involving “mobile home” and “alcohol” were suffered by men. And 96 percent of “nail gun” cases were men.

“Guys are definitely dumber than women in this regard,” Peckler said.

One 37-year-old man tried cutting branches with a circular saw – on top of a running wood chipper. The saw cut off several fingers, which fell into the chipper.

Having a brother appears dangerous as well. Regardless of who was injured, ER records implicate the brother twice as often as the sister.

And my personal favorite part of the article:

“Demonstrate” appears in no small number of cases where less-than-skilled people tried to show off martial arts moves, wedding dances, pogo-stick skills and cheerleader routines.

Though many people consider themselves expert enough to demonstrate something, Robert Cano at University Community Hospital sees scores of cases that prove otherwise.

“Almost nothing good comes after someone says ‘Hey, watch this!’” Cano said.

Note the 52-year-old mother, demonstrating judo to her daughter by flipping her husband. Torn left knee.

Other cases: The 25-year-old man demonstrating to children how to climb on monkey bars when his shoulder “snapped.” Or the 16-year-old demonstrating a softball technique who stepped on a rake that smacked her in the forehead.

Or the 55-year-old woman showing her grandson how to use a pogo stick – she fell and smacked her head.

And finally, the ER doc’s favorite story:

Peckler at Tampa General marvels at accidents that should have been fatal but weren’t.

His favorite case: the man who was supposed to be watching his 3-year-old, but decided to change his car's oil in the driveway. Seeking a safe holding area, Dad put the child in the car and crawled underneath to drain the oil.

The child knocked the gear shift from park to neutral, and the car's tire rolled over the man's chest.

He suffered no major injuries, Peckler said. But how could anyone survive?

Peckler shrugged and said, "God's strong love for fools."

Indeed. Just be careful next time you hear someone say, "Watch this." Maybe you should get the phone ready to dial 9-1-1. Then again, after reading how inclined some folks are to hurt themselves while using the phone, perhaps a better response to "Watch this." would be "No thanks."

Hazards Of The Trade

Back in 1999, when I was expecting our first child, I remember having the WGN Chicago news at noon on the tv in our teeny-tiny downtown (Rockford Illinois) apartment. I was in the (hallway of a) kitchen making lunch, when I heard a long screech of tires coming from the tv. The fact that I was able to get from the kitchen into the living room to see the tv even in my expanded pregnant state should tell you how small that apartment really was... So I made it back in front of the tv to see the reporter **get hit by a car** – scary! Luckily she was ok, but the news anchors at the studio were a bit shook up and forced to forge ahead in the newscast, not knowing the fate of their co-worker. Every now and then, I remember this

incident, and I've looked for a clip of it on the internet to no avail – until the other day when I finally found it. And just because it took me so long to find it, I will post it – perhaps others are looking for it also, who knows. Remember, the reporter was not seriously hurt in the accident – she hurt her leg and has since recovered from her injuries. Unfortunately, she was laid off last year, but the lay-off had nothing to do with the accident that had happened almost a decade earlier and everything to do with the station's budget cutbacks because of the terrible economy.

When searching for the above clip, I came across the following video of a Dutch weatherman getting nailed by a car, but don't worry – this is not as graphic as it seems because it is a fake clip; it's actually a commercial for tires.

Newseum – Haven For News Junkies!!

If you are a news junkie like me, then you will love this website – there are maps of the whole world, broken down into sections. You click on dots on the map, and you can see the front page of the newspaper for that region. In many cases, you can get the pdf file of the entire newspaper! The site is updated every day, so you can see current headlines. I really like to read news from all over the country, especially places where I use to live, like Chicagoland, Lincoln Nebraska, and Rockford Illinois. And it's really interesting to see headlines from the entire world! (even though I can only read the ones in English!)

[Here is a link to the United States headlines map – enjoy!](#)
Follow links on the site to access news taking place on the entire planet!