

ACM Awards – 2011 Edition

Was it really 11 years ago already that we got to attend the 2000 Academy of Country Music Awards in Los Angeles? Newcomer Brad Paisley won that year for Best New Male Vocalist, and he's now a country music veteran who took the Top Male Vocalist prize in 2011. Someday, I'd like to attend the recording of another live awards show. Nothing beats the excitement in the air and participating in a live tv show taping where anything goes. And never in one place will you see so many super performances by a variety of outstanding performers – both from country music and also outside the genre. But my 4.5 kids keep me grounded, and I don't travel as much as I would or as much as I used to. So until the day when I can get back to a live country music awards show taping (and I will be in no hurry to go to the ACMs until they move it out of Vegas!), I will enjoy watching and voting along at home.

This year was a super show; I had a nice time watching it last night. And a surprise awaited me at the end...

Some highlights:

– Brad Paisley opens with a performance, and then he's joined by none other than – ALABAMA!! They were so awesome; this number really got my country blood pumping!

– Some unlikely duos performing this year:

Unlikely duet #1 – Jennifer Nettles from Sugarland and pop star Rihanna. Their duet made for an interesting performance. Not my favorite kind of music, but they sounded good.

Unlikely duet #2 – Country music sweetheart Carrie Underwood screaming alongside Aerosmith frontman turned American Idol judge Steven Tyler. The first song wasn't great; it was more for Tyler than Underwood, in fact, I thought it a waste of her

lovely voice. But their "Walk This Way" duet was toe-tappin' fun!

Unlikely duet #3 – Zac Brown Band and James Taylor. I'm really starting to enjoy the harmonies of the Zac Brown Band, and their performance with James Taylor tonight was thoroughly enjoyable!

– Probably the first time I've cried while watching the ACM awards – Darius Rucker's song backed by a chorus from the Lifting Lives music camp was incredibly uplifting and awe-inspiring! I loved every minute of it!

Overall, a wonderful show! Except one thing – where the heck was Rascall Flatts?!?

And oh yeah, that surprise at the end – Taylor Swift won Entertainer of the Year. No surprise there; if I had paid attention when I filled out my fan ballot and realized that the Entertainer award was fan-chosen, I would have picked Swift in a heartbeat. But I spaced and chose Miranda Lambert (still beat Hubby on the ballot 7-3, just sayin') for some reason. The real surprise came when they announced the nominees for Entertainer of the Year, and I actually found myself rooting for Taylor Swift – what was going on? I've never been a fan of Swift's music, and I hadn't voted for her, so what gives? My 6-year-old daughter was enjoying the show with me, and every time Taylor Swift came on or her name was mentioned, Sammie got SO excited. So I told her I would let her know when "the big award" was coming on, and you should have seen her face when Taylor Swift won – she cheered! It was adorable, and I cried. I cried at the ACM awards twice last night, what is wrong with me? Oh yeah – pregnancy will do that to you. Probably a good thing that I was watching from the safety of my own home.

Jack Hanna, David Cassidy, Goats, Camels, And Live TV

I saw a link to this on Facebook, and it's hilarious – gave me my smile for the day! Watch chaos erupt on live TV in the 70s when Jack Hanna brings a gaggle of goats into the tv studio, and they run amok. The host, Bob Braun, has a great sense of humor about all of it, although the same can't be said for all of the audience members, especially those who end up with rogue goats in their laps! David Cassidy even has a hand rounding up the herd, and by the time the camel puts in his two cents, the host is practically rolling on the floor with laughter!

The Office – Season 7!!

I am behind on blogging about my favorite tv show (and the only one that's left that is good enough for me to watch these days!), The Office! Time flew so fast that the season premiere was a few weeks ago now, and it's been a great season so far!

The Office is on Season 7 already, and unfortunately for us fans, this is reportedly the last season for the show's lead actor, Steve Carell. As a huge fan of the show, I personally don't see how it will work without Carell's lovable idiot boss character, Michael Scott, and I'm hoping that he will change his mind about leaving. Although he has yet to win an Emmy for his performance as Michael Scott (darn Alec Baldwin on 30 Rock takes it every year!), episode 2 of season 7 of The Office saw the best performance I've ever seen Carell give and probably the best acting I've ever seen on a tv sitcom! If you're a fan, I'm talking about the scene where he is in a counseling session with Toby, and Toby is kind of manipulating him to actually talk to him. For a few minutes, Michael is actually talking and playing cards with Toby – a man he simply cannot stand. He even has an "I loathe Toby" face that is priceless. So anyway, he's playing cards with Toby, and Toby is actually making some valuable psychiatric headway with Michael... until Michael realizes it. Within seconds as he's realizing what Toby has done, his transformation back into his "I loathe Toby" mode is just... WOW. Emmy-worthy material, for sure in my opinion, but only time will tell.

Unfortunately, if you are not already watching this great show, then I can't recommend you start now in the 7th season – nowadays the show seems to be written for its fan base, and newcomers might not be able to follow the plots which are

seemingly being developed around the already established characters. But I do highly recommend you check out the show beginning in Season 1 – you can do this on dvd or perhaps even on NBC's website? That way, you can watch the The Office characters hilariously evolve yourself. If you work in an office yourself, are looking for a new tv show to watch, or are simply a fan of good tv, talented script-writing, try The Office!!

I cannot wait to see what the 3rd episode of this new season will bring us on Thursday!!

One of the Michael Scott's (aka Steve Carell's) famous "I loathe Toby" faces:



Next On Dancing With The Stars...

One of those rare amusing email forwards caught my eye, so I'll share. Besides, my last post was kind of a downer; here's something funny to counteract it:

Next Season on Dancing With The Stars:



Cincinnati Kids

When I wrote about our trip to King's Island (an amusement park near Cincinnati Ohio) a few blog posts ago, I mentioned how I have the behind-the-scenes Brady Bunch book written by the actor who played Greg Brady on the show, Barry Williams. A few nights ago, I looked up the episode in the book where the Bradys visit King's Island, and I read the synopsis (including the part about how the Bradys almost didn't make it off The Racer roller coaster alive! If you watch the episode, look for their terrified faces as they pulled into the station – that was not acting!) and dug up clips of the episode on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

If you've been to King's Island recently or in the past 10 or 20 years, then you will see how much the park has changed since this episode was filmed – enjoy!

My Psychic Moment

This is a strange thing that happened to me; just thought I'd write a little note about it.

I was in my laundry room, folding laundry and humming the song "You Light Up My Life", which is not a usual song on my playlist – I probably haven't heard it in a few years. So I'm folding laundry, and the final Jeopardy question comes on the tv:

CATEGORY: Billboard Hot 100

CLUE: Besides Frank and Nancy Sinatra, they're the only other father and daughter who each had #1 solo hits.

Got your answer? Mine was Nat King Cole and his daughter Natalie. Although wrong, my guess must have been a reasonable one as two of the contestants also incorrectly guessed the Cole's as their response. The correct answer, however, was Pat Boone and his daughter Debby – whose only #1 hit was ironically enough, "You Light Up My Life" – the same song I had inexplicably had in my head just minutes earlier!!

PS – I've never really heard of Debby Boone, and I certainly didn't know who sang "You Light Up My Life". For all I knew, it was Lee Ann Rimes, whose version of the song is quite enjoyable.

Zack And Kelly Having A Baby?

Do you remember the *extremely cheesy* Saturday morning kids' sitcom on NBC called Saved by the Bell? The show saw the beginning of the careers of famous now-adult actors and reality show hosts Mario Lopez, Mark-Paul Gosselaar, and Tiffani-Amber Thiessen.

I used to watch Saved by the Bell every week, and I caught every episode at least once again in syndication. There was at least one spinoff: Saved By The Bell – The College Years, and a few made-for-tv-movies that followed the exploits of the Bayside High School crew. In one of the movies, that famous on-again, off-again couple from the show, Zach and Kelly (played by Gosselaar and Thiessen) were united in holy matrimony... I didn't know that, since I was only interested in the original show, not so much the spin-offs or updates.

Sometimes I peruse the celebrity gossip (and sometimes current events info) site tmz.com, especially lately when they've been reporting a lead in the Stacy Peterson case (a missing woman from the Chicago area whose case I've been following because I used to live in the area). For their part, tmz.com seems to have quite accurate info and usually has it much earlier than other news outlets. So the other day, I noticed a headline on Tmz saying that ["Kelly" – aka Tiffani-Amber Thiessen – is pregnant and looking ready to pop](#), as they say. At the bottom of that article, there was a link to another Saved by the Bell story: [Zach Morris and Kelly Kapowski – Back Together!](#) If you click the link, you'll find that the Saved by the Bell actors were out and about together in NYC in September.

Interesting... wasn't September about 9 months ago? An interesting footnote to this story is that I read that Mark-Paul Gosselaar was divorced from his wife only weeks ago. So are Zach and Kelly from Saved by the Bell having a baby together? Did you read it here first? Most importantly, will

the actors continue their name-hyphenating tradition when they name the baby? How about Saved by the Bell – The Baby Years? Stay tuned...

Good Riddance To Lost And Celebrating...

...the end of my desire to re-watch the run of the show on dvd. Here I thought the finale would be so ground-breaking, so explanatory, and so intriguing that it would make me want to re-watch the entire show again, just to see how it looked after it was pulled all together. But I was wrong. I don't want to watch it again, and they didn't pull it together. In fact, my feelings couldn't be further from what I had hoped – I want to forget that I was ever hooked on a show called Lost, and I want to forget that a show called Lost ever existed.

The tv show Lost premiered in 2004. The premise always seemed intriguing – a group of people survive a plane crash only to be faced with unforeseen mysterious challenges that await them on a mystical island. I meant to watch it during its inaugural season, but I had a new baby in 2004, and tv was not one of my top priorities. After Lost's first season ended, however, the water cooler buzz just became too intriguing for me to resist, so my husband and I began to catch ourselves up on the first season, thinking we could always drop the show if we didn't like it. But like millions of others, we were hooked – Lost was great. WAS. Somewhere along the line, the show **lost** (haha) quality and many viewers at the same time – I'm thinking this was around the time of the infamous Hollywood Writers' Guild strike of 2007-8. Many tv shows went on an indefinite hiatus at that time, some did not return, and

some, like *Lost*, were never the same. *Lost* became famous for throwing out a ton of loose ends, new characters and questions each new episode – without ever offering answers or resolutions. Many viewers **lost** (ahem) the ability or desire to follow the show, and *Lost* **lost** (cough cough) much of its fan following. And that's when Darlton (the collective name of the show's production / writing team Carlton Cuse and Damon Lindelof) announced an end date to *Lost* – all of our many questions and loose ends would be concluded at the end of the 2010 season. And my husband and I, like many other almost-lost *Lost* fans decided to stick around. After all, we reasoned, we had invested all this time already, why not a few more seasons, especially if we were going to get our answers? We were anxiously awaiting the finale tonight, but unlike the anticipation of true *Lost* fans, we were just excited that we could have our Tuesday nights back. Much of the buzz compared *Lost* to reading a good book – when you get near the end, you think, what am I going to do when this book is over? It's so good! I can certainly identify with the good book analogy, but I would not apply it to *Lost* – we were just happy it was ending. So I guess disappointing isn't really the word I would use to describe the finale. I was half-expecting no real answers, considering the original bait and switch, but I couldn't really believe that they could get away with such a thing. And I am disappointed that I wasted a whopping **four and a half hours** (count 'em) on this tonight!

The first 2 hours were a re-cap special, which was less helpful than I thought. The first half of it was the actors reflecting on the show and giving inside info about filming techniques, etc. I'm thinking, why would they show this before the final episode airs? It didn't make sense to me. Now I'm thinking it was just another way to grease the wheels of *Lost* fans to overwhelm their tiny minds and brainwash them into being happy with the craptastic finale. There were also these "Lost Transmissions" – letters from audience members incorporated into scenes of *Lost*. They used footage from old

episodes of Lost to make it look like Lost characters are actually reading fans' letters – for example, a scene with computers had a fan's letter written on a computer screen and the characters reacting to the "letter". It was really stupid, and no, I'm not just upset that my letter wasn't chosen. I didn't care enough to write a letter, just as I don't care enough to stay up really late, pointing out every one of the clues I found that the cast and crew of Lost KNEW their finale would be incredibly awful and disappointing.

So anyway, then the finale episode itself was TWO and a half hours, and NONE of the questions were answered. NONE. All of the "true lovers" were paired up, and that provided enough fluff to keep Lost fans preoccupied and happy with the end, or so the producers hoped. Not the case in this household. In fact, if you ask me, in many of the interviews with the actors, you can catch hidden statements that they were not happy with the ending and didn't think the fans would be satisfied. In fact, Darleton themselves made a series of disclaimers during the re-cap special. I'm not going to waste more time on Lost by pointing everything out though. I stayed up until 11:30 to watch this garbage and another 30 minutes writing this, and that's long enough. Goodbye Lost – and GOOD RIDDANCE!

Oh yeah, a quick list of the few of **many** Lost loose ends they failed to tie up, just off the top of my head there are plenty more:

The temple and the guy who was in charge of it.

Sayid and Claire changing, having something dark inside them.

Drug smuggling with the Mary statues on the small plane that crashed – a man named Echo and his brother appearing to Lost survivors – for example, Hurley in the mental hospital.

The Numbers

Walt

Walt's Comic Books

Whidmore's connection to the island

Polar Bears

Miles' father – Dharma guy on Dharma Initiative training videos

The whole show in general – the ending didn't make sense to me at all

And I have one last thing to say – the 10 seconds of the water-skiing squirrel on the news after Lost was more entertaining than the Lost finale. At least my night was redeemed – thank you, water-skiing squirrel!

*An addendum – it was too late last night for me to write about the extremely entertaining Jimmy Kimmel Lost special, so I'll just share the alternate Lost endings he had on his show – they are very funny and although meant as jokes, any one of them would have been better than the REAL series finale. Sigh.

LOST!

What seems like ages ago, I was a big fan of Lost. I didn't watch the first season when it aired, but all the buzz about it got me curious, so my husband and I gave the first season dvd's a try – and really liked it! But then the second season of Lost wasn't as good, mainly because there were way too many questions and loose ends brought about – we couldn't figure out why they weren't concluding some of the mysteries instead of adding tons of new questions each week! When production was temporarily halted because of the writer's strike a few years ago, things on Lost really went downhill. But we had invested the time in watching it, and because the show's creators announced a definitive end date for Lost – this is the last season – we decided to stick it out.

So last night's highly anticipated last Lost season premiere was... eh. Only so-so, I would say. First, the show opened with really cheap-looking computer animation showing the island underwater, what was that? And there was a recap episode before the premiere, thank goodness for that, but between the 2 episodes, we saw the same climatic scene 3 times in 12 minutes! And the recap episode didn't help as much as I would have hoped – 12 minutes into the new Lost, and I was officially lost. My husband tells me that there are now two sets of each character, but I somehow missed that. If it's true, I don't like it.

Ugh... I like the concept of seeing flight 815 before it crashed, but all the actors look 6+ years older! Especially Boone!

The end of the episode was breathtaking, although I remain confused... were any of these people aware of what had

happened? The time travel throughout the various decades?

I guess I have to watch the premiere again; I feel like I'm missing something... actually I'm missing a lot of things. The show is still entertaining, but I am so glad it's almost over! It really require more thought and more of a time commitment than I have to give to tv right now!

Missing The Office

Last week I really could have used a Thursday night pick-me-up from my favorite show, The Office, but alas, no new episode. I was sure I couldn't be disappointed two weeks in a row, but this week's ep is also a re-run! Then I started thinking about how it's been in the news lately that NBC is changing around their scheduling, most of it having to do with the Olympics and Jay Leno. Then I realized that if the Olympics are on NBC, the Office probably won't be on for the entire duration of the Winter Games! I did a quick search, and to my relief, I found that a new Office is scheduled to air on January 21 – not this week, but next week thankfully. We might have to wait out the entire airing of the Winter Olympics, but at least they're not going to make us wait until it's over and we'll have at least one new Office episode to enjoy in the meantime. Any other Office fans out there? Does anyone know how many more new episodes we get for the rest of the season, or at least how many we can expect to enjoy before the beginning of the Olympics? How long IS the Olympics, anyway? And fyi, the Jan. 21 episode of the Office is called, "The Banker", and the plot outline is this: When a prospective buyer for Dunder Mifflin visits, everyone looks to impress and Michael gets nostalgic.

Sounds hilarious, as usual! And don't get me wrong, this show is so great that reruns are tons of fun too. We were just watching the "Frame Toby" episode from season 5 last night, and we had to rewind 4 times to listen to Creed's classic line about the quarry – I'm not going to repeat it here because it's mostly the WAY he says it, but it has to be one of the funniest Office moments EVER! Which got me to thinking about a hypothetical situation – what if Creed were a character who came to our semi-regular game nights? HAHA!