

100!

This is my **100th** blog post! What a long way I've come from my first blog post, aptly and boringly titled, "First Post" – it was a description of me learning to blog! And what a variety of subjects I've covered, from retractable sharpie pens, to kids' blankies... from movies and tv shows to animals, trips, and family life... It seems like forever ago that I was taking you all through the 11, 572 snow days we had, and it's been fun to share all these aspects of my life on the internet while learning things about my friends and family who read and/or comment on my posts. So thanks to all my readers, even if you just read because I make you, thanks anyway... I truly appreciate each and every comment I receive – written and spoken, keep it up! And might I add that I'm the first tangents.org blogger to achieve this milestone... hope to have others join me soon!

Brown Recluse Spider Warning!

This is the THIRD time I've gotten this email forward, so I thought it was worth mentioning in my blog. The subject line of the email reads: Fwd: Dangerous Spider Bite – Brown Recluse Spider (Graphic pictur...

The body of the email shows some awful pictures of someone's infection on their hand that they supposedly got from a spider bite. Since I am a skeptic of ANYTHING I get via email forward, I looked up this warning on snopes.com, the website that investigates possible urban legends and their origins. Actually, while I was at it, I looked up snopes on snopes.com, seeing what they'd say about their own site being an urban legend, but that's another post...

Anyway, back to the spider bite warning. Instead of posting the pictures of the infection here, I will just provide a link to the snopes.com entry about it since the pictures are pretty gross... [Click here](#) if you have a morbid curiosity and you'd like to see what the inside of someone's hand looks like.□ So anyway – and I find myself saying anyway again, which means lots of *tangents* in this post :). **Anyway**, when I looked up the brown recluse spider bite warning on snopes.com, it said that the status of this legend is undetermined, which means that they don't know if it's true or not. Evidently, the photos are real, and it's really an infection in someone's hand that is pictured, but the origin of the infection is not necessarily the spider bite. Here is a description of the incident by the victim her-(or him) self:

I suspect a spider bite was the cause. I was out in the wood at Caddo Lake and noticed a bite on my thumb. The doctor I was seeing thought it was a spider bite. Other doctors told me it was a brown recluse bite. It was also a MRSA infection. It became so infected because the first antibiotic I was on was not doing any good and I tried to finish the semester before going in to see the doctor. It was a very interesting experience and I no longer wait to go in to the doctor. Whether or not it was a brown recluse bite or not I can't say. I saw some very good doctors who specialize in spider bites and they thought it was. But you have probably seen the latest info on MRSA infections being misdiagnosed as spider bites.

Umm... this person described this experience as “interesting”? Wow, what a mellow personality one must have to possess a

wound that looks like that and describe it as interesting...

So, the moral of the story is, be careful with spider bites. Be even more careful with email forwards, and most importantly, (especially if you've read my post called, "Don't Let a Hospital Kill You) take good care of skin infections before they become as serious as the one pictured in the spider warning email, or you will have an "interesting experience" of your own!

Doors to Nowhere

In the town where we live, I've noticed a weird phenomena: there are many houses with second floor doors that lead seemingly nowhere. Well, they lead outside, but that's it – no stairwells, no balconies, no screened-in porches. Just random doors on houses. Perhaps there used to be something there, maybe a staircase, etc. It would be one thing if there were only a few houses like these, but in my town alone, there are at least 10, one being next-door! In a town this small, that is a lot. Actually, they aren't all second floor doors. The church down the street has one that is about 3-4 feet off the ground – enough to see that it's a door to nowhere, but not enough to be on the second floor. I wonder what the purpose of these doors are and why there are so many? Maybe it's something to ask the library historian about, or maybe some of you fellow NW Ohioans who read this blog and have lived here longer than I can enlighten me – people didn't waste doors in Chicago!

Don't Let a Hospital Kill You

What a time for me to stumble across this article on CNN – [Don't Let a Hospital Kill You](#)

I visit the doctor's office monthly, and it's time for me to start visiting every 2 weeks already! Also, I will be a resident of a hospital in about 2 ½ months! As I've written before, I try really hard to put my faith into the doctors and nurses who care for me, however, my husband is a born skeptic of the medical community. Sometimes it's difficult to cast his doubts and concerns aside, especially when I read something like this. Also, since I grew up in a huge metro area, even though I love our small community, I have to be honest and say the small hospital here scares me a at least a little. I haven't shown my husband this article yet... maybe I'll wait until the baby and I are home and healthy in July?

Take Me Out to the Ballgame – Uecker Style

Well, the Cubs lost their second series to the Brewers this season, but equally upsetting is what happened today during the 7th inning stretch. Taking place at Wrigley Field, today's game was the "rubber game" of the series. Someone decided Bob Uecker, aka 'the voice of the Brewers' would be a good guest to come and lead the crowd in 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame'. Nevermind for a minute the events that took place during the song today; this decision doesn't seem very wise to me from the get-go. Bob Uecker was born and raised in Milwaukee. He grew up watching the minor-league Milwaukee

Brewers, and the first team he signed with in the major leagues was the Milwaukee Braves. He's been doing the play-by-play announcements for the Brewers on the radio since 1971, and still holds the job. Why then, did someone deem it a good decision to have him come to Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs, to lead the crowd during the 7th inning stretch? If we pretend the Chicago White Sox don't exist — the Cubs have their biggest rivalry with their neighbors to the north, the Milwaukee Brewers. So why invite someone who has obviously been a lifelong Milwaukee fan to do the 7th inning stretch during a Cubs / Brewers game on Cubs turf? I just don't get it...

Here is a play by play of today's incident. Bob Uecker comes out to sing the 7th inning stretch. Nothing seemed amiss, until the part in the song that goes, "root, root, root, for the *Brewers*". He actually said 'root for the Brewers' at Wrigley Field. He was immediately BOOED LOUDLY by the crowd, of course, so then he sings, "you do the same for the Cubs" to the tune of the song, but by this point, the organist just gives up because now he's out of tune and has lost the organist in the song. In order to get back on track, he then proceeds to skip ahead, or maybe it's because he realized it would be an even worse decision to say something like "if they don't win it's a shame" about the Brewers in Wrigley Field. Either way, he skips ahead to "for it's ONE, TWO, THREE (*organist comes back into the song, hardly missing a beat except for the made-up lyrics*) strikes you're out at the old ball game!" I had kids to tend to, so I didn't see the entire fallout from the fiasco, but I did get back to the tv just in time to hear Uecker say, "I'm rooting for the Brewers, what do they want me to do, root for the Cubs?" YES! Of course the Cubs fans want you to root for the Cubs, especially at Wrigley Field! And if you can't do that, pretend! And if you can't pretend, then stay in Milwaukee!

Well, forget Bob Uecker and whoever invited him to Wrigley

today – that person was probably fired before the beginning of the 8th inning anyway. The Cubs are off to a great start this year, and I can only hope I get less busy so I can see more games because they are playing some great baseball, and it's fun to watch! I can only hope they beat the pants off the Cardinals who are in first place in the Cubs division by only a half game... That series begins tomorrow and I will be watching – in between kid duties, of course! GO CUBS!

An Afgan Girl on the Other Side of the Sky

I just finished reading a really interesting book about a girl named Farah Ahmedi. She grew up in Afghanistan, and when she was only 7 years old, she stepped on a land mine and was almost killed. She was one of the wounded children chosen to get medical care in Germany, so she had good medical care for 2 years, but it came with the price of loneliness because her family had to stay behind in Afghanistan, she didn't speak German, and no one at the hospital spoke her language. Her leg was amputated, and her other leg was rebuilt without a knee, leaving her unable to bend it. When she returned to Afghanistan as a 9-year-old, the Taliban was starting to take over, and a rocket hit her house, killing her father and two sisters. Her brothers were forced to try to flee to Pakistan in fear of being drafted or executed by the Taliban, and she hasn't heard from them since. Since she and her mother were the only members of her family left, they were forced to flee the Taliban also – we've all heard about how the Taliban don't treat women very well, and women couldn't even go out in public without men. This was difficult for Farah and her mother since they didn't have any men left in their family.

They spent 4 years as refugees in Pakistan until they were finally granted approval into the World Relief's American Refugee program. After the long process of applying and finally getting approved, they were waiting to leave for America when September 11, 2001 happened, and their trip was cancelled as no foreigners were being allowed into the country. Within 6 months however, the program was reinstated, and they came to America.

The book chronicles all the adventures, trials, and tribulations it took for Farah to become the successful American citizen she is today. It was a VERY interesting read; from the details of life in Afghanistan under the Taliban to the struggles of an Afgan widow and her daughter getting used to the American way of life. In fact, they had been through so much, that when they got to America, they were certain that their American hosts were actually slave owners who were trying to imprison them. It's a wonderful story about the triumph of the human spirit, and I recommend the book to anyone who likes learning about different parts of the world, other cultures, or just likes reading a good non-fiction life story. In fact, her book was published when she entered a Good Morning America contest and became a finalist. I heard about it because Farah attended the rival high school to the one where I went, so for me, it was interesting to read about the area I grew up in as seen through the eyes of someone who had been through as much as Farah and was seeing the area for the first time as an immigrant. [Check it out!](#)

Spring is in the Air =

BABIES!!!

CONGRATULATIONS to my sister in Illinois, who gave birth to a healthy 8 lb. 15 oz. baby boy today!!! I can't wait to see pictures of the little darling, and I will post them when I get them (HINT HINT - no, just kidding, I know you have much more important things to do right now than to worry about sending pictures) I just wish I could hold him! And Congratulations to Austin on becoming a big brother - it's an important job buddy; I know you'll be a great one! Welcome, Ryan Timothy!

Other baby news - our kids' babysitter's cat had kittens the other day. Look how unbelievably cute they are:



See if you can count 'em - makes a good picture puzzle, doesn't it? There are 6 - the little orange one kinda blends in with the towel - he's unique!

My daughter's teacher had her baby, and my two cousins also had their babies, which means 3 of my grandmother's 4 expected great-grandchildren for this year are here already! I am the last one standing ☐

Seriously, I feel left out, being the only one left pregnant out of all the women I knew who were expecting. I am ecstatic that all the babies are healthy and thriving though - that is truly something to be thankful for! For the most part, I love being pregnant, though I have to say this one is the most difficult pregnancy yet in some ways. Also the easiest in some ways too, so it's not all bad... But my feet are killing me constantly... I feel like I can't stand for more than 10-15 minutes at a time, and with a toddler and 2 other little kids to care for, that is a tough feeling to have. Plus I'm exhausted much of the time, and have terrible heartburn a lot... all this and 3 months to go, not to mention the fact that the weather is only getting nicer, then it will get really hot and then I'll just be miserable. I hate not having the energy or the desire to go outside to enjoy these nice days... it makes me feel guilty, especially because it means my toddler can't enjoy them with me. Is it mean for her to be couped up in the house with me on gorgeous days like today? She doesn't seem to mind though, and we do play together lots while I'm sitting down, so it can't be all bad... I just tell myself that in August I will have much more energy and time to enjoy the weather. It's hard to imagine now, but some of the fatigue and aches and pains will lift, I HOPE!

Holy Regrettable Cooking Show, Batman!

For our date night tonight, we decided to attend the much hyped cooking show sponsored by our local newspaper. Maybe that explains why it was so hyped right there - being sponsored by the newspaper = lots of free advertising, and since I read the paper every day, maybe it was drilled into my head that this thing would be fun. Was I ever wrong.

It began when we arrived only 10 minutes before the show started, and every seat was full. It was held in the high school gym, which means we now had to find seats in the bleachers and squeeze past everyone else - pregnancy bump and

all. I was so close to turning around and leaving right then and there; the fact that I didn't was my second mistake after buying the tickets to attend the thing in the first place. Apparently our local high school has no air conditioning, because the 1500 or so people who were crammed into the gym were all fanning themselves with their free cookbooks. Which brings me to another reason why I thought this thing would be such great fun. The tickets were \$10 / person, then there were coupons in the paper for \$3 off, which brings each ticket to \$7. They advertised a "bag full of samples, goodies, and free cookbooks" to every attendee, along with a chance to win lots of pretty cool door prizes. The sample bag was alright – no complaints there. The "choosing which wine with dinner" wheel made a great fan to combat the heat, I must say, and I'm not the only one who thought so – most of the 1500 sardines in attendance were using it as such. But on the way into the show, apparently that's when they handed out the doorprize entry blank and the free can of chili sauce, and somehow (maybe it was my panic when I saw the crowd we'd have to conquer to find a seat) I missed getting either handout. So, here we were, sitting on the bleachers packed in like sardines in 100°+ heat, and I've just found a way to cut our chances of winning a doorprize *in half*. Even though we were a little on the late side, that actually turned out to be a good thing because by the time we bumped and stumbled into our seats (ie, the square foot of space each person was allowed for their person, legs, knees, pregnancy bumps etc.), the "show" was ready to begin, thank goodness. Except it became clear that once the show began, it was not going to pick up pace. It was a woman on a stage making recipes (she was there to do 8 of them she said!) so far away that you couldn't see anything she was doing. Her "jokes" were lame, and she barely had a personality. So now, this was hot, boring, uncomfortable for my aching body, and my chances of winning a cool grill are like 1 in 1500 instead of 2 in 1500? Forget being polite or wasting money. Our time is so much more important; especially with 3.5 kids. We bumped and stumbled our way out of there,

same way we got in, mumbled our apologies for stepping on people, and didn't look back. We fled the cooking show.

So that brings me to the Batman reference in the title of this post. When we went to pick up the kids at the babysitter's after the cooking show debacle, we went in her laundry room to check out the 2-day-old kittens... all of a sudden, screams erupted. I'm normally not a screamer, really more of a gasper when I get startled, but the babysitter and her daughter and my daughters were ahead of me in the laundry room and saw a bat. Their screams made me scream – I'm not afraid of a little Ohio brown bat, I swear, but apparently screaming is contagious. So both of our husbands come running, and hers goes for a broom. Mine respects how sensitive I am about animals, so he asked for a bowl and was going to capture it. So they open the door, only to find the mommy cat had beaten the babysitter's husband to the murder of the bat. She devoured it whole, and there was really nothing left for me to be sad about, so I pretended it didn't happen, took pictures of the really cute kittens, and left. What a night!

Shaken Gang Syndrome

I am a current events junkie, so of course I've been following the recent story of the earthquake in southern Illinois. This earthquake was pretty strong; so strong, that tremors were felt as far away as large cities like Chicago, Indianapolis, and even Atlanta, Georgia.

Another recent headline in the news lately is the rash of gun violence in the city of Chicago. Seems the previous weekend saw 36 people shot in the city, 9 of them fatally. [Click here](#) for that story. Since they're saying that the midwest

basically has not stopped shaking since the the earthquake last Friday, let me offer up a possible explanation for this phenomena: Shaken Gang Syndrome.

Sure, the gangs in Los Angeles can handle earthquakes without batting an eye, but it's not something that people in the midwest have had to adjust to. Maybe the instability of the earth's crust contributes to people feeling emotionally unstable, and this is illustrated with rising violence and civil unrest.

All jokes aside, let's hope this weekend's skyrocketing violent crime rate was an isolated incident in Chicago. The Chicago PD would like you to note that for the month of March, the violent crime rate was down by a whopping 1% compared to March 2007, so that is promising news!

A Day of Mini

Finally the snow has stopped (quick, where is some wood for knocking?!? Our snowblower has been put away, which is enough of a jinx, but add a comment like the above, and I'm asking for trouble!), and the weather is finally being cooperative enough for some outdoor fun. So this weekend had us taking in the first mini-golf game of the season with friends. Unless, of course, you count the mini-golfing we did in Florida in January, but I don't count that since in Florida the mini-golf is more like a distraction to the lizards hopping around the course and the captive alligators you can feed at our favorite mini-golf place in Orlando.

I did not do very well this weekend. Of the four of us actually playing (the kids futzed about the course), I came in last. I will blame it on my pregnancy bump – it's getting

quite large lately and is throwing off my balance, not to mention my stamina. I was distracted by looking for a bench to sit on after every hole. Yeah, that's it, I can't mini-golf while pregnant. Nevermind all the practice I got on my computer this winter (see previous mini-golf posts of mine where I have links to (mostly) cool computer versions of mini-golf), I just can't mini-golf while pregnant. Oh, just kidding, I've done it before, it's no big deal and not that much different, just gotta swing around the bump. I just lost because I was rusty, and I didn't take my time putting. Besides that, my husband did extra well this time, and he usually comes in last, so last place had to go to someone. I don't really care if I win or lose, for me, it's just about learning what the ball does in various situations, gaining that experience, and most importantly, having fun! I did win the mini-bowling we played afterwards though... I really want to get one of those for my basement. I've always liked bowling, and here is a way the physically impaired (as I am for a few months here) can still enjoy participating in the sport. Pipe dreams, of course... if I had that kind of money or space in my basement, I could think of a dozen better things to put down there... mostly animals...

But anyway, I looked for cool mini-golf shots on youtube, and I actually didn't see any... just a lot more people worse at mini-golf than I am who don't even realize it. But I did come across this pretty cool contraption at a mini-golf course in Colorado, check it out: