

Kids VS. Daylight Savings

No one likes to lose an hour of sleep. Usually I take it as it comes, however, because I do enjoy the extra hour of daylight. This year is another story. The kids have NOT adjusted well to the time change AT ALL! My oldest, an 8-year-old, comes into our bedroom EVERY morning and whispers, "Dad... Dad... DAD... Is there a delay?" This is partially the school districts fault. For awhile, we were having 2-hour school delays due to weather at least weekly. So now, she can't get used to the fact that the weather is finally nice enough to start school on time. Either that, or the district is sick of the heat of all the missed school and won't delay anymore... But much of it is because of the time change; my daughter just wants there to be a delay so she can go back to sleep for an hour or two.

My 3-year-old is back to staying up later than us. She has always been a toughie to get on a proper sleep schedule, and wouldn't you know it, we had her in an awesome sleeping groove until this darned time change happened. She is back to refusing to go to bed, and she is a crabby zombie in the mornings. The other night, she was sneaking peeks as we tried to watch Poltergeist in the living room – THAT'LL get her right to sleep! That movie scared me awake for years – that clown part is STILL scary!

The baby – actually, she is now an almost 17-month-old toddler – is the most affected. She cannot fall asleep before 10 at night, and she actually sleeps in a little bit in the mornings, kind of. She'll wake up at 5 or 6, then fall back asleep when Dad lays on the floor with her – poor Dad! Have you noticed a trend? They go to Dad when it comes to sleep issues – they KNOW better than to mess around with me – I get kinda grumpy when I don't sleep well. Unfortunately, the pregnancy has made me a light sleeper so I get woken up anyway.

Something tells me we'll get it all worked out, but then we will just have to change the clocks back an hour the very weekend the kids finally adjust, starting all over again!

The Office and The Anniversary

Our wedding anniversary is coming up – this year marks #9! – and there's a pretty cool gift we get this year: the first new Office episode in months! Steve Carell gave an interview with *TvGuide*, and said that his character Michael Scott is hosting a dinner party, and it goes terribly awry. If you know anything about the show, then you know how hilarious this will be and are looking forward to it as much as we are. So on April 10, check out the first brand new Office episode since the writer's strike saga!

And that reminds me, on April 10, 2009, we are hopefully going to have the time and resources to put together a "second wedding" for our tenth anniversary. We didn't know any of our Ohio friends when we got married way back in '99, so we'd like to renew our vows and "get married" all over again in Ohio, 10 years later! And, luckily for us, April 10, 2009 falls on a Friday! So, this year we will be watching the Office. Next year, we will be "getting married" again, hopefully!

Gas Gouging in NW Ohio – Alive and Well

My fellow Northwest Ohioans, this is a call to action!

Have you noticed that we are being taken advantage of? Yesterday, the national gas price average was \$3.22 / gallon for unleaded. Yet here in NW Ohio, every station in this town had gas for **\$3.39 / gallon**. The price of gas in the Northern suburbs of Chicago has reached \$3.27. We (especially in our family since we have loved ones in that area who we have to watch pay through the nose for EVERYTHING) have always prided ourselves on having lower prices than they have, MUCH lower actually. We used to have gas prices about \$.25 / gallon lower than Chicagoland. This is no longer the case! Their gas is now \$.12 *cheaper* than ours! What will follow? Will we no longer have cheaper food than they have? Will we soon be paying \$10 for a hamburger, have an average restaurant bill of \$30 for lunch for two, movie theater tickets at \$10 each? Where does it end? I can't help but feel the gas stations have called our bluff. We can't boycott them, because let's face it, we're an island. We get to enjoy our relatively crime and pollution free existences because we are so far from the nearest large cities. However, the local gas stations are starting to take advantage of this, because they know it will cost way too much for us to get out of town to get some gas somewhere else. The average price in Toledo yesterday was \$3.22 / gallon , but to get to Toledo, it would cost about \$5-\$10 in gas, depending on your car! And who has time to run to Toledo for gas, anyway? But why is it that Toledo has cheaper gas prices than we do? Everything was always cheaper here... at least it used to be.

I'm just worried about how they will gouge us next. I looked into filing a complaint with the attorney general of Ohio, and their website said to contact the stores first. So I guess

it's only fair that we first let the gas stations know that we're terribly unhappy. I would write to the newspaper here in town also, but they've never printed my letters. Maybe I complain too much? Actually, one letter was very nice thanking the person who turned in my lost wallet with all the money still in it, but they still didn't print it. Anyway, if someone else wants to write to the paper, that'd be great. The more the merrier on this, I say, what could it hurt? Complain to the local gas stations and ask them questions, write to the newspaper, write to the attorney general, anything and everything anyone can do will help. Remember, driving season hasn't even officially started yet, and when it does, the price gouging at the pump will only worsen! Here is a link to the complaint section of the Ohio attorney general's website – it tells you how to fill out a complaint online, and also gives phone numbers and email addresses:

<https://www.ag.state.oh.us/citizen/consumer/complaints.asp>

Please help me – let's do SOMETHING!

Rollbacks Are Extinct!

Just a short little venting post because I made my weekly stop at Walmart today... and not one, not two, but **THREE** price increases awaited me!

1. drawstring kitchen garbage bags – when I started shopping at Walmart in Ohio only 5 years ago, these were \$1.33 / box of 20. Last time I went to Walmart, they were \$2.88 for the same box, and today, they are \$2.98 for the same box that was \$1.33 not more than 5 years ago! That is more than **DOUBLE** the price in 5 years!
2. bananas – when they opened our brand new SuperWalmart a

few years ago, they pretended like the regular price of bananas was a cheap \$.29 / lb. but the truth is, I haven't seen them at that price since! They have gone up and down constantly, and are now a whopping \$.67 / lb – the most expensive bananas I have ever seen and I refuse to pay it! And let's face it, Walmart has the worst looking produce I've ever seen!

3. dryer sheets – before today were \$.88 / box. Today, they decided we should have to pay \$.96 / box. If they go over \$1, I will no longer be getting my dryer sheets at Walmart.

To complete my complaint session, I actually had to email Walmart the other day to complain about their photo service. I used to get all my digital photos made into prints at Walmart because it was cheap and convenient. I would order between \$1-\$10 at a time. Since I have a lot of kids, they (used to) get lots of business from me. But now they won't let me pay for my orders in the store. I like to order the pictures when I take them; sometimes there are only a few at a time. And I refuse to sit there and make teeny weeny charges on my credit card over the internet every few days – it's a bookkeeping nightmare, not to mention how little trust I have in Walmart after all the other crap they always pull.

About the grocery prices, I understand that there is something called inflation, but this is ridiculous! No wonder Walmart has abandoned their “rollback” campaign – rollbacks are extinct!

Dodged a Bullet

Ohio was on the national news last week, and it wasn't for politics. CNN and the Weather Channel were talking about our

state because of the major snow storm that befell Cleveland, not to mention the rest of the state – except us, for once! Here in the Northwest corner of the state, we dodged a bullet this time. Got about 2 inches only, and it didn't affect driving conditions. My husband didn't even have to shovel since the wind blew it all off the sidewalks this time! I hope it will stop snowing for the season soon, but if it doesn't, any more “storms” like this are welcome any time!

Spring Ahead... to Country Music Award Time!

Actually, it's time for the Academy of Country Music awards (ACM's), which are totally different than the Country Music Association's awards (CMA's), but somehow *Spring Ahead to the Academy of Country Music Awards* just didn't make such a great blog title. For you country music fans out there, you know that spring and fall are the awesome times of year for country music awards. We get 2 great awards shows, and coming up in May are the ACM awards – the nominations were announced last week, that's why I get to write about this now. I was lucky enough to attend this show live one time in 2000. It was TOTALLY AWESOME – I'd LOVE to go back... something like that (and lots of liquor) just might get me on an airplane again... yeah right. Anyway, Dolly Parton hosted, and Dick Clark ran around the stage during the breaks fretting over this and that and everything in between. Winners' acceptance speeches got cut off, and there was the general glitz and glam of any L.A. awards show – only we were there! And talk about a GREAT concert! Getting to see like, 15 top country music performers LIVE, singing only their hits was unbeatable. And I learned a lot too because I had never been to the taping of a live tv

event before. Did you know that they have “stand-ins” ready in case anyone who is seated down in front has to leave for the bathroom or anything else? They pay models to dress up and get ready in case they need to sit in say, Wynonna Judd’s seat so it’s not empty when they show the audience on tv if Wy needs a potty break (that actually happened!). So anyway, this year I will be watching the ACM’s from the comfort of my couch; hopefully without interruptions from kids (should change the name of this post to *Yeah, Right*).

I can’t remember if it’s the ACM’s or the CMA’s where they’ll have a live performer, and then that person will be nominated for the next award, so after their performance they’ll be waiting backstage, and every time they end up winning the award! I wish they’d make it a little less obvious! We like to fill out our own ballots and make a guessing game out of our picks for winners, and this type of format makes that too easy! All you have to do is figure out the order of award presentations, figure out the schedule of performers, and *Viola!* You’ve won the bet! I’ll let you know come CMA awards time which awards show does this, unless they’ve (hopefully) changed things by now.

Here are the nominees this year, enjoy the show!

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

Kenny Chesney

Brad Paisley

Rascal Flatts

George Strait Keith Urban

TOP MALE VOCALIST

Rodney Atkins

Kenny Chesney

Brad Paisley

George Strait

Keith Urban

TOP FEMALE VOCALIST

Miranda Lambert

Martina McBride

LeAnn Rimes

Taylor Swift

Carrie Underwood

TOP VOCAL GROUP

Diamond Rio

Eagles

Emerson Drive

Little Big Town

Rascal Flatts

TOP VOCAL DUO

Big & Rich

Brooks & Dunn

Halfway To Hazard

Montgomery Gentry

Sugarland

TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST

Luke Bryan

Jack Ingram

Jake Owen

TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST

Sarah Buxton

Kellie Pickler

Taylor Swift

TOP NEW DUO OR VOCAL GROUP

Carolina Rain

Lady Antebellum

The Wreckers

ALBUM OF THE YEAR [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

5th Gear – Brad Paisley (Arista Nashville) Produced by Frank Rogers

Crazy Ex-Girlfriend – Miranda Lambert (Columbia) Produced by Frank Liddell, Mike Wrucke

Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates – Kenny Chesney (BNA) Produced by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney

If You're Going Through Hell – Rodney Atkins (Curb) Produced by Rodney Atkins, Ted Hewitt

Taylor Swift – Taylor Swift (Big Machine) Produced by Scott

Borchetta, Nathan Chapman # 6 Produced by Robert Ellis Orrall

SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

Don't Blink – Kenny Chesney, Produced by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney BNA

Famous In A Small Town – Miranda Lambert, Produced by Frank Liddell, Mike Wrucke Columbia

Lost In This Moment – Big & Rich, Produced by Big Kenny, John Rich – Warner Bros WRN

Stay – Sugarland, Produced by Kristian Bush, Byron Gallimore, Jennifer Nettles Mercury

Watching Airplanes – Gary Allan, Produced by Gary Allan , Mark Wright MCA Nashville

SONG OF THE YEAR [Award to Composer(s)/Publisher(s)/Artist(s)]

Don't Blink – Kenny Chesney – Writers: Casey Beathard, Chris Wallin_Publishers: Lavender Zoo Music (BMI), Mama's Dream Music (ASCAP), Sony/ATV Acuff Rose (BMI), WB Music Corp. (ASCAP)

Lost In This Moment – Big & Rich – Writers: Keith Anderson, Rodney Clawson, John Rich Publishers: EMI April Music, Inc. (ASCAP), Romeo Cowboy Music (ASCAP), WB MusicCorp. (ASCAP), Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp. (BMI), Writer's Extreme Music (BMI)

Moments – Emerson Drive – Writers: Dave Berg, Annie Tate, Sam Tate Publishers: Gravitron (SESAC), WB Music Corp. (ASCAP)

Watching You – Rodney Atkins – Writers: Rodney Atkins, Steve Dean, Brian White Publishers: Bethar Music (BMI), Mike Curb Music (BMI), Multisongs (SESAC), Songs From The White House (SESAC)

Stay – Sugarland – Writer: Jennifer Nettles – Publishers:
Jennifer Nettles Publishing (ASCAP)

VIDEO OF THE YEAR [Award to Producer(s)/Director(s)/Artist(s)]

Don't Blink – Kenny Chesney – Producer: Tacklebox Films
Director: Shaun Silva

Lost In This Moment – Big & Rich Producer: Big Kenny, Steve
Lamar, Marc Oswald Director: Robert Deaton and George Flanigen

Online – Brad Paisley – Producer: Frames Per Second –
Director: Jason Alexander

Stay – Sugarland – Producer: Kristian Bush, Byron Gallimore,
Jennifer Nettles – Director: Shaun Silva

Watching You – Rodney Atkins – Producer: Broken Poet
Production – Director: Eric Welch

VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record
Company]

Because Of You – Reba McEntire Duet With Kelly Clarkson –
Produced by Tony Brown, Reba McEntire MCA Nashville

Find Out Who Your Friends Are – Tracy Lawrence With Tim McGraw
and Kenny Chesney – Produced by Julian King, Tracy Lawrence –
Rocky Comfort/C05

Shiftwork – Kenny Chesney Duet With George Strait – Produced
by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney BNA

Till We Ain't Strangers Anymore – Bon Jovi Featuring LeAnn
Rimes – Produced by Dann Huff – Mercury

What You Give Away –Vince Gill With Sheryl Crow – Produced by
Vince Gill, John Hobbs, Justin Niebank – MCA Nashville

Thanks, But I Prefer a MA'AM-wich

I have yet to figure out what makes women so much better at making sandwiches than men. It might sound funny, but it's very true. I've been to a number of Subway Sandwich Shops across a number of states, and every time without fail, if a male makes the sandwich, eating it is dreadful. They don't spread the condiments evenly, so the sandwich is either soggy or falls apart or both, and it definitely doesn't taste very good when ingredients are all clumped together and not spread out correctly. I can think of 4 possible reasons why females make better "sandwich artists" than males: **1. organizational skills** – Women tend to have better ways of organizing things and in a more efficient order. Apparently, this holds true even when organizing sandwich ingredients. **2. detail-orientated thinking** – Women tend to think about and obsess over every little detail, just ask their husbands. **3. patience** – Women practice having lots of patience to put up with the men in their daily lives. It takes lots of patience to make a perfect sub. **4. compassion** – Let's face it, women have more of this than men. And it takes an understanding woman to want to take the time to care about your sandwich.

Does this mean that having a woman in the white house is a better choice after all? Probably not, I wouldn't read that far into it. But if I were you, next time you go to a Subway and a male worker says, "Can I help you?", you should say, "Thanks, but I prefer a ma'am-wich".

HAHAHA! Just kidding! You'll look like a big idiot if you say that! If a man makes your sandwich, just wear a bib and don't expect it to taste very good!

Snow Day #11,572

Ok, I'm exaggerating just a tad on the number of snow days we've had, but that's what it feels like by now! I suppose with the new dog in the house, today was as good a day as any to have yet another snow day, but my poor husband is going to go crazy from shoveling all this snow! It's become almost a daily chore – just what he needed! And, the weather guys are saying that they're tracking ANOTHER system due here on Friday! They won't use the dreaded 4-letter "s" word though, it's kinda funny. They'll just call it a "weather system" and "let's see what it drops on us" – as if there's any chance it will bring something other than snow (that dreaded 4-letter word!), yeah right.

Hubby and I braved the weather last night to venture out to a movie for date night. Our date night is once a week on Tuesdays, and wouldn't you know it, it's snowed for the last like, 5 Tuesdays in a row, no exaggerating this time! Last week, our movie theater was CLOSED because of the snow – that stank. Instead of having a nice dinner, we got snacks at KFC cuz we were running late for the movie, and then we got there, and they were closed! So sick of this weather already! What did that groundhog say again?!? So anyway, we ventured to a neighboring town with a movie theater that's a little bigger; that way we could be assured it would be open. We saw Vantage Point, an action movie with Dennis Quaid, Forrest Whittaker, and Matthew Fox. And speaking of Groundhog Day, if you've seen that movie, even though it's a comedy, Vantage Point actually had something in common with it in that they kept showing the same scene over and over. The point of the movie was to take the audience through an incident of terrorism, one perspective at a time. Dennis Quaid and Matthew Fox played

secret service agents, and Forrest Whittaker was a tourist bystander who happened to catch everything on video. It was a satisfying action movie – MUCH better than Gone Baby Gone... I might actually say it was kinda like Groundhog Day meets In the Line of Fire, if you've seen that movie, since Dennis Quaid's character had been through an assassination attempt on the President before and was jumpy – just like Clint Eastwood's character in In the Line of Fire. If you like action movies, this one won't disappoint. I was actually surprised there wasn't a little more to the plot, and I can't believe the constant violence earned it only a PG13 rating. But when I think about it, I suppose you could see the same type of violence on tv any given night or even on cable during the day – it's just what has happened to entertainment these days, I guess. Vantage Point has constant action, the movie is never slow, and seeing the action from the different people's perspectives (vantage points ☐ get it?) was interesting and not at all confusing like I was concerned about. I found something at the end of the movie incredibly hokey, but then again, that's common in action movies, you gotta appreciate them for what they are.

Voting in the great state of OHIO

Today is finally our turn to vote in the primaries here in Ohio. And of the candidates who are left, I only really like one! A lot of people in this neck of the woods find it unfair that we don't get much of a say earlier in the campaign, when all the candidates are left. I just accept it for the way it is, and I enjoy being in the national spotlight now – it's neat to turn on CNN and hear Ohio this and Ohio that. So, I

will be going to the polls later today when time permits to perform my duty as an American citizen and vote – though I hope it doesn't land me in jury duty at a later time. And I will vote for the candidate I would like to see lead our country, even though he doesn't stand a chance and will most likely drop out of the race within a week. Then tonight, I will watch all the news channels as the final numbers come in, and whether we like it or not, we can all enjoy being a part of history, since pretty soon it will be official – we will have a presidential candidate who does not fit the mold of the traditional American president: a white male. Well, sometimes change is good, but for now, go Buckeyes!

ANOTHER forward?

I hope you're not getting the wrong opinion of me – I'm really not a big fan of email forwards... it's just that I get so many. I don't religiously forward every one to everybody I know. And I am certainly not superstitious and don't believe that I will get bad luck for not forwarding emails. But occasionally, I will follow the directions on a forward, or sometimes I even pass it on to my friends and family because I find something cute, fun, or just a little bit entertaining. One popular forward is the "4 Things About You" forward. I've recently received this one for the umpteenth time (wish I had been keeping track), but I don't mind since filling out questionnaires about yourself tends to be fun, I don't know why... maybe to get a chance to think about your favorite things and put them in a list? Anyway, I've decided to post my answers here:

A) Four jobs I have had in my life:

Mommy

business owner

receptionist

office manager

B) Four movies I would watch over and over: (I'm just gonna put my favorites even though I wouldn't watch them over and over – Forrest Gump is just too sad, but it's still my favorite even though I haven't seen it in years)

Wizard Of Oz

As Good as it Gets

Forrest Gump

Nanny McPhee

C) Four places I have lived:

Warrenville, IL

Lincoln, NE

Pioneer, OH

Wheaton, IL

D) Four TV shows I watch:

The Office - writer's strike is OVER - can't wait for new episodes!!!

Lost

Dr. Phil

Friends / Everybody Loves Raymond reruns

E) Four places I have been:

Orlando, FL

Washington, DC

Idaho

California

F) Four people who e-mail me (regularly):

Sue

Vickie

My mom

Elizabeth

G) Four of my favorite foods:

gyros off the spit

saganaki

spaghetti

cheese

H) Four places I would like to be right now:

home

somewhere warm

at a zoo

at an animal park

I) Four friends I think will respond:

Elizabeth

Jamy

Vickie

MB

J) Four things I am looking forward to this year:

The birth of our 4th daughter

having 4 kids

warm weather

the Cubs season