

That's IT!

I've **had** it with my sleep problems! I don't usually have trouble falling asleep, but that's probably because I don't even start trying until midnight or later. Sometimes I do have trouble falling asleep, and even if I can fall asleep easily, I usually do not stay asleep all night. Not that I remember any of the several or many times I wake up each night; I'm usually in a stupor where I'll say things that don't make sense or say not-so-nice things to the dog or anyone else who happens to be in my way. The main problem is that I wake up in the morning feeling terribly under-rested, never ready to start the day, and the problem has been getting steadily worse in recent weeks. I rarely get headaches, but because of the stress of my horrible week compounded by the not sleeping, my head has been throbbing all week (the extremely loud live band at youth group did NOT help!). I've tried going to bed earlier, I've tried limiting my food and drink intake at night, I've tried taking naps when time allows (which is rare), and I've tried taking melatonin (an herb found naturally in the body that helps promote sleep), but nothing is helping. I just can't take it anymore; it's impossible to make my long busy days of caring for 4 small children enjoyable when I feel so tired all the time. My husband stayed awake for a little bit and listened to me sleep last night, and he said that there were times when I stopped breathing, which is a symptom of sleep apnea. So, as much as I hate to do it and don't even really have the time for it, I've made an appointment with the local sleep specialist who just happens to be our children's pediatrician. We'll see what he says next week, but chances are that I'll get sent over to the sleep center for a sleep study – YUCK. Just what I want to be: a lab rat; the subject of a study who has to find a way to fall asleep in a room with a bunch of people watching and while hooked up to all kinds of machines. This is just about one of the last things I want to do, but it

shows how incredibly desperate I am to finally get a good night's rest. If they can actually help me, feeling well-rested is going to be an amazing yet totally foreign feeling! If it doesn't help me, I'm back where I started but with one less option AND having missed out on a fun night with my family ☐

New Baby!

Made you look! Did you think I was going to say we were awaiting the arrival of our 5th child?

No such luck – probably wouldn't declare it for the first time on a blog anyway. I just wanted to share my son's first professional haircut that made everyone joke about him being a different baby – although "toddler" is a much more appropriate word here than "baby" – my son is all over the place, and the haircut made him look SO MUCH older! He's really cute with the haircut, but why do they grow up so fast!?! These pictures were taken only 4 days apart.

BEFORE:



AFTER:



Toboggan... t-o-b-o-g-g-a-n

Just found out that my nephew, Joshua came in second place in his school's spelling bee putting him on the next step to the National Bee. As you might have guessed, he misspelled toboggan. As his father so eloquently pointed out, Joshua did not inherit his spelling and grammar skills from him. Definitely his math and computer knowledge.

I just am curious as to when they started taking the top two finalists on to the next level. I would have progressed not only my 8th grade year but at least my 5th grade year when the champion and I went back and forth until I finally incorrectly spelled *illegible*. My sixth grade year, I had an unfortunate slip of the tongue when I put a *g* in pajamas (still remember that). I do not remember how far I got my 7th grade year nor do I remember the word I won on my 8th grade year... go figure.

Anyway... good luck Joshua in January.

New Edition

Ok... play on words. [*It's a Wonderful Life*](#) is about to get even cuter. I know that this has been planned for a while, but tomorrow night will be a rehearsal for a children's choir that will perform prior to curtain time... if there are any eavesdroppers who have elementary-jr. high students who would be interested (6pm at the Huber Opera House. Now if we get 100 kids there, we know who to blame ☹). I think this is a brilliant move! It will not only provide LIVE pre-show entertainment, but will hopefully fill even more seats. I have already been approached by people in E-town about what show I am in this Christmas (if any). I immediately exclaim that I am the sinister Mr. Potter (not to be confused with the boy wizard). Many people from the numerous churches in town (so many for a town this size... long story that I will not get into) have apparently been making plans to get groups together. Nothing on my own church, but who knows. I had at least 3 customers today who are making plans!

We also have an extremely gifted artist in the cast. Our own George Bailey has produced at least one painting depicting a scene from the show that I am assuming will be on display and signed pieces will be available for purchase.

I cannot tell you how excited I am to be part of this GREAT show and the fun and wonderful cast and the director and [producer](#) ain't bad neither ☹

Ish a show, now get outa my

way .

[A Miracle on 34th Street](#) opens this Friday and we definitely have a show to come and see. This was not always apparent by the number of people we had drop out and then had multiple recasting of the actors involved. My first entrance in the show was to be as the Drunken Santa who gets fired from the parade. While I still play that role, I have another part in the opening scene.

We have a great cast, wonderful crew and excellent director. I get to be on stage with a few of my favorite people to work with. We have new faces and quite a few young faces. Be sure to get your reservations early. I've heard them talk about it on the local station and I only listen to about 20 minutes in the morning.

I get the evening off tonight, so I get to get some of the things done that have been waiting for just such a moment. Short post, but I will be busy soon.

Come see a show....

Bad Things Come In Threes

Ok, so no one in the family has bad health (at least not yet, we'll see what happens in a few weeks after the stress from the holidays and everything I'm about to unload takes its toll) and for that I am very grateful, but we have been hit by some bad luck in the past few days.

First was worst – my husband's hard drive went *kaput*. No warning; he just went to work Monday and found that virtually

everything he had worked upon for the past 5 years or so is **gone**. Software he had written, info for clients that are now going to be extremely unhappy – **everything**. There are few options; everything he read on the internet about this problem raises little hope. He can send the hard drive away to a company with special equipment, but it's doubtful they can fix it, plus the price tag would be \$1500-2000. Basically there is no hope for the hard drive, and it's essentially as if he was laid off from his job less than a month before Christmas.

As if that wasn't enough, we noticed the other day that we no longer have a metal flap guarding our van's gas tank. We have no idea what happened to it, but now that it's missing, we are going through gas about twice as fast as we should be. Of course the car is no longer under warranty, so it will cost who-knows-how-much to fix it. The glove box broke months ago, and the tires are getting pretty bald (all 4 of course). We were going to get everything taken care of at the same time, but with no income now, that won't be happening.

And for #3 – our mortgage company decided to buy us extra disaster insurance for our house. Except it's not their treat – we have to pay for it. What happened is that we switched insurance companies about a month ago, trying to save money. Apparently there was some sort of mix-up, and everything was not transferred smoothly, leaving us lacking in the disaster area of the insurance. So the mortgage company got us some of their own choosing, added \$300 to our monthly bill, and sent us a letter about it after it was too late to avoid paying this monthly fee. I hate insurance companies!!!

Don't mean to complain, like I said earlier, at least no one is ill and we do still have our health – that is the most important thing. And if it's really true that bad things happen in threes, then we should be done with the bad news for at least a little while, right?

Classy.

Family brawl erupts at children's pizza place

Deborah Donovan | Daily Herald Staff

Contact writer

CHICAGO:

Arlington Heights police are investigating a "family ordeal that got out of hand" Sunday night at the Chuck E. Cheese restaurant, 955 W. Dundee Road.

According to Sgt. Tom Boggs, a family was apparently celebrating the birthday of a young man in his early teens when other members of the family showed up, and an argument began.

"There was a pushing match and things were thrown," said Boggs.

One person was taken to Northwest Community Hospital with a cut below an eye and another person went to a clinic for a cut on a hand.

"We tried to talk to everybody there last night," Boggs said. "It's hard to say at this point whether there will be charges."

Boggs said he believes some of the participants had been drinking. He is not sure how many people were involved, but officers talked with five or six Sunday night.

While the altercation created a mess in the restaurant, no physical damage was done there, the sergeant said.

Boggs said the people involved were from the Northwest

suburbs.

The restaurant has pizza, arcade games, shows and other things that appeal to young children. A woman who answered the phone Monday afternoon declined to comment on the record.

In His Hands

The next few weeks will not be easy ones. This morning, we learned that my “Aunt” Lu’s (my Uncle Bob’s current wife) mother passed away last night. A very long-lived lady... sweet as anything who lived a very prosperous life (91 years young with 12 kids, I think). She was a huge fan of the WCCT and she would come to shows quite often either with Lu or Father Fred. I remember that following *Grease*, she and Lu came to the basement to say Hi. She was also the Grandmother of one of my best friends.

Yesterday, we learned that Aunt Carol (Bob’s first wife) is nearing the end of her long fought battle with cancer. Definitely will be very hard this one. Care givers were at her house with my cousins and the rest of her family to prepare them (as much as can be expected anyway.. can anyone really be prepared?) I’m not really sure how long she has been fighting, but it has been a great while in and out of remission until finally there is no more that can be done except to pray for Carol. So many great memories growing up, spending the night with my cousin until it was deemed inappropriate for Alicia and I to stay over at each others house (I think I was 8). At get togethers, we would always devise a plot whereby we would con the parents into allowing this. Very few people refer to me as “James” but I got so used to it that I expected Carol to address me as such. I

remember a Christmas gift she gave me a few years back in a large envelope with “For Your Eyes Only” printed on the front. You will have to use your imagination to determine what was inside and it had nothing to do with the 12th 007 movie ☐

So... could be a rough few days ahead. Not the most opportune time of the year but I don't think there really is an appropriate time. But at least their suffering soon will be ended and will soon be in a much better place.

Tool Man

My almost 17-month-old son has started using “tools”. When we put up the Christmas decorations, he started pulling chairs away from the table, pushing them over to the bookcase to try to climb and get at the nativity. Yesterday, he took down a wall hanging and began to use the hanger rod as a spoon for his mashed potatoes. When I told my dad about this mischief, he said that this behavior seems pretty smart. Yeah, I replied, smart like a chimpanzee! I really don't remember the girls doing so much climbing, tool-using, or just general sabotage!

And another thing about little boys – the parental chasing. I always see moms chasing their little boys; running after them around the store, the zoo, wherever – and nine times out of ten, the kid being chased by the parent is a boy. I had a little boy almost a year and a half ago, and I've been wondering when my turn would come. Yesterday I got my answer. While I was getting my little boy dressed, he said an emphatic “NO!”, then turned around and ran from me. He dove under the dining room table, where I had to drag him out,

kicking and screaming. So yeah, the chasing of little boys by their parents begins shortly after they learn to walk.

Ah, the toddler days again – feels like it's been awhile, probably because the toddler in our family before our son was Disney, who is an almost perfectly behaved child. We often joke that Disney is [D.A.R.Y.L.](#) – remember that movie from the 80's about a boy who is actually a robot? And she is a quick learner! We've been doing "sight words" with our Kindergartener Sammie, which are flash cards with words on them, like "orange", "the", "purple", "my", "I", etc. Disney, who just turned 3, has been picking up the sight words as we practice with Sammie! She knows all the ones I listed above and is also starting to work on letter recognition – 3 years old is pretty early to start reading! I just feel badly for Sammie, who has her own gifts but is also very competitive by nature – it might be difficult for her to see her little sister learning certain things faster than herself.

But the point is, Disney's toddler stage was barely noticable, which is probably why her little brother seems like more than a handful – and I hate to tell myself this, but I think this is just the beginning!!

Modern Day Grinch/Scrooge/Mr. Potter

I think this real individual is NOW the king of the humbugs. Last weekend, a rather disgruntled gentleman shoved a Salvation Army bell ringer to the ground and stole the kettle that held the money passersby had dropped in. When he was apprehended, the person stated that he "hates Christmas and

got tired of the ringing bell.” So much for the mob of Black Friday last year who trampled a Wal-Mart employee to death.

MAUMEE, Ohio (AP) – A man who claimed to hate Christmas shoved a Salvation Army bell ringer to the ground and swiped one of the charity’s red kettles stuffed with hundreds of dollars, police said.

The bell ringer, an unemployed woman, tried to pull the kettle away from the man Saturday evening, but he pushed her down and said, “I can’t stand you and your bell-ringing. I hate Christmas,” police said. The bell ringer chased him into a store parking lot before he tossed the kettle into the back of a stolen pickup truck and sped away, police said.

An empty kettle was found a day later. Police arrested Shawn Krieger of Toledo on Monday morning and charged him with robbery.

The Salvation Army estimated that the kettle held \$500 to \$700.

The bell ringer, whose name hasn’t been released, had been collecting money outside a general store for most of the day when she was shoved from behind, said Capt. Steven Lopes, coordinator of the Salvation Army in northwest Ohio.

“She was so upset,” Lopes said. “She was concerned that she wouldn’t be allowed to bell-ring anymore. We want her to continue.”

Krieger, 44, walked by the bell ringer at least twice before he made a grab for the money, said police Sgt. Jeff Siebenaler.

No witnesses have come forward even though the store was crowded, he said. “These things happen so fast sometimes people don’t know what they saw was a crime occurring,” Siebenaler said.

One shopper wrote down the truck's license plate number, and others consoled the bell ringer, who suffered a small cut when she tugged at the kettle, Lopes said.

Evidence inside the stolen truck, which was found in Toledo, led police to Krieger, Siebenaler said. Krieger could face more charges for the stolen vehicle, Siebenaler said.

Krieger was being held Monday on \$25,000 bond. The judge will assign a public defender to his case.

Not everyone likes the holiday season but what a hideous way to display it. Coal is too good to put in this man's stocking.