

Ready, Set, Relax!

A few years ago (3, I think?) an organization in our county enacted a yearly event called “Ready, Set, Relax!”. Every year, on the first Monday of October, families in the county are encouraged to take off and set aside everything outside of family: no work, no meetings, no private lessons, no practices, rehearsals, games, homework, tv, nor internet. Every local entity takes part; ie, the teachers don’t assign homework and various civic groups (the Girl Scouts, the local city councils, etc.) reschedule their meetings for this day. The idea is that for at least one day, families can enjoy each others company. I think it’s a great thing, and even though I feel that our family is blessed with much more “together” time than most, we enthusiastically participate in “Ready, Set, Relax!” each year. This year, we made sure to have a sit-down family dinner together (which can be surprisingly difficult to accomplish when you have 4 kids of different ages!), then we took a long walk together. When we got home, the two eldest planned a carnival for us parents and their youngest siblings which included a puppet show, dancing, playing games, and story time. It was so much fun! Even though we are blessed enough to be able to spend a lot of time together as a family, “Ready, Set, Relax!” gives us just another excuse to enjoy each other. It’s definitely something we will do year after year, and something I hope might catch on for the rest of the country!

Lions, and Tigers, and Bears...

Oh YEAH!

Well, the Bears killed the pitiful Detroit Lions 48 to 24... But I might be more excited even that my dear friend John may get to see his Detroit Tigers get into the playoffs. The Tigers, also playing Chicago (the White Sox), won their game propelling them into a 1-game playoff vs. the Minnesota Twins this Tuesday. Lisa and I will have to watch that and root for John's Tigers!

But, even more exciting than the Bears and Tigers winning and even more amazing than Detroit playing both baseball and football against Chicago at the same time – **BEEBER STARTED WALKING!**

Now he has been holding-on-to-stuff and walking for months. More recently he had been pushing things around the house – like mini-walkers. But on Sunday, he started WALKING. This means unassisted and when he falls down, he gets back on his feet. WOW! Another child reaches another milestone. **Life is truly a miracle!**

More good news... Superfriend extraordinaire (and Best Man at my wedding) [Derek](#) has just let me know that he WILL be attending out haunted house outing in IL on October 23. YEAH! This means our other friends must join us – it can be a true TANGENTS event.

Jamy, John, Mary, etc – **that means you!** (Hey, WHERE has CAROL been? Carol, if you're reading this – WE MISS YOU!)

**** [LISA](#) I LOVE YOU ****

It is too late in the year, but maybe next year

I just found a recipe for next years Summer parties. It looks like it would be quick, easy and really inexpensive. The question remains who would eat it. Hmmm Is anyone ready for [Fried Grasshoppers?](#)

Now I am sure that most people would see the grasshopper on the plate and just pass on this wonderful new recipe. So I have found more ways to serve bugs, and there are even some that you won't see the bug at all.

[More on eating bugs.](#)

[Even more on eating bugs.](#)

[More recipes.](#)

[Are you grossed out yet?](#)

Here There Be Trekkers

Tonight was our first dress rehearsal complete with newspaper reviewer and minus one key character from the production... UGH! I dunno... week of opening with 4 rehearsals to go and one of the major cast members is at a meeting but I guess it must have been important. So we had a fill-in read lines from the audience. The reviewer for the Crescent is very personable and has been exceptionally favorable in a few of the WCCT shows he has critiqued and the first show I was in with the Village Players. He even quoted a line from a review of one of my characters: "A gleefully unrepentent psycho" or something like that. He must have remembered seeing *Grease*?

Before we began, the subject of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* was addressed by Mr. Greer. Particularly, the *Enterprise's* fly over, around, and into the behemoth ship that took what seems an eternity to sit through. We then focused on the number of Trek fans in the cast of which there are many. The youngest female in the cast is named Katherine Janeway after the first female character to lead a Star Trek television series as captain of the *U.S.S. Voyager*. Another has a husband who has thousands of Trek books. I used to read the novels from time to time but have since lost track unless there is a really special one.

A third really got my interest soaring. It seems that she is a relative of DeForest Kelley (R.I.P) who played my personal favorite character of all Trekdom: the inscrutable, crusty, curmudgeonly Dr. Leonard H. "Bones" McCoy. She, however, did not inherit the searing blue "Kelley eyes" as her brother had.

Ok... back to the rehearsal. I think that with the absence of one of our actors, it went awfully well. Hopefully, this will be the LAST time we are minus a performer. But how fun was that to discover something new about so many in our small cast? Hopefully, our kindly reviewer does not print TOO much about the murder mystery in his article... no spoilers. As soon as I see it, I will make note of it in another post.

3 Days, 22 Hours and counting...

He's Walking!!

My son will be 15 months old on October 11, which makes him due for his next check-up with the doctor. I made the appointment today and found out that all 15-month appointments are made with our pediatric nurse rather than our regular

pediatrician, whom we really like. We like the nurse also, but some of her ideas about health care are a bit extreme for our tastes. For example, she thinks sippy (sippie?) cups are just about the worst things ever invented. Her opinion is that a child should be weaned off the bottle around 1 year of age and that he or she should be given a regular cup with just a little bit of water in it. No juice, nothing but water and milk with meals. Ok, that's fine, but once the baby becomes a toddler, the nurse teaches that they should only be given a glass of water at the sink, several times a day. No bottle, and certainly no sippie cup ought to be carried around the house or elsewhere. I personally don't have a problem with my kids drinking (especially if it's water!) away from the sink or out of a sippie cup – I don't really have the time to be cleaning up even more spills around here, which is what would happen if my kids didn't graduate to sippie cups from bottles. I have three kids who have weaned off of sippie cups just fine. So anyway, the nurse is nice but can be kind of a stickler about certain things...

And as for the newest milestone – he's walking! He's been walking for awhile now, but before Sunday, it was only a few steps at a time. Then he started walking with little push-toys, and he was really good with those; he would make push-toys out of things that weren't even supposed to be push-toys, like my daughters' step-stools, strollers, etc. He's gotten so good at maneuvering the push-toys that he can practically run while pushing, and by now, he's also great at steering them. We took a walk today, and instead of putting him in his stroller, I let him push his push-toy down the sidewalk, and he was off and running! He got so excited that he took a hand off the push-toy, raised it in a wave, and yelled "Hi!" to the kids playing in the schoolyard we passed. But aside from all of these awesome first steps (pun intended), he really officially started walking yesterday. Yesterday was the first day he began to take lengthy jaunts across the house on two legs without the assistance of a push-toy. He was on a roll;

he'd walk over, pick something up, and then straighten up to throw or pass the object rather than flopping down onto his knees and going into a crawl as he would have done weeks ago. So, my son is taking baby steps to learn to walk, haha. But we think that yesterday was a big breakthrough, err, a big **step** for his learning to walk, and I would bet that by this time next month, he will be walking and running around just like a full-fledged toddler... wonder what the nurse will say about that when she has to chase him all over the room?

If a tree falls...

and it doesn't hit the house, did it really fall?

In the back of my house, some 80 to 100 feet away from the house lived a rather large Oak tree that was at least 80 feet tall. This massive tree was about 3 feet in diameter at 5 feet off the ground. The trunk was a massive 5 feet across at the roots.

I think I was lucky that the wind blew the tree away from the house. Not that it was close enough to hit the house (it would have been close), but there was a good chance it would have knocked down other trees that would have hit the house. This tree had limbs growing out almost as wide as it was tall.

Over the past years I have been worried about it falling in the direction of the house. I wanted it cut down when I sold some timber about 10 years ago. They didn't cut it down. This tree had a 1 foot by 6 foot gash in the trunk made by a backhoe some 30 years ago. This week spot was exactly where the tree cracked as it fell. It took a couple of good sized trees with it too. I should be set for firewood for this winter and maybe next year too. I consider myself very lucky

that it fell when there wasn't anyone around. I should post a picture or two before and after I start cutting it.

Anyway, I did not hear the tree fall. We had two windy periods this week, Monday/Tuesday and Friday/Saturday. I'm assuming (since I didn't hear it fall), that I was not in the house during the fall. I'm sure the ground would have shaken a bit when this one hit. I'm also assuming that it did not fall on Monday or Tuesday. I'm fairly observant and I thought I would have noticed this tree when I let the dog out in the afternoon. My guess is that it fell some time Saturday afternoon, when I was tending the gate at the Oktoberfest. It got quite windy on occasion with some heavy gusts. I noticed the tree on Sunday morning. I was also looking at a great horned owl sitting on another tree. I don't normally see owls out during the day, so I wonder if its home was destroyed when the tree fell. And that takes me back to the hundred acre woods with Pooh and his friends.

80s Toys

All that talk of California Raisins on my blog the other day got me to thinking about many of the toys I used to play with when I was a kid growing up in the 80's. I was a big fan of Fisher Price's Little People back then, and I generally liked playsets of any kind. The internet is a cool thing for many reasons, and it's fun for stirring up nostalgia now and then. I remembered this set of wind-up skill games they had in the 80s that were really small. After a few minutes of google searching, I found them: [T.H.I.N.G.S. by Milton Bradley](#) (Totally Hilarious Incredibly Neat Games of Skill – who remembers these?) . It's funny how most of these little toys look like just your everyday junk from China when you're an

adult, but when I was a kid, I had the Sir-Ring-a-Lot game and wanted all the rest of the T.H.I.N.G.S.

I was also really into [Nerfuls](#) after sending away for one (visor guy) in exchange for cereal UPCs. These were little 3-piece figures – a body, a ball for the head, and a hat or hair. Some came with vehicles and the coolest parts were the stackable Nerfuls houses.

Legos were also really cool (still are!), and I'm thinking of getting my 5-year-old some of her own sets for Christmas this year.

Added link to [Weebles Mickey Mouse Clubhouse](#).

Welcome Back To The Post Season!

Yesterday, the Bronx Bombers closed out the regular season in historic and dramatic fashion. In the sixth inning, A-Rod blasted 7 RBIs by hitting a three-run homer and in his second at bat in the frame, belted a grand slam leading the Yanks to a 10-2 finish against the Tampa Bay Rays. Two records were set... the most RBIs in one inning for an American League player (only Fernando Tatis of the St. Louis Cardinals has had more in one inning with 8, back in 1999). The first homer of the inning was the Yanks' 243rd rounding of the bases topping a team record set in 2004. Rodriguez's 30 long balls and 100 RBIs for the season seems exceptional considering he was sidelined (ok.. mixing sports terms here) for the first 28 games due to his right hip surgery.

AH... October madness. Now we wait for a week before the

Division Series begins. Still a toss up between the Tigers and Twins as their records are tied prompting a final game to decide the AL Central title. Let the party begin!

Science Probably Could Have Given Us Something More Useful Than This

... [giant puppet, but I found it](#) pretty cool when I came across it the other day. Check out the frenzied movements of the puppeteers in red – there are lines of men, and they take turns running and jumping to pull the ropes to move the huge puppet.

Oktoberfest

This must have been the day for fall festivals. Here in E-town, we had what must have been the second annual Fall Fun Day at the fire hall. Games for kids of all ages, a chili cook-off, pie judging, think that was about it. Since the boss was in charge of the chili cook-off, I got to work the early shift. I thought at Least I would get a bit of chili whwn she returned after the event was over.

After work, I was invited to go to a corn maze that is right outside of E-town which I had no idea had been going on for the past few years. Heck, I had no idea there was a

campground just outside town. Unfortunately for us, the rain decided to hold off until our band of maze venturers found ourselves lost and then made our way back to the starting point... somehow.

After I went to church, I headed over to the county airport where the theatre was holding its first annual Oktoberfest. Great fun, GReat food, FANTASTIC band (sorry I missed the polka), just a great time. Happily, the rather dismal weather did not dispel a rather sizable crowd from attending. I thought the turn out was really great. It will be interesting to find out how much we raised. I was really excited to see Peg there helping out. She really is making her presence known in the theatre. GOOD FOR HER! Be sure to catch her in her stage debut when the WCCT presents [Little Shop of Horrors](#) October 9-11 and 15-18 (think there is a Thursday night show the second week). Break a leg all!

I must say that I have heard good things about the Junk Yard Band but they are fabulous. Playing everything from the 60s to the 80s. Really fun music. Mom and Dad 2 were there, too keeping us in stitches. I participated in the So, You Think You Can Dance (Or as I clearly have state... I don't think... I **KNOW I CAN'T DANCE**) contest getting a 28 out of a possible 30 points. Personally, I think the last judge was rotten to the core but that's just me.

Ok... off to bed so I can be fresh as a daisy for work at 9. No rehearsal til Monday. Must be that good.