

New TV!

Last night, my husband and I decided to visit an old friend we haven't seen in some time – The Redbox. You all know the Redbox – the dvd rental machine that sits like a swollen ATM at many Walmarts, Meijers, Walgreens and the like. Dvd rental at the Redbox is \$1 per night, and one of the perks of the Redbox is lack of selection. Yes, I said **lack** of selection. In this day and age of rushing from here to there, who has time to actually make an extra stop to go into a video store and browse hundreds of selections? We really enjoyed our Redbox summer, renting a movie almost every night and exhausting pretty much the entire Redbox collection. Now the kids have been in school for a few months already, and time has gone by without us having time to think about our long-lost Redbox bud. So anyway, last night, with the cold wind howling outside, we thought it to be the perfect night to stay up a little too late with a random Redbox horror movie. It was [Seventh Moon](#), and it seemed to actually be pretty scary, except that it is a 'dark and shaky' type horror movie – the camera moves around a lot, and the entire movie takes place in the dark. We turned off our lights in the house, but we still couldn't really see. Remembering what a repairman had told him once, my husband suggested we take the front panel off the tv and dust a little mirror inside – supposedly we would get a brighter picture. Thinking it sounded easy (?), I agreed and we began to unscrew our tv. We get the panel loosened and discover that there isn't any dust on the screen! And, you'd be surprised at how much empty space there is in a big tv! But anyway, we started to put it back together when CRACK! Uh, oh. Here's a hint – if you ever decide to tackle a home improvement project on the suggestion of someone else, no matter how small the project, always remember *who* told you to do *what* so that person can be held accountable!

So we are trying to put the tv back together, and we were thinking that at this point, we would just like to go back to our movie, however dark it might be, we just want to be able to WATCH the movie on a working tv. But then my husband sees the small mirror at the bottom that is FULL of dust! I rigged a paper towel rod with a dust cloth, and reached in there and dusted off that little mirror. We tried again to put the tv back together, encouraged and excited by the fact that we might have actually been able to fix it. We put the tv back together, but we had cracked something, so it's not really properly lined up and is now missing a few screws, oopsie. BUT... the picture is SO much brighter! Not only were we able to see the rest of the movie (which was a nice 'n suspenseful creature feature), but now we can actually watch tv during the day! Oh, if only we had discovered our new tv during those bright summer days months ago when the Chicago Cubs were still invited to play baseball...

Wow the wind has picked up

Another very windy night. I'm hearing branches and various nuts hit the house and roof. I'm sure there will be a couple of trees down somewhere with this storm. Guess I will have to leave for work early, just in case something falls over the lane.

Anyway, now is not the time to be running around in the woods, but that is exactly what one little dog wanted to do. I guess when you got to go, you got to go. Being so close to the ground, he is out of most of the wind. He didn't stay out too long, I guess the falling acorns bothered him.

I'm not sure if I will get any sleep with this wind. After

seeing one huge tree on the ground this week, I guess I'm just expecting another to fall. Nothing nearly as big as the fallen oak, but there are a few a bit closer to the house, like within 10 feet.

I don't recall many fall days with heavy winds like this. To have so many in a week seems to be really out of the ordinary, but I'm not sure. I usually think of late spring and early summer as the heavy wind days.

I was just thinking about the last time a big tree blew down near the house. We were all in the house that evening, and we were having another big wind storm. There was a loud crash and the house shook, but we could not see what fell. The next morning we saw that the big ash behind our house fell directly away from the house. That was about 18 years ago. My youngest was home and on a breathing monitor. We lost power, and I remember being on a list for a quick restore. Funny how that came to my mind this evening.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...

There is one problem with being involved in the theater. When you plan a holiday show, the rehearsals start well before the actual holiday season. And since our Christmas show starts at the beginning of December, the rehearsal is also earlier. I don't like to do Christmas until after Thanksgiving.

Anyway, it will my job to bring Santa Clause to life in "Miracle on 34th Street". Ok, so I'm not playing Kris Kringle/Santa Clause, but I am playing 2 different Santa Clauses. And some other part I cannot remember right now.

For those of you who do know the show, the first Santa I play is the drunk Santa that loses his job because he was trying to stay warm on the float. One little drinks never hurt, does it?

To make the show even better for me, I get to act with one of my daughters again. This is always a thrill for me. Should be fun.

Geez, You Can't Even Put Your Kid In A Box For A Ride On Top Of The Car Anymore

Often I write about laws and regulations that are intended to help parents decide what is right for their child because sometimes these laws overstep boundaries. There was a story a while ago about a woman who was arrested for leaving her sleeping toddler in the car while she walked with her other daughter to donate change to a Salvation Army bell-ringer less than 50 feet away. I, like many others, couldn't help but wonder if perhaps the police overstepped their boundaries in that case – it was probably traumatic for all those kids to have to watch their mother getting taken away by the police in handcuffs. I wish that parents nowadays could just be trusted to do what is best for their children – but then there are people like this woman from Alabama:

ALBERTVILLE, Ala. (AP) – An Alabama woman has been charged with endangering the welfare of a child after police say she let her daughter ride in a cardboard box on top of their van. Albertville Police spokesman Sgt. Jamie Smith said the 37-year-old woman was arrested Sunday after police received a

call about a minivan on a state highway with a child riding on top.

Smith said the woman told police the box was too big to go inside the van, and that her daughter was inside the box to hold it down.

Smith said the mother told officers it was safe because she had the box secured to the van with a clothes hanger.

The 13-year-old daughter wasn't harmed and was turned over to a relative. A jail worker said the mother was out on bond Monday.

Thank goodness the child was not physically hurt.

Morning Guilty Pleasure

This morning, I was able to catch most of *Regis and Kelly* (the ONLY celebrity focused morning show I enjoy watching). As I made mention of earlier, John Stamos is now in previews for *Bye, Bye Birdie* for its return to the Broadway stage since the debut 50 years ago (WOW!). Mr. Stamos will be playing the lead part of Albert Peterson. Dick Van Dyke originated the role of Conrad Birdie's manager in the original production as well as the original movie. The cinematic experience does not do the stage version justice at all. Not sure why but like many musicals it is much better to have that live, theatrical experience. I honestly cannot think of many musicals that have translated better or at least as enjoyably on the screen. I guess I would say *The Sound of Music* only because it has been so ingrained into pop culture as a movie that many forget or don't realize that it was Rodgers and Hammerstein's theatrical swan song. That reason and the puppet show version

of “The Lonely Goatherd” is my favorite part of the movie and IS NOT in the stage version.

Ok... back to my original topic. During the interview, Reege made mention of the fact that Ann-Margrock (err.. Margret) played the young girl, Kim MacAfee in the movie. Shortly after the movie was filmed, Ms. Margret would be Presley’s leading lady in my mother’s favorite Elvis movie, *Viva Las Vegas*. However, Mom was not aware that she was in the cast of *Birdie*.

Here’s a few more tidbits: one of our fellow [tangenteers](#) has played the role of pop singing idol/draftee Conrad Birdie. I assisted in the directing of my high school alma mater’s production a few years ago. AND there was a veery short lived sequel (4 performances) entitled [Bring Back Birdie](#) which was set twenty years following the events of the original. Twenty years is quite a LONG time to wait to attempt a comeback.

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 our 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 year's Summer parties. It looks like it would be quick, easy and really inexpensive. The question remains who would eat it. Hmmmm 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 Trekkdom: 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?