

# 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.

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## 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.](#)

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# **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!

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# **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.

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## 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.

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## Blast From The Past

Being a child of the '80's, I definitely remember the California Raisins – they were 3D-ish Claymation figures of singing and dancing raisins, mostly famous for their rendition of “I Heard It Through The Grapevine”. Thinking about this as an adult has me wondering if this was a successful ad campaign. I guess successful is not quite the word I'm looking for... I mean, of course it was ultra-successful in a sense; everyone in the '80's knew about the California Raisins, but did they really make kids want to eat more raisins? Later they began to do commercials for Post's Raisin Bran (Post only chooses the plumpest, juiciest raisins!), so maybe they helped to sell more boxes of cereal.

In the '80's, the California Raisins were celebrities and they

had their own line of products that ran the marketing gamut: lunch boxes, stuffed toys, tv specials, t-shirts, Happy Meal toys, you name it. This is precisely the reason why I came across a California Raisin figure the other day at the thrift store. I had stopped in to get myself a few more little Halloween figurines for my front hall shelves (had an empty shelf after finally packing away the figurines of the bears playing baseball after the Chicago Cubs were eliminated from MLB's post-season – that is ALL I'm going to say about THAT!), and at this particular thrift store, you get a free Happy Meal-type toy with every \$2 spent. My husband and I did just spend 5 hours gutting out the girls' room and donating most of their toys last week, but I couldn't resist picking out a toy for my favorite little shopping companion – my 3-year-old daughter Disney. So anyway, we were pressed for time, and I found the California Raisin, so I grabbed him and gave him to Disney, promising her we would watch a movie of her raisin dancing and singing on the computer when we got home. True to my word, I loaded up youtube and found some great clips of California Raisins, which went over really well with Disney. She giggled and covered her mouth, and then she put her raisin on the computer to “watch” the other dancing raisins. He's been a presence in our household since last week, and of course her little brother likes him too. He is small enough so that I can put him in our “emergency” car box (full of toys, snacks, band-aids, etc) when the kids tire of him in the house (the raisin, not the little brother!). He even makes a great bathtub toy! So anyway, while resurrecting the California Raisins last week, I came across this cute little commercial that I hadn't thought about in the 20 years since it was made. Enjoy this blast from the past!

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# Boys Are Gross!

It's becoming clear to me why little girls think little boys are gross. They have a point – little boys ARE gross. Case in point: my almost 15-month-old **boy** was playing on the stairs today. When I went to retrieve him, he had taken half of his diaper off, and... well, I really don't want to get too technical or disgustingly detailed, so let's just say that he had gone #2 in his diaper and that it was a precarious situation and made for a difficult maneuver to get him off the stairs and cleaned up without spreading the mess. Leave it to the boy...

Not going to comment on my now 5-year-old daughter's 'painting with poop phase' she had when she was a toddler – that was far worse, but just a phase. Our boy seems to live to get into things he's not supposed to, whether it be splashing in the dog's water bowl, dumping the dog's food (he does each of these activities 2-3 times a day!), wanting to play with wires, throwing food, smearing food, squeezing food in his fist, dumping drinks, playing in the toilet, the list goes on... **BOYS!**

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**You'll Look So Good That  
You'll Be Glad That You**

# Decided To...

“Smile Darn Ya, Smile.” Ok... combining two song lyrics from two different musicals:

- “Put on a Happy Face” from the just revived for the very first time on Broadway...*Bye, Bye Birdie* starring John Stamos.. not as the title character which 20 years ago, I could have envisioned given his character Uncle Jesse from Full House and his status as a drummer in the Beach Boys
- The second is from some other show I must have forgotten somewhere along the line... if it comes to me, I’ll list it in the tags.

Ok, a few weeks ago we had Talk Like a Pirate Day. Today, just happens to be World Smile Day. What is it that makes me smile? Just a few things, really.

- I love to be with my friends and family no matter what the occasion: game nights are always fun and road trips are a blast, watching crazy fans enjoy watching their favorite teams play (I thought my mom got wild when she watches Yankees baseball but seeing [Chris](#) watch a Bears game... now THAT is a sight that could bring a smile to anyone). However, just being with them to lend a hand, ear, shoulder, foot, eye, back, or finger really is great, too. Sometimes, even more rewarding than the frivolous. On occasion, I have also used them for guidance and support, as well.
- Coming in very close to number one is... well, most people who regularly subscribe to my rantings and ravings know this. Even when I am being constructively (of course) criticized, I can always find something to smile about on stage. Except of course, when the moment does not call for it.. that’s when acting (for me) is difficult. I guess in the moment when the unforeseen happens and

(perish the thought!) I don't get a part, I do tend to be optimistic and try to learn and try to move on.

- In a big way, music can be an extension of my love of the stage. Musicals are of course my favorite genre of theatre. I do enjoy most types of music but there ARE exceptions (c)rap being chief among them.
- A great, big scare. Ok.. maybe the adrenaline getting the heart racing, the blood rushing creates a nervous smile and chuckle but I love to be scared.

Ok... that's three things. that can usually make most of my nothing days all seem worthwhile. So remember... Light up your face with gladness and hide every trace of sadness because I feel sad when you're sad I feel glad when you're glad.

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## Putting It Together... Again

The title seems vaguely familiar so, I added to it. The next week will be exciting, nerve wracking, late, but overall great fun. The week leading up to the performance. The cast and crew got a taste of that this evening when the elaborate effects were added for the first time. There are many light cues and sound effects throughout the play. It took a bit of time to get them all set up so we got started with the rehearsal a bit later than usual which was fine with all involved. We would have to do it eventually anyway. It gave those of us on stage a chance to reminisce about some of the worst movies ever made. Bo Derek in the blockbuster movie [Tarzan the Ape Man](#) was tossed out. Honestly, I have never seen that version of the legend. Some mentioned that Ms. Derek's role in the feature *10* was better since her role was nothing more than running along the beach. Has anyone seen the (I imagine) horror classic, [Basket Case](#)? Me, neither.

Finally, we did get to the Ed Wood classic [Plan 9 From Outer Space](#) which I have seen and I agree with most critics in saying that IT IS the worst movie ever made. However, I still think it is hard to beat the original holiday classic [Santa Claus Conquers the Martians](#).

Finally, about a half-hour late, we did get through the show with only minor trouble. However, with still a few rehearsals left, I'm sure it will be all good. At least we did not wait until Sunday to put it all together. The rain outside also added a new dimension of intrigue.

I just learned that if you are interested in attending a performance (October 9-11), you may now make reservations on-line through the following [link](#)

Ah, the excitement is building!

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## **Jon And Kate, What About The 8?**

You may have heard all the brouhaha about the TLC reality show *Jon and Kate Plus Eight* that's been in the news lately. If not, a quick re-cap: Jon and Kate Gosselin were a young couple who had a set of twins and a set of sextuplets, giving them a grand total of 8 kids before either one of them had even hit the age of 30. They filmed a show for TLC chronicling their lives with all the little ones, and the special was such a success that they soon found themselves celebrities with their own reality show. Apparently the sudden mega-stardom caused too much strain on the family, and the marriage did not survive. Amidst accusations of infidelity and other ugly, yet very public issues, the couple

filed for divorce earlier this year. Scarcely a move has been made by either party since without full coverage from the media.

I watched a few episodes of the show back when the Gosselin's were one big happy family, mostly because it was interesting to watch such a large family function as well as they did, err, as well as they seemed to function anyway. But ever since the big family fall-out, things have been getting increasingly worse for the clan. TLC announced yesterday that Jon would no longer be a major part of the show, and they were re-naming it Kate Plus Eight. Ouch. There are millions of people who follow the plight of the Gosselins; there are Kate fans and there are Jon fans, and then there are people who are mainly concerned for the welfare of the 8 kids. The media has certainly vilified Jon, though it's difficult to determine how much of it he has done to himself. No matter how much the accusations about Kate's controlling and domineering nature tend to be proven true by her behavior, she is always able to appear to be the better person through her public statements. Maybe she really is the better person of the two, or perhaps she is more intelligent or has a better spokesperson advising her than Jon has. But whatever the case, one thing is clear – those 8 kids they created together should not have to be caught in the middle of all of this, it's disgusting.

The reason I decided to join in on the media storm and write about this is because of the latest chapter that broke yesterday – when TLC kicked Jon off the show. His response? He legally banned all production crews from the house he still co-owns with Kate, where the children live and the parents take turns visiting. He has threatened to slap TLC with criminal charges if they come onto his property. He hasn't said whether this includes a ban on filming the children, but one can guess, based upon his actions, that it's no longer ok with Jon that his kids star in a reality show. It's completely understandable – many people, including child

psychology experts, etc, were constantly saying how unhealthy it was for the 8 kids to be filmed on a daily basis. But Jon (along with Kate, back when they actually agreed on something) was always a staunch defender of the show and the fact that he and Kate had the kids' best interests at heart. But now that Jon got himself kicked off the show, it looks like he's decided that reality tv is no longer a healthy lifestyle for his children. And that's fine and even makes sense, but one does have to question his intentions when his legal action to stop the show comes the very day that news is released that he is no longer a part of the show himself. As a well-written gossip column stated, "Jon is acting like the kid who didn't get picked to be on a team for the neighborhood baseball game, so he's taking his ball and going home." Whatever his intentions, I am among the many former fans who just want what is best for the 8 kids while the rest of it goes away. But before that happens, I am very interested to hear the spin Jon puts on his reasons for his actions – all of them. He is giving a live interview on Larry King Live tonight on CNN, and I'm almost ashamed to admit that I will be watching (the midnight replay of course – there is no way this would ever take precedent over a new episode of The Office). Then again, why bother watching the interview when I know the "highlights" will be shoved down our throats for the next few days – or at least until Jon's careless behavior provides enough fodder to make yet another story...