

What happened to my coffee???

I have written many times about my love of coffee. I will admit that I am a bit of a coffee snob. But I never needed to have gourmet coffee at every turn. But for the past couple of days the coffee I've had just didn't taste right. Hmmm...

At work last Friday I had one cup of coffee. It was flavored coffee (beans from a local coffee shop) and it had an off flavor. Ok, maybe I don't like that flavor, I've had some experience with that.

Saturday no coffee. Sunday no coffee. Tea tastes fine both days...

Monday coffee at lunch. It was bad even for store brands... Arrrg.

Monday dinner. I was at a well know chain restaurant that usually has decent coffee. The first cup was ok, the second cup not so good. More Arrggg.

Today I had one cup at work. My Kona blend. Can I just say it was nasty..

I think I found the problem at work, the water in our new office just isn't right for coffee or tea. My green tea in the afternoon had a weird/off flavor too. I really hope they get the water coolers. Or at least put a filter on the water. Maybe I should get a pitcher with a filter on it...

Told you I was a bit of a coffee nerd/snob. If I can be upset with the coffee based on the water it was made from. Funny the water doesn't taste bad from the faucet, just when mixed with coffee or green tea. The black tea was fine..

All You Need Is An Octopus To Hold Your Hand In A Submarine That Is Yellow

Today seems to be one of those moments when it appears that Beatlemania will about however briefly. Not only is The Beatles: Rock Band hitting gaming systems the world over but many of the greatest albums are being reissued as remastered CDs. Abbey Road, Revolver, Rubber Soul, and the quintessential White Album are just four of the titles dropping today.

While I was cleaning the shop today, I glanced at a *Parent and Child* magazine and one of the cover articles pondered...["Why Kids Love the Beatles"](#). I don't know how many parents today introduce their children to the Fab Four but I know of at least one [father](#) whose youngest can rip off lyrics during a game with the best of them... even obscure songs that flew right over my head. I agree wholeheartedly with most of the article. I believe that the longevity is due in large part to the creative genius of Lennon and McCartney who penned some of the most memorable songs imaginable that still hold up 40+ years after the groups break up. Classic melodies and words from ballads like "Yesterday", "Hey Jude," and "Let It Be" to pop standards such as "I Saw Her Standing There," "Can't Buy Me Love," and "Penny Lane" to the wildly odd lyrics of "Octopus' Garden" and "I Am the Walrus (goo-goo-ga-joo)" are just a few of the hits produced from the Lads from Liverpool.

The article went on to give a small bio of the four gents. Who was the Cute Beatle, the Quiet Beatle, the Brainy Beatle, and the Sad Beatle? I did not list them in order they appear

in the article so if you decide to cheat you better make sure you read the question carefully. Not only did John and Paul contribute to the songwriting but George and Ringo wrote some classics as well.

No matter what kind of personal lives the quartet lived outside the stage or studio, one thing remains undeniably clear. Even after 40 years, millions are still listening to, singing along with, and commemorating the world's greatest rock band. I'm not sure if The Beatles will hold up to classic composers like Bach and Beethoven 100 years from now and I don't think I will be around to find out. Plus, we had an Elvis themed game night... why not a Beatles? At least we can introduce one of our friends to the classics who shall remain anonymous... unless they care to comment.

Another annoying late night

I'm not really sure why I'm up so late this evening, but I am..

I was skimming through some of my old posts because I noticed somebody was going back and looking at things. I think it was some sort of 'bot looking into my blog, but I can't tell for sure unless they reply.

Last year at this time I made a plea for some blog responses. I did get a few and that really made my day. I realize that not everyone sees something in blogs to respond to. I know that I visit a blog site or three and don't respond. Not because I don't like the blog, but because I really think that I have nothing to add.

I've just been thinking, maybe (just maybe) I should respond

every once in a while with a simple “I like your blog.” response. That would take very little of my time, and would give the other blogger a small lift. I mean, it couldn’t hurt.

That may or may not show up on blogs I semi-regularly post responses to. You know who you are, and I really enjoy your blogs. Sometimes they say everything that needs to be said. My response would be redundant.

I’m going to try to get some sleep... Ha Ha...

Looking for Meatloaf

I haven’t made a meatloaf in sometime and since I’m the only one at home, I can’t see myself making one in the near future. Small meatloafs just don’t taste the same as one of at least 1 to 2 pounds.

Anyway when I get the urge for meatloaf, I’ve been trying it at different restaurants. So far, I haven’t found one I really like. The taste or texture just doesn’t match what I think meatloaf should be. The best I’ve had so far is from the Ten-Pin Tap in Ridgeville Corners, OH. A little bar, that was the major place to go for lunch before we switched buildings. Now, I’m not sure where to find it.

There are many reasons for this. #1– Most places don’t serve meatloaf. It is too plain for most restaurants. #2– I don’t think they drain the grease. Just shouldn’t be swimming in it. #3 – I’m wondering if they use the worst kind of ground beef. Just doesn’t cut it sometimes. #4– Do they ever add any spice? Bland, bland, bland or maybe swimming in Ketchup..

Anyone else on the lookout for good meatloaf? Have you found

any? Where?

Putting The Fun Into Labor...

Well, it was a last-minute attempt at a Labor Day outing with friends, and even though we strayed from our original idea of going to a Lake Erie-area haunted house and drive-thru zoo, we had LOTS of fun!

We went to the Toledo Zoo, always a great zoo, even if this Labor Day Saturday of 2009 equated to being one of the most crowded we've ever seen that zoo. It was just over 80°, so the animals weren't all that active, but we did get to see Louie, the "baby" elephant (who is now 6 years old and awaiting the completion of construction of his very own zoo exhibit area) lying down and taking a break, which was cool. We also saw one of their huge hippos swimming in the underwater hippo-quarium, which is always a treat because you can see a humongous hippo swim right past up close. After the zoo, we ate at one of our favorite places in the Toledo area – Nick's Cafe on Reynolds (not sure if it's actually Toledo or the suburb of Maumee). But the place is just north of Ohio's turnpike, I 80/90, and they have great food and almost *unimaginable* portion sizes – are they used to feeding GIANTS?!? Unfortunately for Nick's, the place was empty, but this is (just) one of the reasons we go to Nick's when we're in the area – they have GREAT food. Besides, **you** try withstanding the crowds to get a table at the Olive Garden on a Saturday evening, especially with 4 starving kids!

After dinner, we were going to head to another nearby Toledo suburb for a free exotic animal / magic show, something right up our alley. But the combination of the big weekend, crabby

kids and crowds at the zoo caused our driver and his wife to veto that great idea, so luckily we hadn't told the kids since it sounded like fun and they would have been disappointed (no matter their exhaustive state) to miss it. But we've learned that over-doing it with little kids along is **always** regretful, and so we happily prepared for our journey home after we gorged ourselves and piled leftovers into boxes at Nick's. But we grew distracted by a strip-mall across Reynolds from Nick's Cafe, and that's how we finally discovered what Nickel World of Toledo really is...

We had seen it in the strip-mall before, but we had always busily assumed that it was the 2009 incarnate of the early 20th century 5 and dime store. On Saturday night, we discovered that Nickel World is actually a family entertainment place, filled with **many** arcade, skill, and video games! They have a unique business model – they charge an entrance fee of \$2.50 per person, and then they sell \$5 bags of nickels for use on the games. Most of the games are just one nickel to play, some are two, and there's even a large selection of FREE games! The place is so cool; what a great concept! For about \$25, our party of 4 adults and 5 kids were easily entertained for at least an hour, PLUS the kids took home quite a bounty of prizes with the 5,000 tickets they were able to rack up in just that hour! Nickel World has just about every type of video game you can think of – two types of Skeeball, multiple Crane Games, ball-roller games, basketball shooting games, racing games, Bozo Buckets, even air hockey as well as FREE! vintage arcade games like X-Men, Bust-A-Move, Dueling Dragons, and many more... We had a GREAT time, and Hubby and I are dying to return on a date night to fight, race and out-shoot each other without distraction from the kids! The only thing is that they are closed on Tuesday nights when we have our date nights... oh well, perhaps we can reschedule. If **you** are in the Toledo area, you **have** to check out Nickel World on Reynolds (US 20) – a rarity for an awesome value in family entertainment in this day and age of

recession! And while I'm on the topic, Nickel World reminded me of another cool arcade-type place in South Bend, Indiana. [Megaplay](#) has two indoor mini-golf courses, as well as lots of video games (some of the classics are free) and even an inflatable jousting area where they hold tournaments. I've never had the pleasure of participating in something like this, but it looks like lots of fun. If only I had discovered this sport before my sense of balance expired... I did see an indoor inflatable jousting space at another place in Toledo that we visited a few months ago. This place was pretty cool – they had adult-sized bouncy slides and ladders to climb, and my husband and I bounced down the slides and ran around like little kids until the unfortunate voices of reality (muscle strain and fatigue) made it loud and clear that we had better take it easy... But I can't remember the name of that place or where exactly it is, and I can't find it on the internet. Probably a bad sign that we were the only ones there at the time, I hope it hasn't closed down, but that's a lot of why it was so much fun – my kids weren't getting run over by eager older kids, and hubby and I weren't laughed out of the place by nasty teenagers...

So... back from my tangents. We had a really nice and safe Labor Day weekend free from any of the [speed traps we encountered in previous years](#). Hope yours was safe and fun also! God Bless!

A Little Push From J.S.

I just finished watching a little movie that was released last winter/early spring that received little notice but was released by the same distribution company as Knowing. Unfortunately, the latter got more publicity. I will direct

you to a much more in depth description of [Push](#) from taylhis. I will say that I absolutely adored this little gem. It is very action-packed and filled with enough twists and turns to keep me glued to the seat. Much more enjoyable than watching a NASCAR race.

What I found fascinating was the choice of casting the male lead. Chris Evans previously played Johnny Storm aka The Human Torch in *The Fantastic Four* and its sequel (odd that I have not seen *Rise of the Silver Surfer* but from what I have heard... I'm not missing a great deal... maybe one day). In *Push*, Mr. Evans plays Nick who has the power of telekinesis... the ability to move objects with one's mind. My question is: has any other actor played more than one character with a unique superhuman ability? I know multiple actors have played the same superhuman character (Batman, Superman, the Hulk, etc) but I think this reversal is unique. The closest I could come up with is Hayden Christensen who played Anakin Skywalker in *Star Wars* episodes II and III and went on to star in *Jumper*, but that is a stretch.

Supressing My Whim For Another Parrot...

Believe me, I am definitely not expressing that parrots are pets to get on a whim, not that any pets should be obtained on a whim. But I wouldn't really even recommend parrots, the loud and moody (however beautiful and insanely smart) creatures as pets, except to the perfect parrot owner – which might just be as rare as the gorgeous birds themselves. Due to a set of circumstances that transcribed long ago, we've found ourselves adapting to a be a parrot family. Years ago

we adopted Squawky, as a needy unwanted baby, a Scarlet Macaw, who is now somewhere just older than 8 years old. He is finally starting to calm down just a tad, but he still makes me think of putting him in a more unused room of the house on an almost daily basis. That being said, it's time to share with you the video of a bird who re-kindled my childhood desire (not that I ever really lost it, but 4 kids and little sleep will certainly give one pause about adding any new pet to the family) to raise an African Grey Parrot – the type of parrot known more for their uncanny impressions and ability to reason than for their beautiful feathers. As a kid, I read a book that made me want the parrot in the first place. It is called *Harry's Mad* by Dick King-Smith (this author also wrote the story that the movie [The Water Horse](#)'s screenplay (good movie!!) is based upon), and it's a great read for young adults (and maybe regular adults too? Might be basic, but fun – haven't tried it as an adult). And as for the video that made me again want an African Grey, despite the daily blows to my eardrums from the Scarlet Macaw? See for yourself; her name is Sylvia, and I especially love her Rhett Butler and Desi Arnaz impressions!

Death In Arena Seats

Ok... ok... if you have seen any two of the now four *Final Destination* flicks you know what you are going to get. Tonight, Megan and I went to a very nice cineplex which has very comfortable stadium seats very spacious to catch the latest installment aptly titled *THE Final Destination* (is this a sign that this will be the last final destination?) Judging by the box office from last weekend, I wouldn't be at all surprised to see The FINAL Final Destination hitting big screens in a year or two. It even beat up the latest installment in the Rob Zombie reboot of the Halloween franchise. I have yet to see the previous film... I really enjoyed the original John Carpenter creation with Michael Myers wreaking havoc in a Captain Kirk trick or treat mask.

This time, a young man has visions of death while sitting at a stock car race. After the premonition, Nick quickly begins to warn his three friends and others seated around him of the approaching doom. I assume the travesty was due to either the age of the venue or faulty construction. A few days later, the body count begins to climb as the survivors of the tragedy at the track die horrible, mysterious deaths. Nick "sees" visions of these deaths and eventually comes up with the pattern Death is playing out. But can Nick and his twentysomething aged friends stop the pattern before Death visits them all one by one?

I wouldn't say that I liked or disliked the movie... I'm on the fence on this one. As I previously noted, this has been done before only with four different locations for the starting off point (a commercial airline flight, a highway pileup, and a theme park roller coaster were the previous three). Plus as with most films of this genre, there was an ample amount of

blood and gore. But Megan and I both agreed that while it has been done before, it was fun... maybe it was the company. Selected theatres also have the added attraction of 3D something that seems to be making a comeback as of late in both horror and animated features.

Legitimate School Interruption or Propaganda?

Because I have two kids in the local city school system at the same time, I receive double the school memos. So while Friday's after-school-folder-clean-out yielded the usual classwork, homework and doodles, there were also some notices clearly indicative of these times in which we're living: a list of ~~swine-flu~~ H1N1 symptoms and (what I thought at the time anyway) to be a routine parental notice with optional exclusion form. You know the type – *I would not like my son / daughter to participate in the following school activity (fill in the blank, field trip, sex ed, open lunch, etc.), signed (parent's name)*. This time the form was in reference to an address by Barrack Obama, the President of the United States, to the students of the country. When I received the memo, I was all in favor. I would not be one of the parents who declined my child the opportunity to be involved with current events and history in the making. I thought it was great that the President was making an unprecedented, concentrated effort to make a positive influence on America's youth. But then I read CNN.com and the other news outlets, and I saw that some people seemed to be using this as a political soundboard, and I think it's just sad that some people use everything our President does as a reason to bring up racial tension.

I would like to steer my blog from most politics, however, I am a parent of two kids who are in American public schools, so this is an issue that hits close to home. So whether you watch the Obama student address or not, whether you approve of the President and/or his message to students, consider the significance of the Presidential address taking place this Tuesday, September 8, 2009 for what it is – history in the making.

Hamburgers and Root Beer

Years ago it was always a family treat to stop at the A&W to get root beer in a frosty mug. I remember as a kid getting the little ‘baby’ mug. I never thought it held enough root beer.

Slowly those stands started to close and were fewer and farther between. When I was in College, I only knew of two such stands in the ‘local’ area. One was in Delta Ohio and the other in Antwerp Ohio. The Delta Ohio A&W closed many years ago.

With my wife and children, we would sometimes make a slight detour on trips to Fort Wayne and stop at the Antwerp A&W. The children got the mini ‘baby’ mugs until they got a bit older. Always a good time and always good root beer.

In the past few years A&Ws have been making a bit of a comeback in NW Ohio. I know of two restaurants that are a combined A&W and KFC. Interesting letter combination. ☐ These aren’t the old drive ups, but the root beer is still as good. The charm of the place is somehow missing.

Now in a local town there is a Sonic drive-up. They have car-hops on roller skates and a fun atmosphere. But there are no

frosty mugs. I will say some of the drinks there are very good.

Today, on the way back from Fort Wayne, my youngest and I stopped at that A&W stand in Antwerp. It is still in business, and still serving Root Beer in the Frosty Glass Mugs. Many wonderful memories flowed. The root beer is still good.

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