

Redbox Junkies

Now that the kids are back in school (2 out of 4 anyway), I have some (stress on the *some*, not a lot of) extra time to sit and blog again – something that wasn't made a priority over our busy summer. Among our summertime fun and adventures were many trips to the [Redbox](#). Surely you know what I'm referring to, for if we have such futuristic technology here in the NW Ohio boonies, then it must exist in most places. The Redbox is a machine (about the size of a gas station ATM on steroids) that distributes \$1 one-night dvd movie rentals. You can choose a movie for \$1 from any Redbox location (our small town has 3, just an example of how they are *everywhere*), and then you return your movie to any Redbox location by 9:00pm the next night. We first got hooked on the concept when we were on the way back home from Florida and the kids got sick of the movies we had brought for the car dvd player (poor things! Who's with me from the days when we were lucky enough to bring our Walkman on the trip with a couple of tapes!) . So anyway – we stopped at a Redbox at a McDonald's in Tennessee, the kids watched the movie a few times, and we returned it at a Walmart in Ohio – for just \$1! Ok, this is quickly and unintentionally turning into a plug...

So anyway, my husband and I got kind of hooked on the Redbox this summer, watching a movie almost every night – seriously! We went through a horror phase and watched many of a series called After Dark Horror Fest: 8 Films To Die For, and even though many of the movies (there were 8 movies in the series, but the series ran multiple years) in the series were low-budget, many were actually worthy of the recognition and worth watching. Among our favorites of the horror genre was Hack! starring none other than Danica McKellar, Winnie from the late '80's / early 90's tv show [The Wonder Years](#); as well as [The Hamiltons](#), a surprisingly great-for-what-it-is little horror flick.

Somewhere within the mix was a forgotten (though I liked it slightly more than my husband did) [Michael Moore parody](#) (making fun of Michael Moore movies, not done by Michael Moore) and the best Redbox movie **ever** called Sunshine Cleaning.

I highly recommend [Sunshine Cleaning](#). Don't let its similarities with another movie called [Little Miss Sunshine](#) get you confused. The two movies share the word *Sunshine* in their titles, an actor (the late Alan Arkin, wonderful in both roles), and some producers – but neither their plot lines nor their characters intersect. You can check out Little Miss Sunshine for yourself if you haven't already – I recommend that one as well. But Sunshine Cleaning is less mainstream and my husband and I enjoyed it immensely. It stars the talented Amy Adams as a single mom who, along with her flighty sister (Emily Blunt, also a really good actress), start a cleaning business, though it's not your normal, everyday cleaning business – they are hired to clean up extreme biological hazards, ie, crime scenes. What follows is a heartwarming tale which takes many entertaining and at times, comedic turns. The characters are well developed as is the plot, and the movie just makes for a well-spent evening – especially for just \$1. Again, I'm at risk here for sounding like a plug, but oh well! Go get Sunshine Cleaning from your local Redbox – you can even reserve online for pickup before you go!

And People Wonder Why We

Left...

America's Most Stressful Cities

Few enjoy their commute. Just ask Stephen Dinwiddie, M.D., a psychiatrist at the University of Chicago.

"I think anybody who, like I do, commutes on the Kennedy on a daily basis knows exactly what stress is," he says, of his daily home-to-work commute on Chicago's expressway that extends from the Chicago Loop to O'Hare International Airport. "It takes anywhere from 30 minutes to several centuries—at least subjectively."

Article Controls

But more pressing factors make Chicago for the second year in a row the country's most stressful city. Crowding, poor air quality, a high 11% unemployment rate and free-falling home values have created a cocktail of constant worry affecting many in the Windy City.

[Read More...](#)

Speaking of unusual...

Here's probably a very unique and unusual way of preventing people from committing suicide by jumping off of bridges. Apparently this is somewhat common in China, so some workers decided to do something about it. The source is the same as

the last article, WPTV.com:

Slippery when buttered

Last Update: 10:12 am

Chinese workers have covered a giant steel bridge with butter because officials are fed up with traffic jams caused by people who slow down to watch suicide victims leaping to their death.

In a single month eight people jumped to their death with many more threatening to end their lives on the bridge.

The butter was spread over all of the climbable surfaces and it appears to be working. Officials report they are able to get to the bridge and catch the suicide attempters.

Copyright WENN.com. Metro.co.uk contributed to this report.

Here's hoping that missionaries over there can spread the Gospel there more quickly to these urgent cases.

This hobby sucks...

Okay, not *that* kind of sucks. It is very unusual though, that's for sure. While other 10-year-olds collect the latest trading cards, one Illinois boy collects vacuum cleaners. Yes, you read that right. I know some don't want to collect old-fashioned things like coins and stamps, but ***vacuum cleaners??*** Here's [the WPTV article](#):

Unique hobby for a 10 year old boy

Last Update: 8/31 10:05 am



TUSCOLA, IL—Most little boys collect things like baseball cards or hot wheels.

But not the 10-year old Gregory Evans.

He has a thing for vacuum cleaners.

He 's been collecting them since he was three years old.

While other kids dream of Disney World, Gregory's favorite vacation destination is the Hoover Museum.

"I take them apart and see if there's anything wrong with them," said Evans.

And the 10 year old is such an expert on vacuums that he can tell which model is running by its sound.

Gregory hopes to work in a vacuum shop when he grows up, if not sooner.

Reported by: Scot England/WAND TV

What next...

Under the concerns of my eye doctor, my fifty+ year old eyes are now under constant supervision for the possibility of glaucoma. Now it seems that there are new tests that help determine if a person has glaucoma. Under tests done just 5

years ago, any eye doctor would never have noticed a problem with my eyes. Now, new tests can measure parts of the eye that were only accessible in surgery or an autopsy. Is it my luck that I am now taking these new tests, or because nothing else indicates glaucoma, are these test just a wast of my time and money? I really like to think that I'm a little lucky. If all goes well, I will never have to worry about my eyesight and glaucoma.

Of course I went through the same thing a few years ago when the scale for high and low chlorolesteral was modified. I've had the same levels for years, but now it is high, 20 years ago it was good, 15 years ago it was moderate. So I take medication that I would not have taken 15 years ago. Hmmm. The older I get, the more I fall apart...

What Will Happen To Marvel Island?

From the Financial Pages today – business news is not something I usually write about, but you'll see why the following story would interest me:

[Disney To Acquire Marvel Entertainment](#)

Our family frequents the Orlando Florida area, home of Disney World and also their major competitor – Universal Studios. For those of you who don't know, at Universal's Islands of Adventure (the newer and more thrill-ride oriented of Universal's two Orlando parks), there is an entire area called Marvel Superhero Island®. So my question is, now that Disney, Universal's biggest competitor and business enemy, has bought Marvel, what will happen to Superhero Island at Islands of

Adventure? I can't imagine that Universal would want to keep the same characters, now owned by Disney, at their park. And I can't imagine Disney letting Universal keep the characters at their park, unless the price was right, of course. But based upon the competitiveness that is obvious to the tourists flocking to the area, Disney's superhero lease price would probably put Universal out of business!

[Marvel's Superhero Island](#) currently contains (click the link for an interactive map – Superhero Island is on the left side of the park, just left of the main gate) the following attractions: The Amazing Adventures of Spiderman, The Incredible Hulk Coaster, Doctor Doom's Fear Fall, and Storm Force Accelatron, which we've always skipped since it seemed like Universal's answer to Disney's Teacup ride. We always skipped Doctor Doom also since it's a free-fall ride and I'm afraid to go on those. I think my husband went on this one however, but I don't remember him saying it was any different from the rest of these types of rides. In short, it probably won't be much of a problem to rename these two rides. The Hulk coaster is an awesome coaster and should also be able to withstand the re-themeing, although it might need a paint job to change its current green/purple Hulk theme. The Adventures of Spiderman is another story. This ride is awesome! There really isn't anything else like it in either of the two parks. It's basically like taking a thrill ride *into* a 3D Spiderman movie. I guess they'd have to choose a new character and make a new movie. Whatever they do, I hope it's as good as the original Spiderman ride! Also complicating a theming switch would be the superheros and villians that walk around Marvel's Superhero Island. I guess all the costumes would be sold to Disney. Perhaps Disney will build a superhero section – my guess would be at ~~MGM~~ Hollywood Studios if I had to pick a place.

And Universal would have an entire area to theme and fill. Hmmm, imagine the possibilities....

Let's see, would they coincide the new area with a new movie coming out (Smurfs (sorry Carol), Jetsons – not sure if those are Universal movies)? Or would they take one of their existing franchises (Simpsons – they'd have to move that super-cool new ride from the Studios park to the Islands park!, NBC land (The Office – The Ride!)) and create a whole new world? Any ideas?

****UPDATE**** – From orlandosentinel.com: *“...theme-park rival Universal Orlando will likely retain the park rights to its four Marvel superstars, including Spider-Man and the Incredible Hulk...*

...Universal's contracts apparently gives it exclusive U.S. rights east of the Mississippi River for theme-park attractions built around certain of those characters, notably Spider-Man, the Incredible Hulk, X-Men and Dr. Doom.

Universal Orlando said Marvel characters will remain a staple at its parks.

“Marvel Super Hero Island at Universal's Islands of Adventure and the Marvel characters are an important part of the Universal Orlando experience. They will remain so,” said Tom Schroder, a Universal spokesman. “Our agreement with Marvel stands for as long as we follow the terms of our existing contract and for as long as we want there to be a Marvel Super Hero Island.”

So in response to several comments from blog readers, there are a separate set of rights for the Marvel characters in question – theme park rights.

Maybe I Am The Evil Child After All?

I don't know where it comes from but maybe it is one of my talents that have been hidden within myself for the past 3.5 decades. Within the last few months, I have scared the heck out of two of my favorite people. A few months ago on the way to what can only be termed as a questionable phrase at the moment (a play reading meeting or was it the other kind), I dropped off Beeber's bouncy seat which I had possession of following a visit to [Admin](#) and family's cabin at a nearby campground. I entered the house and I don't know why I was so quiet but [taylhis](#) saw me and jumped at least a foot off the ground. I can't wait until our gang ventures to other spooktacular haunts as the time draws even nearer.

Earlier today, I was headed to the backroom to get the mop to use on the beauty shop floor. My mother was getting something out of the fridge which blocked my path, so I waited a few seconds. As she turned around, not only did she jump even higher than 12 inches but also let out a blood-curdling shriek that scared me half to death. My heart was pounding perhaps not as hard as hers but pretty fast, nonetheless. After she calmed down a bit and caught her breath, she raced to the bathroom before she really had an accident. Then we had a good laugh about it. I find this incredibly strange because I can come in after 2AM and she hears me attempting to quietly climb the upstairs steps as I am often informed of the next day.

Honestly, I did not know I was so evil or at least stealthy. I tell you... try to do something good can sometimes really backfire.

From One Optimist to Another

I have always admired the work of Michael J. Fox. Although I usually had to find another tv in the house to watch his fabulous role as Uber-conservative Alex P. Keaton on *Family Ties*, the family did enjoy the *Back to the Future* trilogy and the original *Teen Wolf*. Another of my favorite Fox movies is *The Secret of My Success* in which he plays a young man climbing the corporate ladder without really trying. I admit that I was not an avid fan of his second major series *Spin City*, during the course of which he made public his Parkinson's Disease diagnosis.

The past decade of Michael's life is chronicled in the excellent autobiography, *Always Looking Up: The Adventures of an Incurable Optimist*. The book is broken down into four extremely informative, touching, and HILARIOUS sections each showing how he has embraced his new life. His decision to retire (maybe not permanently) from acting, politics (ok so maybe not the best reading ever, but), faith, and family have all played a part in the creation of the Michael J. Fox Foundation which not only funds PD research but for other debilitating diseases as well.

While reading about his political views did get kind of dry, it did hold my interest with some of the humorous anecdotes that were a highlight of the entire book. I loved the dedication he pays to his wife, Tracy (who played his girlfriend Ellen on *Ties*), son Sam, twin daughters Aquinnah and Schuyler, and 8-year old Esme (who was born following Mike's diagnosis... COOL!) Cross-country road trips, playing guitar with The Who (it really WAS him playing Johnny B. Goode in *Back to the Future*), and his battle with Rush Limbaugh (the BEST part of the Politics section) are just a few of the remarkable tales he spins.

Through it all, one thing was quite evident: Mr. Fox's

unwavering optimism. Never for one instant did I find that he was painting a picture asking for the reader's sympathy. It just proves the cliché that when one is given lemons he should make lemonade and who doesn't like a tall cool glass of lemonade.

Match.com – For Gorillas

See if you enjoy this as much as I did – a group of female gorillas is given posters of their prospective mate. How did they react to it? Read:

From cnn.com:
by Nick Hunt

So when three female gorillas at London Zoo heard that they would soon be visited by a brooding French hunk – well, they went a bit bananas.

The latest development in Anglo-French relations sees Yeboah, a 20-stone 12-year-old, leave his current home at La Boissiere Du Dore Zoo, Pays de la Loire, northwest France and head for the British capital by the end of the year.

There he will be greeted by gorilla trio Zaire, Effie and Mjukuu, who were given posters of their prospective boyfriend for the first time Thursday.

One female gorilla shrieked in delight, while another wedged the poster in a tree to stare at it.

A third, clearly overcome by emotion, held the photo close to her chest – then ate it.

Their reception was somewhat unsurprising. The zoo has been

without a male gorilla since the demise of Bobby, a silverback, in December.

Tracey Lee, team leader at London Zoo, put in a good word for the hirsute lothario on the London Zoo Web site, saying Yeboah is "a very charming, fun loving and intelligent gorilla."

But whom will Yeboah choose to charm first?

Zaire, at 34, is the oldest female gorilla and has been at London Zoo since 1984. The zoo says she's "happiest when she's taking down and rebuilding her nest in various spots around the island. She loves to play with fabric and often drags it around with her all day. "

Then there's Effie, 16, who "enjoys seeing toddlers and often makes her way over to the glass when they come to see her," according to the zoo Web site.

Finally there's 10-year-old Mjukuu, or "Jookie." Dan Simmonds, a keeper at the zoo's Gorilla Kingdom, says she "has this 'butter wouldn't melt look' to her, and she gets away with murder."

"The other two females get along with her very well; she seems to have them all wrapped around her little finger."



Above is a picture of the gorilla who hung up the picture of her new beau.

Saturday arrived

My youngest is settled in to her new apartment with her new roommates. I'm settled in to my new routine with the dog and chinchillas. Ok, not really settled in. We both are in our new places.

Her apartment is a nice place. I was thinking a bit small for 4, but it shouldn't be too bad. I think the de finitely only want to have one person in the kitchen at a time. They do have two bathrooms, so that shouldn't be too bad. They did have enough junk food to last for a while. I'm interested in hearing about how the four girls get along. I'm sure with her experience with all of her sister, my little girl should do just fine.

The college did have activities planned for this evening for all of the new residents. #1 it got the parents and other family members to leave and #2 it gave all the new students a chance to get to know each other.

I may blog more on my experiences living alone. It has been a few years since I spent more than a week or two on my own. That will be different.