

A VERY PRODUCTIVE LESSON

It is getting very close... about a month and a half (of course, February is a VERY short month!!!!). However, I am very, VERY pleased with where I am at this point in the process. After all, I have never before embarked on an adventure quite like this... from infancy to finish, my OWN creation but I would be lying if I did not tell you that I am really excited! K told me that we are definitely where I need to be just going through each piece one by one over and over again. I see two of my list are more challenging than others for reasons that are very apparent to both of us! Definitely will be focusing on those this week.

I was thrilled by one of her comments today! It seems that her family was listening to one of the songs I will be performing (one of my top picks... one that HAD to be on the program). She informed me that my interpretation outshines the artist who performed the song in the OBC (Original Broadway Cast for those of you not in the know). Let me reiterate that this will be an extremely family-friendly show with no questionable songs or staging (I'll save that for my grand 20th spectacle). In fact, I would not be surprised if I incorporated a bit of audience interaction throughout. Not to worry, I would know who **NOT** to call upon. St. Patty's Day weekend... I have a spot to fill perhaps a nice Irish tune.

It seems that I have been a walking billboard for my terrific coach. Not one but two people have asked me how to get in touch with her. My cousin, who is in a band, told me that she has been trying to find a good vocal teacher and was unaware that there was one in the immediate area.

In other production news, it seems that "the other me" has made quite an impression. The promotional photo for the theatre's redux of *Escanaba in da Moonlight* features a gentleman who just happens to share names with me but bears

little resemblance. Numerous people around the area have come up and asked me how the play was going. At times, I have forgotten what they were talking about and inform them that it is not me in the cast. I have worked on stage with J2 but not this time.

January 2012

My blogging style has changed – maybe temporarily, maybe permanently. It's evolved, if you will, to meet the growing needs of my family. I no longer have time to sit down 5 times a week and write about my thoughts, my plans, my stories, my ideas, nor do I have the time to detail my agenda. With 5 kids now and all of the new things we're doing (new baby, homeschooling, new career for both Hubby and I, new ministries...), I rarely do find myself sitting down and when I am, it's rare that a computer is in front of me. So for awhile, I will just post updates on the members of my family and our lives. This will still serve as a way to keep in touch with those who read my blog (those especially that I cannot find as much time as I'd like to talk on the phone with because of all the noise in my house – phone conversations are nearly impossible at certain times of the day!), and my blog will also continue to serve as a family diary for us to look back on someday and enjoy together. Updates:

Family – we began homeschooling last fall, and we still like it. We've had to make some adjustments to our planned curriculum since new little bro Luke (born Oct 7 2011) is quite a happy though demanding handful. We began co-op on January 9, which is a local program they have here at a church for homeschoolers. We go every Monday, and each grade level participates in 3 different classes taught by the moms of the

group. Since it's our first year, I don't have a class to teach yet – I pulled nursery duty. Yep – 3 hours every week working in the nursery with my little Luke and about 5 other babies – Luke is the only boy. My husband asked me how I managed that one (because I LOVE babies!), and I don't know – lucky I guess!! Apparently there are some ladies who don't want to deal with diapers and fussy babies and all that, but for me, there couldn't be a better job for me to serve at co-op. My other kids really like co-op. Beeber (age 3) is in Preschool, and he came home the first week with a “carrot project” – the top of a carrot in a cup of water. It was supposed to grow some green out the top, but ours didn't. He didn't seem to mind though. It's funny because when he handed me his carrot as I was picking him up, I thought it was the remainder of what he had done with his snack until the teacher explained it to me – haha! Disney is in Kindergarten at co-op, and she really likes it. Since we've decided to homeschool our kids beginning at 2nd grade, Disney is also in public school preschool, and she loves both of them! The older girls enjoy co-op too; it gives some of the structure of school without all the unnecessary rules and drama, and the classes are taught from a Christian perspective. I like that the kids are held accountable to other adults besides their parents for their assignments and quizzes. The Sunday-Monday rush is taxing for our family since we have seven bags to pack Sunday night for co-op AFTER a big weekend spent getting ready for church service, but it's worth it and we are settling into a routine. Wednesday sees us leading groups at youth group, and we had a friend offer to take the 3 middle kids to AWANA and they really like that. Thursday we have Bible study, and as I said, much of our weekends now consist of planning Sunday church service and TRYING to find time to rest and relax. Overall, we're busier than ever, but I feel happier than ever – God is so great! I felt so run-down and was having a really hard time for a few months, but I had some checkups with the doctor and think I got the problem solved. I feel better than I have in years and I can't thank God enough!! Now we just

have to get Hubby some more sleep since he is waking with Luke all night, every night AND working 2 jobs, not to mention all of the help he gives me around the house.

The past few months, I've learned better to accept the circumstances of life as seasons that are constantly changing. I've also learned to better accept that the way things are now are most definitely going to change in a few months. I've learned to look forward to seeing what God has in store for my family rather than to let the ever-changing dynamics of our lives fill me with fear, dread or worry. As far as things at the new church, we've set up a wonderful childrens ministry, and we have about 20 kids that come every weekend. This is an AMAZING thing when you realize that the church had 0 kids attending only 4 months ago. We have been contemplating ideas for a youth ministry (tweens and teens) as well as some other things, and only God knows where we will be with that in a month or two. As I tried to say, things change so fast that it's difficult to update it all on my blog, especially when this post alone has taken me a few weeks of having to put it aside and come back to add more later in order to finish it!

Before I stop writing for the day, I do want to share an amazing God story we got to witness this past Sunday. My husband had been up late most of last week writing his sermon, and there was a pancake supper at church on Saturday night. I ended up staying home with my boys because I was feeling run down and Luke was crabby and oozing things from places (you don't really want more details, trust me... baby stuff). So late Saturday night, Hubby decided to start telling God in prayer that he needed rest, and I was doing the same. Sunday morning, I was making my runs for church – I am the designated driver for the childrens ministry. Many of the kids that come to our church need rides because their home situations are... let's say complicated. Our church is located in the middle of the country about 6 miles from town, so I make 2-3 trips there

in the morning to pick up the kids and to drive my own family. Sunday we saw a man riding a bike on US Route 6; his bike was pulling a trailer that normally is used for pulling children, but his was loaded with supplies. I wondered if he was homeless or someone who was making a long trek because it isn't all that unusual to see someone journeying down US 6 – our little corner of the world seems to be on the way to everywhere! So we see people journeying down 6 from time to time, but not usually in the winter. On my last run, as I pulled into church, I noticed the man on the bike was also pulling into church. I got the kids settled, then went out to welcome him. Turns out, his name is Michealangelo, and he had been on his journey on his bike for FOUR MONTHS! He's from Los Angeles, and he began by biking north in California, and then coming out this way headed to New York – because God sent him on this journey. He saw the sign for our little church on US 6 and decided to stop. Michael has amazing faith, and he had amazing stories to tell! My husband asked him if he would share some of these with our congregation, and Michael obliged, even after sharing his concerns about the way he was dressed. I don't have the time to go into all of the amazing details of the personal touches that God put on this story – I've already burnt the eggs that I was cooking and the house smells disgusting. But I will sum it up briefly: Michael's unexpected visit meant that my husband's sermon that he had carefully prepared was not used last week because we were treated to the testimony of Michael instead. So my husband can rest a little easier this week knowing that his sermon is already prepared. Also, we've been talking in our own family and at church about really living a Godly life and what that looks like; we've been trying to make opportunities to GO OUT and serve God rather than just sitting around, doing the same old things for US. Michael's testimony reaffirmed these concepts – here is a man who has devoted his entire life to doing what God wants him to do. He left the life that he knew and WENT OUT THERE and is sharing the Word... And here I am frustrated because my words are failing to convey the story...

And I wish I could find the links to the info about this guy on the internet. Hubby found them so maybe when he gets home from work I can ask him and add them to my blog.

But anyway, it was a magical Sunday, and I am thankful that I got to be a part of it! I will leave you now with a little update about my little Luke – he tried his tot wheels for the first time in January. He likes it, but only for short periods of time. He is a grown up little guy in a baby's body with a baby's attention span. He loves to stand, and practice walking ALREADY even though he is not yet 4 months old. He also loves to watch other kids in action – his sisters and brother and also the kids at co-op and at youth group. WOW – I really have to blog more often! Once I got going, I had so much to say but not enough time to say it... sorry that I was kind of all over the place, but that's the price I pay for sitting down and trying to do this with all these kids running around and my many tasks to accomplish! Until next time...

lukes first time in tot wheels.mov

Coming Soon to the Great White Way

Seems like spring is the beginning of the new Broadway season.

Guess they have to get in to hit that Tony deadline. In any case, I see a gaggle of revivals, hollywood turned stage productions (for better or worse), and one-man shows among the already established shows.

It appears that there is a new revolving door musical aiming

to hit a certain demographic (in this case screaming adolescent females). Daniel Radcliffe ended his employ at the World Wide Wicket company back in early January. Darren Criss (from Glee) Succeeded him for a two week run. And now, Nick Jonas is in the Business until July. Hope that this does not become the next Chicago with every teenage heartthrob stepping into the role of J. Pierpont Finch. A good show should stand on its own. On a side bar, Radcliffe and Criss have more in common than H2\$. Darren's production company (began at all places at the dreaded school up north) created the internet sensation "A Very Potter Musical."

Opening soon for a limited run is the newest entry in Disney's production juggernaut. *Newsies*, a little movie musical from the 80s that starred a young little-known actor named Christian Bale. I do not think it was a major hit but has legions of cult fans ☐

Ghost: The Musical. The less said the better. Sounds like a mess and I don't mean because of the famous clay scene.

In the new revival scene there is a play and a favorite musical about to hit NYC. Phillip Seymour Hoffman is going to fill Willy Loman's shoes along with Andrew Garfield (the *Amazing Spider-Man* not the musical the new reboot of the cinematic saga) in *Death of a Salesman*.

Now for the show that I have had my eye on ever since the news arrived. Lord Lloyd Webber's masterpiece is coming back! ~~*Starlight Express* that WONDERFUL engine that could will be skating back into the heart of theatre goers in March.~~ *Jesus Christ Superstar* enjoyed a new production in Canada last summer and is making its way to the Neil Simon Theatre in March. I just hope that this production is better than the 90s offering that was dreadful and they had the audacity to film it for all to see (not that the 1973 version was the work of genius but King Herod was much more interesting).

Finally... for a very limited run, the performing wunderkind known as William Shatner will be gracing the stage for the first time in 50 years in a one-man production all his own. I can only imagine...

Rebellious ducks, or something like that

Continuing the medical theme from summer camp, enter the 2012 4th and 5th grade winter retreat held right at our church. The older kids get to go all the way to the camp in Michigan for two days, but as a cost-saving measure for the parents I am sure, this crowd gets one night with no travel necessary outside of being brought to church. That suits me just fine and allows more to come who otherwise would not. I know of one family for sure whose junior-higher wasn't going to be able to go to his retreat though his younger brother was at ours.

I arrived Friday night just a smidgen late and check-in was well underway. In fact, most of my cabin was already settled in and watching the opening movie which entertained them while waiting for the official start. I joined my colleagues upstairs and helped settle in the stragglers. Did I mention that Friday was the day of a major snowstorm? After driving on snow-packed roads from Algonquin to Elgin and back home, I and a hundred moms, dads, and other leaders slogged down the roads to make this event, the only one not canceled. But I am sure parents would brave even more to ~~be rid of their young-~~ ~~uns~~ give their brood an opportunity to draw closer to our Lord and Savior. Though there was one cabin that had several boys missing by the time the main event started, mine was complete

(at least it was by dinner time when the last trooper arrived). I even had a couple of repeat campers from summer, one of which I hadn't seen since then as he attended the church's school, but not regular church on the weekends- at least the one I serve at. Even my junior leader was the same. Yep, Mad Cow Disease was represented in full. What? Oh, yes. Remember the medical theme I mentioned? Well, all the cabins were named after diseases and cures. Most girls would never go for a cabin labeled SARS or mad cow disease, so they naturally got the cures while the boys proudly represented their diseases.

Once the movie was shut off in the middle (sorry for those who may not have seen it before...) and rules had been gone over, it was time to get into things with a game of course. That game was Duck Hunt.