

Small Separate Side Post

I didn't really see a place for bitching and moaning in the few posts I wrote about our wonderful trip to Chicago – hence the small separate side post.

First, when we arrived at our hotel, we requested a crib for the baby. Evening turned to night, and we were still without a crib. We called down to the front desk, and she kept saying strange things about the missing maintenance guy, but finally he was located. He delivered the crib and took a look at our ant (!) problem and declared it was no big deal. Maybe not to him, but I saw the Dateline episodes about the people who got severely bit by the hotel bed bugs! On top of this, we had a door that would stick so that I'd have to knock every time I came back from getting pop or ice or something from the car, etc. And then there were the drunken celebrity phone calls...

Not something we did, rather, something we came across when perusing the hotel's tv offerings. On the hotel's video menu, where they usually have movies you can buy, games you can play, and stuff about the hotel, we learned that the Hampton Inn offered some offbeat choices. First, there was the Hilton Family Channel – 24/7 documentaries about the Hilton family, how they began their hotel empire, and where it is today. After 10 minutes, I had had enough. And after those 10 minutes, not a word of Paris, interesting...

Another strange tv offering was under the 'short takes' menu. These seemed to be youtube.com videos – I know I had even seen a few on youtube. You know, Charlie Bit Me (the British siblings posing for a picture when the baby bites his big brother, a youtube / talkshow sensation), Office Pranks; I'm sure you've come across some of those popular videos somewhere in pop culture, yet here they were being offered for (free) viewing in the hotel room!

Still another strange tv offering was "hot for words". And before you get the wrong idea (or is it? I'm confused by this whole concept), this was not the 'adult' menu. Each 'hot for words' video however, looked to be something naughty but was actually proven to be individual dictionary lessons – to increase one's vocab, perhaps? But it still seemed to be a strange selection for a hotel tv – I've never seen anything like that before...

And lastly, perhaps what is the weirdest selection on the hotel tv: drunken celebrity phone calls. It was a young adult (I guess?) making prank phone calls to celebrities (supposedly). But the caller was the only person on camera, and there was no proof that celebrities were even involved – maybe it would have been funny if we had seen the celebrities reactions to being called by some random (drunk?) guy, but there was no proof that he was even able to get ahold of the celebrities phone numbers, and even then, a stretch. It was a really strange thing to have this kid on our tv, watching him make these really stupid, probably fake phone calls. What a strange tv offering... yet it was free, and we bit, I guess...

The final bad thing about this hotel is the ringer on the phone – it sounded like a woodland creature, no joke! I really wanted to get a video of the thing ringing, but when the baby didn't sleep that well, everything of least importance was put aside. Too bad, it was the strangest ringtone I've ever heard... at least it rang for the first time in the evening. If it had rung in the morning without us knowing it was the phone, I would have been convinced it was some sort of wild rodent loose in our room!

The Younger set

Children and young adults (7 to 18?) are invading our theater. It is, of course, time for the annual Children's Theater.

As long as I remember, we've always had a good turnout for this acting forum, but this year it is an absolute invasion. There were at least 40 younger members of society on stage during the first evening. Tonight was the third evening of theater for the youngsters, and there was still at least 35 roaming stage and backstage. It is really good to see this in the theater. This is the future of theater. In the next few years some of these actors will be back on stage as adults. Always good to see.

I am wondering where the child relatives of other Tangents bloggers are. Didn't see any nieces, nephews or children of the Tangents group. Oh well, since I volunteered to help again, you will all know where I will be..

Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

Don't take your love away from me

Don't you leave me heart in misery.

No, no nothing quite that emotional. I forgot to mention another shattering event at the workplace last weekend. Friday morning, I walked to the store to pick up my paycheck and saw a sign on the door: **Please use other door.** I immediately thought of the wind from last winter when the door would be blown open, forcing us to lock it before it broke. I looked up and down the glass and saw a long crack halfway

down. I asked the boss if she got really mad at someone else and put the crack in the door. Apparently not. The tremor inducing machinery for the repaving of OH49 was to blame. Thursday, the building shook so much that I was not sure if it was going to remain standing. From what I understand, a rock came flying and hit the door and left the crack.

Saturday, we apparently had some rushed customers who kept walking into the door. Sorry, I probably would have done the same after being so accustomed to pushing the "out" door. I even set a wet floor sign in front of the door and more than one person walked into it. I suggested hiring a door greeter to man the door (hey, if Wal-Mart can...), a bigger sign, or some yellow CSI tape.

A Patch Of Blue In A Sea Of Black And White

We took a fun little excursion to Chicago this past weekend and had a few adventures! More about those later (if I get to them – my time to blog has dwindled A LOT lately!). What I want to write about now is the Chicago Cubs game. Let me begin by escorting the elephant from the room – the Cubs got creamed by the White Sox yesterday. There, I said it. And I'm just stating fact, unfortunately. We were lucky enough to have tickets (happy birthday to me from Hubby – THANK YOU!!!!!!) for Sunday's game – the final game of a 3 game series between the cross-town MLB rivals the Cubs and the White Sox. This game was to be the "rubber match" – with both teams tied at 1 win apiece for this series, Sunday's outcome would decide the series winner. But the Cubs lost. Miserably. It was almost like they didn't show up to play

baseball – which is something I and probably at least a few other Cubs fans lovingly yelled from the stands. We got to watch Carlos Zambrano, the Cubs famously hot-headed starting pitcher, take the mound – and consequently lose his control and get booed off the field. And let me say it wasn't just Sox fans who were booing Zambrano. But I think it was awesome that he was the starting pitcher the day we got to go watch the game live, and he was really fun to watch. It was frustrating to see the empty bullpen across right field though – it seemed empty forever. My husband and I really thought Lou Pinnella should have made the call to the bullpen a little bit sooner and at least get someone throwing balls down there – Zambrano does not recover his game often once he loses it. We were both watching for Lou's call, and finally Zambrano made his trademark nasty move – the guy gets so angry that he beans someone. He throws a 90ish mph baseball AT the batter! So then he stalks off the field, gives the fans a one-finger salute (I don't think it was THAT finger), and goes into the locker room to pout by himself. He didn't throw down any water coolers on the way this time as he's also been known to do, but I can't say that I wouldn't have liked to see that. As lucky as we were to get to see Big Z pitch, he didn't do very well and we were happy to see him go.

But alas, Zambrano was not the only problem yesterday since the Cubs' bats haven't produced much of anything for weeks, and our game day was no exception. Thus we witnessed a shut-out on the Cubs.

But that's enough of that. It 's amazing how much fun we had despite the worst possible scenario for the game! I LOVE live baseball, and MLB almost doesn't compare to the smaller AAA and AA leagues. Those are fun too, but comparing those atmospheres is really like comparing apples and oranges. It was kind of toasty in the sun, and my knees got burnt to a crisp; I'm dealing with that today. For those of you who want to know the outrageous robbery they're getting away with in

MLB stadiums across the country, at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago, it costs \$23 to park, \$6.75 for a 20 oz. beer, \$4 for a bottle of pop or water (let me guess – they took out all the public drinking fountains, I sure didn't see any), and \$4.75 for a hot dog. If you can keep yourself hydrated during the game, you can save yourself \$6 on 2 bottles of water by buying one before and one after the game from the street vendors – they sell them for \$1, which isn't bad at all in that heat! Originally I had planned to eat all day at the stadium, but I just wasn't hungry in the heat. There's nothing like sitting there at a baseball game and cracking peanuts, but I actually passed on those too. I certainly didn't want to leave my seat much, and by the time the peanut vendor arrived, we no longer felt like sitting there calmly cracking peanuts while the Cubs played like you-know-what and gave the game away. That reminds me – we had GREAT seats, upper-level, 3rd base side, right about even with the pitcher. We had a bird's-eye view of Zambrano's animal-like pacing and stomping rituals on the mound. I guess that's enough about the game – interesting how we were ALMOST late...

Sox park (its real name is a tongue and finger-typing twister) is situated on I-90, one of Chicago's expressways. I was anxious to try Jill the GPS's skills in a city environment since she had so failed us in Pittsburgh, but more so in the outskirts, we weren't really in downtown Pittsburgh. Jill did fine in the big city of Chicago, but when we got off the expressway, it was chaos – and it wasn't like Jill was programmed to guide us through the Sox's bizarre parking system; red coupons, green coupons, etc. We THOUGHT we had left in plenty of time for the game and might even see some batting practice, but we hit some traffic on the way down (did I mention this was also a weekend for the Taste of Chicago?!? Oops – bad planning on our part; we couldn't believe it. The Taste draws *millions!*). Anyway, when we arrived on the south side, we were confused about where to go for cash (\$23!) parking. There were people directing traffic (don't know if

they were cops or city workers or Sox park workers, but I might find out so I can file a complaint!), so we asked one of the ladies how to get to cash parking. She said, "I'm going to let you make a U-Turn (we were heading east, toward the stadium), and you make the u-turn and go to 33rd street. So we made the U-turn and headed west when we began to get a not-so-comfortable feeling. Remember, we had seen the stadium, and we were now heading away from it, out of the city. And usually numbered streets in cities are parallel to each other. So if we were looking for 33rd, most likely we should see 31st, 32nd, or 34th streets first – but we weren't. So we turned around, and an hour later, when we finally figured out where to be, we had passed the "helpful" traffic person again and confirmed our suspicions: she had tried to take us out of the city **on purpose**. In fact, when we passed Ms. Directions again, there was a Sox parking pay lot *one block* in front of her. I like to think the best of people, but here it's obvious that earlier, she had us make the U-turn rather than turn around so we wouldn't be able to see that she was taking us the wrong way. Rude isn't even the word for that. As most locals know, Sox park is not known for being nestled in safe neighborhoods – Wrigley Field, home of the Cubs, is known as the "Friendly Confines" – NOT Sox Park. We were fine, the area didn't get too bad, my husband just got really upset that we might be late for the game. Indeed, when we did finally find our lot, there was a big line and we sat in it for a long time. I can't help but wonder if maybe Ms. Helpful had noticed the color of our shirts – Cubbie blue- which isn't exactly welcome on the south side of Chicago. And those Cubbie blue shirts we wore (which ironically said "Cubs win!", sheesh) were probably responsible for other rude behaviors directed our way. For instance, my husband got bumped a little harder than regular crowd jostling, and some of his popcorn spilled. Sox fans nearby jeered, and there were also the people who would walk by us up the stairs on the way to their seats (we were seated on an aisle) and feel inclined to say "Cubs suck". Yesterday they may have had a point.

The people directly around us were friendly enough, a mix of Chicago fans, both north and south, Cubs and Sox. Some people wore a Sox hat and a Cubs shirt, while there were families of people dressed for both teams, an interesting mix. As I looked around the stadium, I saw mostly white shirts (the black shirts were hard to see) in the sea of people, although the sea was dotted with many patches of Cubbie blue, much like the blue patch the two of us created. As rude as a select few Sox fans were though, I suppose they can't be all bad... on the way in to the stadium, it was extremely windy and we both got our Cubs hats blown right off our heads – maybe it was a sign of things to come... But anyway, it was Sox fans who helped up retrieve the runaway hats.

Overall, a great day for some baseball; definitely something I hope to do again. Except next time, I think we'll park far away and take the train to the stadium and forget trying to park in the city. We hit traffic on the way out too, and an hour after the game had ended, I turned around and I could still see Sox park which was STILL within walking distance!
TOO MUCH TRAFFIC!

What A Difference A Letter Can Make

This weekend, I learned two new duties at work. One, I was strongly advised to learn the other I took upon myself to try my hand at. I have watched others cut a whole steak before but have never tried it myself. Last night, a customer who I know asked if we could cut two of the whole ribeye steaks for her. Since this was nearly 8PM and the cashier was about to leave, I told her that it might be Monday before it could be

done. No problem, she was not in a hurry. This morning, I decided to be brave and slice it myself... at least I know the guinea pig who would be the recipient of the steaks well enough. Since it was boneless, all I had to do is take a knife and hack my way through it. And both of them were very lean so not much fat to trim. Hopefully, I did well enough. I called and left a message on the customer's machine.

The other adventure was printing next week's ad signs on the computer. No problem there except maybe the age of the computer... actually looks like a relic of the 80s. Once again, went really well until I looked over my handiwork and discovered that a sign that was supposed to read:

CAMPBELL'S

PORK 'N BEANS

3 FOR \$1.00

came out reading:

CAMPBELL'S

PORN N' BEANS

3 FOR \$1.00

Thank goodness, I noticed it before no one else did and hung the sign. I did make a new sign with the correct item and THOUGHT that I had thrown the faux pas in the garbage. Apparently not. When I got to work this morning, there was the offensive sign with a nice little note attached. It was good for a laugh anyway. But as I have always said, be careful how much you learn; you can get in all kinds of trouble ☐

Testing

I am back from camp and have in fact enjoyed a nice afternoon with C & L, who are in the area for tomorrow's Chicago vs. Chicago game. There was a new indoor mini-golf place over at Stratford Square mall which we were told just opened last week. I'll take their word for it since it has been over ten years since I have been there. Following 18 holes of golf (out of 54) we decided our eyes were getting tired of the black-lighting (the whole place was lit that way with the neon paints) and proceeded to have some dinner. Deciding against the one real restaurant which L said seemed like an Applebee's after looking at the menu, we opted for the food court. I had Chinese, they had Sbarro's and some pretzel dogs. All of us had blue raspberry lemonades from the pretzel stand which was quite good. Instead of going back to play more golf, which we could have as the fee C paid for us covered the entire day, we talked for a bit and walked around the mall which surprisingly was still quite active with seemingly less than 5% vacancy. I guess maybe I am used to other local malls, not counting Woodfield in Schaumburg, that have closed in the last several years. We stopped at a pet store and C & L found that they could happily own a glorified mutt with a fancy name for the bargain price of \$1600. No, I didn't accidentally add an extra digit. Not \$160 or \$600, but over *a grand and a half!* Ouch. Well, that was pretty much it. They had to go shortly after and so we went our separate ways.

What? You wanted to hear about my week at camp? Well, that is coming soon. As for the title, C talked me into updating Live Messenger with the newer Live Essentials version and I noticed I could install a Writer program to write my blog posts. Right now I am seeing this post exactly as it should appear on my

blog page once published- grey background, full justification, and lowercase title included, unlike the WordPress editor on which I would have to click a preview button to see how it would look. It seems pretty nice and barring any difficulties I will probably give this a longer test run with added pictures and whatnot. There seem to be things that I don't think the WordPress editor even has. I'll see how it goes. Well, until later...

Edit: Well, that didn't go well- I needed to edit the post straight away. It added a bunch of #160s and forgot to encase the paragraph tags in <> symbols so the post had extra p, em, /em and /p characters included in the text. I guess there are bugs to be worked out- oh well.

More Than Met The Eye

Tonight, as promised, a friend and I took in *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*. I was NOT disappointed (although we both felt the need to visit the facilities as soon as the final credits began to roll). Nearly non-stop action, breathtaking effects, comic relief (at times) all created a perfect summer blockbuster. The battle of the Autobots and Decepticons returned to the big screen. I WAS a big fan of the toys and cartoon of the 80s and weel remember the battles of Optimus Prime and Megatron. The live-action sequel again brings the alien robots together with humans led by Sam (Shia Labeouf), Mikaela (Megan Fox), and Major Lennox (Josh Duhamel).

Sam is on his way to live the ordinary life of a college student when the action kicks off. The young man learns the truth about the origins of the Transformers and the

Decepticons return to Earth to capture him and draw out Optimus Prime for a confrontation.

At times, I was not sure who the movie was aimed at. There were a few scenes in which I thought it was playing to the more adult viewer (it is PG-13 rated for a reason) who is old enough to remember the beginnings of the franchise. A scene in a dorm room involving Sam and a young lady who is more than she appears created a chuckle from a young child in the row behind us. Then there was the playful bits geared to the kid in all of us which were really fun.

Again, the main robots all had distinct personalities of their own. The leader, Optimus Prime, the emotional Camero transforming Bumble Bee, and the hilarious twin duo of Skids and Mudflaps.

Like all summer popcorn flicks, this is in no way geared to the intellectual demanding audience. As with any Michael Bay production, there are huge explosions, limited conceivable plot lines, and a great deal of fun. And, IMHO, any film starring Shia Labeouf is not going to be confused with Shakespeare.

An Angel And A King Forever

Thursday June 25, 2009. Two iconic figures of pop culture; two tragic deaths. One that will surely (and has already) overshadow the other. Growing up, I did not really know Farrah Fawcett as her most famous role. I remember her hyphenated moniker Fawcett-Majors. I remember seeing reruns of the Six Million Dollar Man in which she co-starred with her then husband, Lee Majors. I even believed that she was the actress who played the Bionic Woman. I guess Charlie's Angels

was on after my bedtime. Her bravery through suffering has been well documented and must have been heavy upon those who loved her. She is definitely in a better place.

On the other hand, the weeks ahead will undoubtedly focus on the self-proclaimed King of Pop. No matter what the last decade or so of Michael Jackson's life may have brought the fact remains: the man had an extreme amount of talent musically, and performance wise. I will not dwell on the tabloid details of his life but will say that I do remember his heyday in the early to mid 80s and was enthralled with his extreme talent. I was with my family in Texas the summer of 1984 during the Jackson's Victory tour and remember thinking how cool it would be to be able to get impossible tickets. I also remember the videos (when videos were actually shown on MTV) that were mini-movies. Thriller is still a masterpiece aurally and visually. Ironically, I just watched it via youtube earlier this week. Nearly 15 minutes. 28 million copies of the album sold worldwide. Experts are already speculating that the world will never again see the like. His life may have been troublesome and strange. I think being tossed into the spotlight at the age of 4 and continue for 4 decades would be difficult to say the least.

To say nothing of the passing of Johnny Carson's second banana, Ed McMahon. Not a good week for pop culture. Peace and healing to all the families of these three icons.

Life in the Comic Section

Sometime back the comic strip [Funky Winkerbean](#) had run a series on the death of one of the main characters. It hit me hard at the time, because the character was a wife and mother

who died of cancer. The comic strip jumped 10 years into the future and we now see the lives of the characters after this death and the death of another character (presumably in the war). I've seen bits and pieces of things I feel written in the comics.

Currently they are dealing with the widower of the first character who died. He is trying to raise his teenage daughter (been there, doing that) and even started on the road to dating (not yet, not quite or maybe, I'm confused). I find it interesting to read the comic and it almost feels like the author has done his research in one way or another. Usually it is very close to some of the things I feel and think.

It is hard to explain what I feel to a person who hasn't dealt with the same situation. In most cases, I don't even know where to begin. This comic explains and shows things in a way I never could. But then, I found someone else who reads that comic and they didn't see the same things. Maybe I just see it because I have been in the same boat. I guess I need to think and ponder that. My life in a comic, who would have guessed.

Car Problems and lots of fun

I was going to take my car in today to see exactly what was wrong with it. It started up fine after charging the battery, but this morning the battery was dead again. Hmmm, didn't seem to want to hold a charge. I tried the jumper box and it was no go. I hooked up the charger again, but the battery would not charge up. I took the cover off of the battery and found out the problem. The four year old batter was leaking acid and the sides were bulging. After 4 years, I guess the battery gave up.

Now it was off to town to get a battery. First to Wally World, no battery for my truck. First Car Part store, no go. They could order it for tomorrow... How do I get around? I'll try the dealer. Dealer was a no go too, they could get it tomorrow too. So I stopped at the next Car Part store. Yes, they had one (maybe). The guy knew there was one there this morning, but he thought it may have been sold. They went to check and it was still there. Yeah.

I got home and installed the battery and the truck started right up. So for now I will keep an eye on the truck to make sure the battery isn't getting drained by something. But with the looks of the old one, and a strange smell that was no missing, I'm sure it was just the battery. So for now, the truck is up and running.

Special thanks in this to my newlywed daughter and her husband for driving this old man around town looking for a battery. Also thanks to the Admin for the use of his battery jumper. It only worked once, but that wasn't the fault of the device.

I do have a question. Why do new cars and truck enclose the battery in a box? You can no longer see the battery and lose visual clues as to its condition. I think I would have looked for a battery sooner if I had seen a side bulging.