

A College Student Could Have Done Better

Recently a fellow blogger mentioned a dorm fire at the university where his youngest daughter is to attend. While I'm sure that much was learned from that particular tragedy in order to safeguard future students, it gave me a flashback to my own college days when there was a fire in the dorm where my friends lived. That particular dorm building was 28 stories high, and I was hanging out somewhere around the 25th floor on the night when the fire alarm went off. Obviously, we couldn't use the elevators to evacuate the rather large building, so we had to use the stairwells. I remember that after descending flight after flight of stairs, the monotony of the flights started to mess with my head a little bit, and by the end, it became difficult to even move my legs in the motion to go down the stairs – maybe a testament to just one of the challenges faced by those in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001? Luckily in our case, however, the fire was not threatening to our welfare, and we all made it out of the building safely. When we got out, we gathered around to watch the flames being extinguished – and much to our surprise, the flames were licking the part of the building where some of my best friends lived. Turns out, the fire had started in my friends' room (not where I was hanging out that particular night) and demolished it. The couch where I had crashed many a night had turned to just ash and a metal frame. I found it interesting that the firemen gave us a walk-thru of the room afterward – apparently something they do on college campuses? They taught us about the 'flashpoint', where the fire must have started and how hot it was there, and they also pointed out various objects from around the room and explained the temperatures it must have been in the room for the fire to have that effect upon that particular object, etc. – very informative! So anyway, the point of this post

is **that** building – it's called Watterson Towers, and it's located at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. Not the pertiest thing, ain't it?



First off, the thing is HUGE; it houses 2200 students. Illinois State University is a college campus located amongst farm fields in central Illinois – a far cry from Chicago – and Watterson Towers is the highest building between St. Louis and Chicago – a distance of nearly 300 miles. Also, the design of the structure is... well, it's bizarre – for lack of a better adjective. I think a college student could have done better at designing a building, hence the title of my blog post. It has been rumored that the [designer of Watterson Towers committed suicide](#), but I'm not sure if this is true or not. Click on the link I supplied above to read more about this – someone asked if the designer committed suicide because he thought the towers would eventually collapse, and the person who asked the question mentions that firefighters told them that if there were a fire at Watterson, students wouldn't make it out alive – go figure since I and hundreds of others are proof that that theory didn't pan out – thank goodness! Obviously those rumors are overblown, at least some of them, cuz I can't find any info about the designer or his fate. But the bottom line is, it **is** a very strange design for a building, especially one that is to house college students. Sadly, more than a few students have jumped from the windows of Watterson over the years to escape the pressure that

college students often needlessly feel.

More than a decade after residing in Watterson, it's still interesting for me to research the building and its design. It's amazing to me to remember that college kids used to get up early to stand in a line reminiscent of heavily-sought after concert tickets to get a room in Watterson. Seems like any of the other dorms on campus would have been much safer and cheaper, for that matter... But Watterson was where it was at – at least when I was in school. It was the most centrally located dorm, and it had the largest rooms by far. I can understand how space would be an issue when you are rooming with someone (or multiple people, as could be the case in Watterson's huge rooms) you might never have met. So anyway, here is the breakdown of the design of Watterson – it is almost maze-like when you're inside, and I still think a college student could do better at the design part! Just imagine Move- In day! 2200 students, all their stuff, and their parents! And remember, it's a 28-story building, but there are only FIVE elevator stops – and if your student does not reside on an "elevator floor", you must carry their stuff up or down flights of stairs to reach their rooms! To those who are uninformed of Watterson's design, Moving Day must play out like a cruel joke!

From Wikipedia.com:

Watterson is composed of 10 houses, each considered its own residence hall. The houses are named after the first ten men to hold the office of United States Secretary of State. The entire building is divided into two towers. Each tower is divided into five houses. Each house is divided into five floors. Each floor divided into four suites, except on the third floor, which is divided into two suites for elevator access. In the North Tower, the houses, from bottom to top, are Jefferson House, Randolph House, Pickering House, Marshall House and Madison House. In the South Tower, bottom to top, the houses are Smith House, Monroe House, Adams House, Clay

House, and Van Buren House. The houses are located across from each other, joined by a breezeway only on the third floor of the houses.

The building's unique design prevents it from having full elevator service. Of the 8 elevators that operate in the building, there is a maximum of nine stops, eight of which students have access to (maintenance level is for staff only): Service Level, Formal (Lobby) Level, Smith-Jefferson Breezeway, Monroe-Randolph Breezeway, Adams-Pickering Breezeway, Marshall-Clay Breezeway, Madison-Van Buren Breezeway and the Informal Level. Each breezeway level is the third floor of each house. A resident who lived on Clay 4 would stop at the Marshall-Clay Breezeway and then need to walk up one flight of stairs to reach his room.

And that's the simplest of the directions... if a student was assigned to Randolph 1, he or she would have to get off at the Monroe-Randolph elevator stop, then walk the breezeway, then descend the two flights of stairs until they got to Randolph 1... it seems that ISU should have offered a degree just for those who figured out the navigation of Watterson Towers! And oh yeah, I forgot to mention that Watterson's elevators were notorious for breaking down! In the two years that I attended Illinois State, I got stuck in the Watterson elevators *twice* myself and heard of **many** others who met the same fate! I wonder if they've fixed any of the problems plaguing that building in the last 10-15 years?

A Wonderful Weekend... Until...

Beautiful weather, fun times with the best of friends, and a bit of work (just a bit) all added up to a fun weekend AND

THEN...UGH! Older brothers can be so trying sometimes (I'm sure the same can be said for younger siblings as well). Fantastic news to start off with: We managed to finish filming *The Clinic*. Hopefully, it can be put together well enough to submit for consideration by the deadline. We have lots of fun things being planned after the final product comes to fruition. The process seemed to be much smoother than last week. I must say that I am glad we finished when we did. I think "Donnie" was just about out of energy. And that, my friend says A LOT.

Saturday night, I once again had the extreme thrill and privilege to assist my friend in setting up for his totally mind-blowing demonstration of mentalism in Mind Games. Taylor and I helped by watching him practice some of his routine. Thankfully, very little of it was done fully so as not to ruin the performance. I was asked to provide a dollar bill for a bit and at the end I had no idea what was supposed to have happened, but that is as it was supposed to be until the show.

I was encouraged to ask some of my family to attend the performance which I did and told them that "Upon pain of death" they would attend. Four of them did... the rest better watch themselves. Little Sydney really seemed to enjoy herself. She was on the edge of her seat the whole time, totally mesmerized by the show with her mouth and eyes wide open. Quite a change from the fright she got from Chris dressed as The Nerd. Today, I asked if she was still scared of him. She just laughed and shook her head, no. Thank goodness.

Later this afternoon, while at my big brother's house entertaining the kids with my sister and cousin, I noticed that Jeff was nowhere to be found. Moments later, Kim told me in confidence (the kids were right there) that he went to the ER WITH CHEST PAINS... BY HIMSELF!!! Given his history, I figured that it would be a long night, so I volunteered to

stay with the three kids until their mother could be reached. When he finally called, it was decided that he would be admitted for the night... just to be safe. Because their mother could not be reached, I said that I would stay at the house and get the kids ready for school tomorrow. Still did nothing to calm my nerves that he once again failed to say anything...
AHHHHHHHH!

Well... guess I will get cozy and see if the Yanks can't take one from the Red Stockings.

Come See Me Read Minds

This saturday night I will be "reading minds" at the little theatre.

<https://www.mywcct.com>

Come see it – AND BRING PEOPLE. Many audience participation. It will be LAME if not enough people are there!

Thoughts on a new day

Today had a rough start. I knew that in advance, so I did little things to prepare for it. One was taking an entire day of vacation, instead of just a partial day. Another was to go with the flow of the day.

I went to the funeral of a young man I barely knew. I do know his parents. I know his father very well. We've worked

together for that past 16+ years.

Funerals something I generally try to avoid. I've been that way all my life, but for the past 5+ years I've really developed an immense dislike for them. I will go to them when people I know need support I might be able to give. It was still a rough morning.

As to going with the flow... Well after the funeral I thought it would be nice to spend some time with friends. A little time not thinking about the final aspect of life. It was a good choice. Lunch with good friends made the difference in the day.

Just thought I would share.

Weird, but nice

It's weird, I get a call about Goodwill opening and I will get to help set up the store. So, I would be working again in June. But that's not all of it! I got a call from Movie Gallery yesterday and they wanted me to have an interview with them. Of course, I was babysitting and therefore couldn't make it to that interview, but I have one for this evening. For months, I cannot get anyone interested in hiring me and now that I will be getting my job back, and possibly a better position, I have people who are interested. Isn't that the way things always work out? I know that at my interview today, I will have to be open and honest with them. I will have to tell them that I will be working again soon, and maybe with about thrity hours a week, plus, I am getting a little busy during the weekends at the moment. Once my wedding is over with, things won't be a problem with weekends really. I am not opposed to working two jobs since that will help Tony and I

out a lot! But, the thing is will I be able to work two jobs? Some people are able to handle it and others are not. Plus, it all depends on if they want to hire me over at Movie Gallery. Good thing that Movie Gallery and Goodwill will be right across the street from each other! ☐

New York Trip Diary – Volume 7... Nah, Forget It

I forgot to mention something in my New York Trip Diary, but it's just a little thing – no need to make an entire volume of it. I was just going to talk about how much my husband and I enjoyed seeing the Empire State Building. We didn't go up into it, but we passed by right next to it while riding a bus, and of course we also saw it looming over the NY skyline since it is once again New York's tallest building after the collapse of the World Trade Center. The Empire State Building actually wasn't quite as tall as I would have thought, but the architecture is what I noticed. The building has limestone panels on the outside, and it looked much different than the steel skyscrapers (like the Sears Tower and the John Hancock building) I am used to being a native Chicagoan. The Empire State Building was completed in 1931 after only 410 days of construction. It was finished during the worst of the Great Depression, and as a result, no one wanted to rent office space for its first few years of existence – leading to its nickname, "The Empty State Building". Five people were killed in its construction; including a worker who committed suicide because he was laid off. In a macabre example of foreshadowing for the city of New York, the Empire State Building was hit by an airplane in 1945. The crash happened between the 79th and 80th floors and killed 14 people. One of

the plane's engines shot through the building and out the other side, where it landed a block away on the roof of a building and started a fire. The Empire State Building's elevator operator survived a fall of 75 stories inside the elevator and her record for 'longest survived fall in an elevator' still exists today. Here is a picture of the accident:



So anyway, fascinating building with a lot of history. I just found it really cool to see an old-school skyscraper up close!

And since we were on the subject of the Sears Tower earlier, here is a video of lightning striking it – which I understand happens pretty often. If only they could harness that energy for human consumption...

Upsetting news for parents

My youngest is on her way to a show choir competition. That in itself is enough to make a parent worry a bit. She will be spending this evening on a bus, and arrive at the destination tomorrow afternoon. That is also enough to make a parent worry.

But she is heading south and east to South Carolina and the Myrtle Beach area. Has anyone seen the news about that area? Unfortunately, I have. If you haven't I will share.

[FIRES in South Carolina.](#)

Can a just say that this is really something to worry about. My youngest is always getting herself in this situation. When she was in the 8th grade she went to a Vet Camp. There was news that a Black Bear was roaming around in that area. Hmm.

She decided to go to a specific college. There was a dorm fire in the dorms she was going to be living in. The students in the fire were in the same area of study she wants to go into. Hmm.

Does bad luck follow my little girl all over the place, or is this just some weird set of coincidence.

I'm guessing the latter. It helps keep me sane.

Bored With The Afghans

My cousin and her small family moved to Alaska last November. Alaska?! Who goes to Alaska! (HEHE... small inside joke). Char's husband was stationed there after his training in the U.S. Army. In March, Rich was deployed to Afghanistan but he is allowed to communicate via phone or computer from time to time. He will be able to return for a week or so for the arrival of their second child (reportedly another little girl). I chatted with him a few weeks ago to discover that he is stationed in a relatively safe zone... in fact, he was bored. I think I would rather be bored in Afghanistan than being in the heat of battle somewhere else..

My sister got a phone call this afternoon from Alaska. It seems that Rich helped set up for a concert that will be taking place featuring a famous country star. Both Char and Christi were upset that they could not be there, too because Rich got to meet him and got his autograph. I told them... if you wanted to meet him so badly, you could both enlist and join him. Don't suppose that is very likely in their familial circumstances. But I believe that they were both promised autographs. Hopefully, some pictures as well.

I wonder what Christi would have done if instead of Toby Keith there were stars of the WWF or WWE or whatever the so called "professional wrestling" group calls themselves. I believe it has been downgraded to "sports entertainment." Honestly, it reminds me of a soap opera with all the convoluted story lines and obviously staged matches. .. good for a laugh. However, somehow there is a number of members in my family who enjoy it. I still remember running outside on Saturday mornings when dad turned it on. To each his own, I guess. I would much rather see Toby Keith in person. Of course, there are other celebrities I would like to meet.

Oh, the irony

Last weekend I picked up a job in hometown district for first grade. In fact, it was the school nearest my home. Later, a job in supersized district appears for a resource teacher (they call it by a different name, but that's what the job is-for those students who need the extra boost). It was of course much further so why would I want to change over to this one? Yet, for some reason I did. Probably because I hadn't worked in that district for a month thanks to them canceling most of the jobs I've taken in recent days. Yes, the expected one included. That actually lasted an entire week believe it or not. I guess no one bothered to check and see that a mere 90-day (noncertified) sub had their three-week assignment. We're the ones who get the unwanted/last minute scraps at the table. Did you know 120-day (certified) subs in this state can work more than 120 days? They have to get a waiver from the state to do it, but for some reason they get it. There was one year the state said no, but with some finagling they managed to get it back for the next year. For the end of that one year, jobs were easier for me to come by. So back to the story, I did change the job. 1st grade is a little below my comfort zone anyway, as I have mentioned. So Monday I arrived and guess what? They told me I was needed in first grade at the start of the day because another sub was going to be late! Sigh. It happened to take away my only break that day outside of a 45-minute lunch (the teacher didn't have any students for nearly the first hour, after that it was one group of students to the next. Actually, they offered to let me stay in first grade and bump the other sub to my assignment. After having worked in this class for the last hour I thanked them for the offer but moved on. And, the other teacher worked with older kids.

The first grade irony continued on Wednesday. I subbed for elementary PE where we played hockey tag all day, a combination of the two games in the name. The "it" players are armed with hockey sticks and they try to hit other players with yarn balls. Depending on the rules the players hit could be out or become "it" as the stick is handed over. The morning was all 4th-6th grades, most of whom knew what they were doing. The afternoon had four groups, one 4th grade, one 2nd grade, and two 1st grade. So, back to first grade for another hour ☐ Not only that, but one of the classes, probably the roughest group all day, was a class I had subbed in for a couple of days last year. Several older students had asked if they could help me during their lunch, and this was the class they would have helped with had I said yes. I should have said yes. Oh, well.

In case you're wondering, Tuesday was pretty much a repeat of IT in hometown district, same school as last week. The 6th graders were working on house floor plans instead of enlarging cartoons, and the 7th and 8th graders were still doing modules like last time. Nothing much to say.

West Coast Baseball...

My favorite team (the Detroit Tigers) are at the end of a West Coast road trip. After tonight's (this morning's) game they will head to Kansas City. I'm curious as to the start times used on the West Coast. In Seattle, the games started just after 9:00 PM our time. Most of the games were over before 1:00 am. In Anaheim, the games start just after 10:00pm, and they haven't been over before 1:00 am.

I usually have to get up by 6:00 am, at the very latest, so

these west coast trips are usually going on past the time I would like to be asleep (I don't always get there, but that was another post). Since I'm paying for Game Day Audio, I feel like I should get my money's worth and listen to as many games as possible. So, yes I did stay up for all of the west coast games (3 in Seattle and 2 so far in fair Anaheim).

As you could guess, I'm kind of tired today. I did go to "bed" early last night, but I woke up in time for the game. But that really doesn't get to my initial curiosity. Why the different start times for Seattle and Anaheim? They are in the same time zone, aren't they? Now the 10:00 start is what I would consider normal (that is 7:00 in California), but the 9:00 (6:00 in Washington) is a bit odd. So, I started doing some research, and found my memory failed me (I was missing some sleep here). Only the Saturday game started at 9:00 our time. That now makes sense. Saturday games could get the people there by 6:00 local time. Not a bad idea.

Of course, now everybody knows why I was so tired on Saturday during filming. I was up late listening to the Tigers lose last Friday... ☐

Since I answered my own question, I imagine there won't be many comments here... ☐