

Newspapers, a dying industry?

I have noticed over the past few months that a number of large newspapers are either going out of business or filing for bankruptcy. I'm sure this is also a problem with many of the small town newspapers too.

Personally, I have not had a subscription to a newspaper in many years. I was tired of the apparent lack of news I was seeing. More and more it seemed I was getting opinion pieces on the front page. It doesn't matter if I agree with the opinion or not, I just wanted straight news. While I still haven't found a place to get that, I feel I get better news coverage now, than I ever did before. I go to many different news sites on the internet. If I find that the stories I'm interested in are reported by more than one news organization, I will read multiple articles. I've found that most news is just regurgitated from one of a few major news sources, never a chance to get a full story there.

To my eyes, the newspaper industry lost its focus years ago. They didn't see that they were losing customers when cable news became a mainstay for most people. They missed the internet boom of getting news to people too. The newspapers became a place to get ads and coupons. The news or opinions were no longer important to people. They could get those in other places. And along came coupon bug and other web based coupon sites. No need to wait for the Sunday edition of the newspaper for coupons.

Today I heard bits and pieces of some of the things coming from Washington, and there is some movement to bail out the Newspaper industry. My question is why. How is it important to the country. There are other news outlets, why do we need a newspaper that can't stand on its own? I don't like seeing jobs lost, this economy needs all the jobs it can get. I would like to see sustainable jobs. With newspapers going downhill

for years (maybe even longer than auto industry), I only see bailing out newspapers as a big waste of money. If the economy had stayed healthy, I still saw the newspapers failing within the next few years. The young adults of today don't relish the feel of a newspaper anymore. It is much easier to get your news on the go. I-phones, Blackberries, computers, televisions all do a better job reaching people today.

And of course with the new soy based inks, silly putty doesn't do nearly as good of job producing reverse images of the comics. That was a big set back for the newspaper industry. Kids weren't playing with newspapers anymore... ☐

Weird sleep cycle

Since Sunday my sleep patterns have been severely off kilter. While even in the best of times, my sleep habits are not the best (only around 5 hours per night), this is weird even for me.

I don't care what time the post says (I haven't bothered adjusting it to local time), it is now almost 1:00am. I went to bed around 8:30pm. I was just exhausted. I've been doing similar things every night this week. And then around 12:30, I wake up. Not just wake up to roll over again. No, I'm wide awake. I'm not sure how long I will stay awake tonight, but on other nights, it was the whole night or most of it.

On Sunday, I'm sure my nerves were getting in the way of any sleep I was going to get. After answering all the questions at the Hospital on Monday, I realized that this was the first time I've ever been admitted to a Hospital. Any other time I've had something wrong, it was done in a clinic or the Doctor's Office. While I've visited many hospitals, this was

the first time I was in for me. Good news that, I guess, even this visit was a screening visit. I've had no complaints.

I'm very certain the medicine used to put me under has been the main culprit behind my strange sleep habits this week. It put me under quickly, and I remained in a relaxed state of mind for 2 days. Too bad I was very relaxed early in the evening. Now I'm wide awake and I can't think of anything really quiet to do. I need to hit a library or a book store for some new books to read. I just don't feel like watching a movie. So here I am writing a blog about being awake. Dang that sounds familiar, [just without the kids](#). Wonder if I can find something a little different to comment on.

New York Trip Diary Volume 2

NEW YORK TRIP – MARCH 20-23, 2009 – TAYLOR: 9 yrs, SAMMIE: 4 yrs, DISNEY: 2½ yrs, CHRISTOPHER: 8 mos

(continued from a previous post)

Friday March 20 (cont'd) – We arrived at the Akron Zoo about 2pm, which was right on schedule pretty much, although it would have been nice to have more time to explore the wonderful zoo that awaited us. From what I saw, Akron looked like a dumpy little city with a beautiful little zoo. All of the exhibits seemed to be of newer construction, and the animals seemed really active and happy. The Akron Zoo has many unique animals in their collection; including the super rare Sumatran Tiger, (most people are used to seeing Bengals, also called Siberian tigers as those are the ones frequently exhibited at zoos) and the Sumatran tiger was roaring when we saw him. They also have 2 types of animals that I was looking forward to seeing – the hyacinth macaw and the capybara

(largest rodent on earth) – but both species were off exhibit waiting for warmer weather. No problem, we had seen capybaras at the Cleveland Zoo earlier in the day, and I have a macaw at home, not a rare hyacinth, but a macaw just the same. Akron has a Malayan sun bear, the type of bear that was the inspiration to A. A. Milne for his Winnie the Pooh stories, and these are also not commonly on exhibit in zoos. When we stopped for lunch, we were pleased to find that the cafe is attached to a building with a Galapagos tortoise habitat, a komodo dragon exhibit, a really cool marmoset environment (a little marmoset – it's a small primate, if you don't know – came running up to the glass when he saw us with our nacho container and started licking the glass!), and an awesome jellyfish exhibit. Before Friday I had only seen one type of jellyfish – moon jellies – but the Akron Zoo has several different kinds on display. My favorite were the bulbous blue blubber jellies. Here is the marmoset trying to taste our nachos through the glass while my daughter is in the middle of a blink:



And next is a picture of the komodo dragon; I couldn't resist posting it. These things are incredibly ferocious and huge. Once they claw (and *look* at those claws!) or bite their prey (and I'm talking prey as large as water buffalo), they hang around until the animal succumbs to the 28 varieties of deadly bacteria the komodo has in its saliva and then devour it. [Sharon Stone and her husband Phil Bronstein have something to](#)

[say](#) about the danger of komodos after one bit off his toes during a behind the scenes visit. You can't really tell from the picture, but this thing was almost 10 feet long!



The Akron Zoo is a place for great family fun. The girls got to be penguins:



and measure their wing spans:





Even though their baby brother didn't quite make it long enough to see all of the animals and activities Akron had to offer:



Another cool experience we had at Akron was hearing the bald eagles chirping. I always kind of assumed they would have big voices to match their size, but their tweeting was really cute! Overall, we had a wonderful day zoo-hopping. After our visit to Akron, it was time to head for our hotel in New Jersey. The ride was uneventful; the kids got some sleep and so did I. The traffic in New Jersey was absolutely horrible, which we totally expected, but what we didn't expect was all the detours. There were police and road construction everywhere, which amounted to a ton of traffic, especially for one in the morning. It was a bit stressful, but we did it, and kudos to my wonderful husband who kept his cool and guided us through the many detours for which Jill the GPS couldn't compensate. But who needs Jill? We made it without getting

lost! And as we were walking down the hall to room 913 to turn in for the evening, I turned to Jamy our great friend and traveling Manny (man who's a nanny in case you missed my first diary installment) and said, "At least we're not staying in room 911 for our trip to New York." He showed me his key, which did say 911 – oops. Thankfully it was just a coincidence, not an omen:



And here is a parting shot of our family outside the Akron Zoo from earlier in the day – stayed tuned for Trip Diary Volume 3!



A Bus, A Bus, My Kingdom For A Bus

After our adventures on our own tour of Times Square, the time was near to get on the bus for our twilight tour. I had never gone on a guided tour of the area so I thought it would be kind of neat to sit back, ride around, and learn about the area. We got on top of the two-level bus in the back. There was a canopy that covered half of the bus that some of us had to be wary of or we could end up with a lump on the head. The vehicle took us from So-Ho to No-Ho (hehe), across the Brooklyn Bridge, to Greenwich Village, and pretty much all over. Some of the landmarks we were able to see included the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, the Washington Arch (which was constructed to commemorate the centennial of President Washington's inauguration). the Flatiron Building (which served as the facade for the Daily Bugle in the Spider-Man movies). The tour itself was awesome by starlight with the lights and atmosphere... even if it was below 40 degrees. I bundled up the little guy as best I could.

While the tour was enjoyable, the guide was not so enjoyable at times. Quite frequently, he would get carried away with his commentary and we would be at a new location when he was still lecturing about the previous one. He even quipped that the info would be beneficial if any of the passengers were ever going to be on Jeopardy!

Following the tour, we departed the bus. Then the real fun began! We had to find a Waterway bus to get us back to the Ferry to take us back across the Hudson to our Jersey hotel.

This turned into a comedy of errors. To quote Admiral Kirk, "We looked like a cadet review." Apparently, finding one of the buses required a bit of timely luck. We first had to find a location where we thought one would eventually arrive. So we asked police officers, hotel personnel, and

other people who looked like they would know. The most we got was some pointing and mumbling neither of which were extremely helpful. I thought about asking the Dark Knight himself who we saw earlier. Now if Spidey had been patrolling the area, I'm sure that he would have been more than happy to help us. He is from Queens after all.

We eventually got to the location for a bus arrival (I won't say that we were at one time a corner away from it). And we waited, and we waited, and we waited. Chris approached a horse-drawn carriage driver to see if he would take us to the pier (for not less than \$75). A taxi would have been just as bad. Finally, C decided that he would jump out in front of the first Waterway bus that came along. Finally, our hero came along. I think it was two hours after we began looking for one. So, another late night for all. Still no major meltdowns. I was really proud of the kids. However, this would not be the last encounter we would have with Waterway buses.

Another one gone...

I heard and read that Baseball player/hall of famer/tv announcer George Kell died. I am just a bit too young to remember his ball playing days, but I do remember him announcing the games on television.

My brother and I used to watch the ballgames on TV just and his voice gave more to the game. With Ernie Harwell on the radio, we had wonderful announcer either on TV or radio.

Just another sad day for me. Memories shared with my late brother. A voice from my past gone. Sad thoughts for me today.

A Kangaroo And His Joey On The Sidewalks Of New York

I don't know if anyone has a picture of this or not, but it would be one for the ages. A grown man putting a baby carrier around another grown man (check you tube). I wish I could describe it but it was funny to just be part of. Holding my hands up in the air as we eventually got Beeber into the pouch. Sounds like the makings for a good B sci-fi movie. I was expecting to be weighed down considerably and be tired by night's end, but I barely noticed the extra baggage as we walked the sidewalks of Manhattan.

We signed up to take a night tour of part of the isle of Manhattan. Before the tour began, we took a tour of Times Square and the vicinity near the starting point of the tour. While walking, we ran into a real life celebrity. Morgan Freeman was standing in front of [Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum](#). Chris decided to get up close and personal for a photo op. After the picture, he admitted that the actor had a somewhat stiff personality. One would almost say... candle-like?

Close by was [Ripley's](#) house where a man swallowed a long air-filled balloon whole. He then began to attempt the old nail in the forehead trick. However, before he completed it, the performer informed us that the authorities were clearing the sidewalk so the show had to move inside but discount tickets would be waiting... moving on.

Anyone who knows anything about the sidewalks of New York knows about the street vendors, pan handlers, artists, musicians, and such out there trying to make a quick buck. We stopped at a characature artist who drew a likeness of Goose.

Next door, was a gentleman selling banners on which he would decoratively print names. Chris decided to get a Disney banner with (irony of ironies) Disney's name printed on it. The artist printed the name and said for a few dollars more, he would put it in a frame. Chris said "No frame." I think the man must have been a relative of the Soup Nazi but something was definitely lost in the translation because by the time he was finished, the banner was indeed inside a paper frame. The swindler's accent made me think of the Nazi also. "You said a no frame?" "Yes, I said no frame." Congratulations my friend! Wooly Sheep! He a sound like a long lost cousin of Morat. Sit Morat, sit! Good Morat.

So there are these barrels

Yesterday I stopped at our local theater to pick up two barrels to take back to the theater we borrowed them from. When I got there, as stove was waiting to be delivered back to our theater. A lot of work to do the day of and day after a surgical procedure. Me, I scheduled all of this last week when I thought my visit to the hospital was next Monday.

I was feeling well enough to roll a couple of barrels, so that wasn't a problem. The return trip with the stove, well that started out good. We were able to roll the barrels out and then load the stove. Two people with minimal effort. I like that kind of move.

Then I got to the final destination of the stove. No ramp, no steps to back up to, just brute strength and manpower to move the stove. Lucky for me, there were other there to do the work. Don't you love it when a plan comes together. Really there was no plan, just luck and younger theater people there

to do the heavy work. I like that kind of move too.

There were more things to move and I was lucky enough to get out of most of that too. I guess until the same things have to move again I am safe. There is a very good chance that my name will be in the mix if and when those items need to be moved again. Any volunteers?

Then a quick trip to a local establishment to share a drink or two with a couple of friends. They helped with the move and it was fun to talk without having a play to rehearse or perform. Nice time, even if I don't care for the bar scene. Maybe I will volunteer for the next move. I think I owe a round or two.

Back In Room 911

So after a few hours of sleep (WHO SLEEPS ON A VACATION?), the troops went to breakfast in the hotel. Interesting experience... not because of something we did. After breakfast, we went to the pool before Big C had to go to work. The water was wonderful... the moment I stepped into the three feet section, it was heavenly warm. Usually, there is a need to get used to the temperature. C encouraged me to do a gold medal dive into an at most five foot pool...ok, sure. While I was doing a good job of keeping the three girls occupied, C&L took Beeber to meet the clients. It was quite fun... chasing Sammers as she made a lap of the entire pool while holding onto the edge. She still amazes me with her adventurous (if a bit mischievous) nature and very inquisitive mind.

After Sammie finally decided to come back to the dull shallow end, we played a game of Shark Attack (and guess who was the shark). We also became acquainted with a few young boys and

their Canadian grandmother who have ties to our corner of the world. It seems that she had accompanied her son's family on a business trip to help take care of the children. Her son lives and works at a factory in the village of Hicksville where I just completed a run in *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Small world, indeed.

About this time, Dis noticed that Mom and Dad were nowhere to be found. So, it was time to make a dash back to the room to avoid a major melt down. By good fortune, Lis was in the room with Beeber so we went down to the riverfront to walk around and feed the seagulls and enjoy the Manhattan skyline. Being my first time to NYC since 9/11, it was a chilling experience to personally take in the empty space where once stood the World Trade Center towers. Yes, my room number was 911.

New York Trip Diary Volume 1

When my family travels, I like to take notes and make a diary of our activities. I figure it will be fun to read later when the kids are grown up and will also bring back many memories that might otherwise be forgotten. Now that I'm keeping a blog, I decided to just keep the trip diaries in my blog; that way I don't have to write them twice and they're automatically saved for us in cyberspace. Last weekend, my husband had to go to New York on business, so we decided to make it a family trip and take the kids along. Here is a log of our activities:

NEW YORK TRIP – MARCH 20-23, 2009 – TAYLOR: 9 yrs, SAMMIE: 4 yrs, DISNEY: 2½ yrs, CHRISTOPHER: 8 mos

Friday, March 20 – We left the house bright and early, only twenty minutes past our goal of 8 am. Disney and Christopher

had kept us up until 2:30 in the morning the night before, so we were dragging a little, but they slept in so at least we could tie up loose ends without them. Sammie and Taylor were big helps in the morning! The kids were very good in the car even though Christopher got a little crabby toward the end of the first leg.

We arrived at the Cleveland Zoo 11ish – not my favorite zoo. I'm not one to complain about any zoo, but Cleveland had lots of walking to see a small amount of animals. I think part of the problem was that they were undergoing a lot of construction, so that made for more walking around the construction areas and also to some animals being off exhibit. They have koalas, but one was sick and the other was sleeping. I'm glad I got to see it anyway though since seeing koalas is a rare experience at zoos, but now I know why many zoos don't have them – they sleep 20 hours per day! Cleveland Zoo also has lots of steep hills, which was a “bear” (pun intended, wink wink) when pushing a double stroller, but luckily for me, that was my husband's problem. As we were walking past the zoo's hospital, an employee told us to come inside because a baboon was about to have a physical. This is a really cool feature of this zoo – they have glass walls in their examination rooms so that zoo visitors can watch animals' procedures. Unfortunately, the baboon was not cooperative, and they couldn't get it sedated so we didn't get to see it. We waited for about an hour, but we really wanted to fit in Akron Zoo in the same day as well, so we decided not to wait any longer. Here are my girls waiting for the baboon's physical:



Cleveland Zoo also has a cool rainforest exhibit which normally costs extra admission, but our Toledo Zoo membership got us into ALL THREE zoos we visited on this trip for FREE!!! What a bargain AND an extra special Valentine's Day gift from my husband that keeps on giving! The rainforest exhibit had a cool 2-story monkey/squirrel exhibit, and a really nice view of a swimming gharial (a crocodillian with a long slender snout). But overall, the animal habitats were lacking. Thank goodness they are building new ones, but I wish they were building one for the giraffes. There were probably more than 10 giraffes confined to a tiny indoor room – at least it was only their winter quarters, so once it gets warm, they can go back outside and have room to roam. Hmm... maybe when I'm done with this trip diary, I'll have to develop a zoo rating system – that would be fun. Then I'd have an excuse to visit even more zoos, and re-visit some of the old ones!



Here are the kids in front of the

lion exhibit at Cleveland – then it was on to the Akron Zoo.

“Just Akron, cold beer, and poor poor thing for 2 weeks?” you ask? Well, not for two weeks, we were only there for about 2 hours, but I wanted to throw in that line from the stage play Harvey (and later, the movie starring James Stewart) that was running through my head for the two hours. Stay tuned for Akron!

Kids In America

Upon accepting the invitation of again accepting the position of Manny, I was warned of problems that might present themselves on the 9-10 hour trip in the minivan. I am so happy that very few of these problems reared their ugly heads. Thank goodness for planned parental necessities. The three girls were equipped with their own bags of goodies for the long trip both to the East and back home again. We also had a large bag of DVD's to watch on the player in the car. I also brought a few kid-friendly Disney movies and Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (one of my favorite movies growing up; sad to say the transition to the stage did not go as well).

Basically, I only remember the occasional statements of “are we there yet” and the like. The extremely long voyage across Pennsylvania had to be broken up to prevent melt-downs and I'm sure the adults enjoyed our happening upon [Bellefonte](#). In the dark, it seemed to be deserted but as we approached downtown there were cars, and several restaurants, many of which were some variation of a pizza shop. Funny that it was close to State College, home of Penn State University. We decided to stop at Mama Lucretia's... pizza, pasta, cheesesteak all of which were very tasty (unless that was the hunger talking).

I must comment on the eating habits of one of the kids. "Goose" frequently made the comment that "Beeber" would have an order of paper with a side of plastic. The eight-month old will find anything to put in his mouth to indulge in: napkins, plastic bibs, straw wrappers, anything: typical. Just watch your plate; if he spies anything within reach, he will get it! After eating, most of the time a great majority of it ends up on the floor around him.

Back in the car for the remainder of the long jaunt, the kids all took naps. Taylhis also rested for a bit. I did my best to stay awake to ensure that C was still alert and going. Thank goodness we had some music going and comedy. Listening to some Miss Saigon and Assassins seemed to make the time go a bit faster. I also learned that one of the songs from Jekyll and Hyde was cut from the final show. I saw the musical in Toledo a few years ago and saw that Bring on the Men was missing. I thought perhaps touring companies might have cut the song, but it was taken out prior to the Broadway run.

Finally, after the less than an hour announcement turned into a bit longer, we arrived at our hotel around 1.30 AM. Constuction, police cars everywhere, drawbridge, lots of obstacles.... AH travelling!! I LOVE IT! Especially when I am not driving ☐