

Dream Sequence...

My youngest daughter Disney has a cold, so lately, she's been waking up every hour (at least). So my sleep has been totally interrupted, which, for a person like me, is not good. I'm barely functioning. My body aches, my head pounds, I have no attention span, no patience with anybody, and I've been very grumpy – the fact that I'm admitting it says a lot :). It's been difficult for me to find joy in things lately, just because I'm so tired, and the thought of retiring to my bed at night now fills me with dread because of the 'night terrors' – waking to my daughter's screams and demands. Even if I don't wake up, I can still hear them in my sleep, and it's causing chaos in other aspects of my life. I'm barely even looking forward to this business trip we're taking this weekend to New Jersey. A few weeks ago, before this all started happening, I was ecstatic about this trip because it's right next to New York City and I've never been there. Not only that, but we're planning on stopping at TWO zoos on the way there, which as you might know, would normally put me over the moon with excitement. But now I'm just worried about getting there in one piece. My husband is the one who is actually crawling out of bed with our daughter; he is the slave to her every demand. So if I feel this bad, is he going to feel well enough to get us through the 10-hour drive and back safely? He assures me he is, but I don't know; I just feel SO crappy all the time!

Anyway, to help try to regulate my sleep until this passes, I've been taking the diet supplement Melatonin. It's been providing me with some calm before I fall asleep; I used to lay there for about 30 minutes at least with a pounding heart and tense muscles before I could fall asleep, just waiting to hear my daughter's screams. But the Melatonin is helping me calm down a little bit, and hopefully it will make my bedroom feel less like a prison and more like the restful haven I was

used to. One side effect of the Melatonin I've noticed is that it's given me VERY vivid dreams. The other night, I dreamt that my mom gave us these yogurt containers all stacked in rows that spelled out some sort of life advice. You know how they print stuff on product containers? Well, she had collected different flavors of yogurt that said different things and stacked them all up until they made a few sentences of wisdom. It was a gift for something; we got to read the advice and then keep all the yogurt. I wish I could remember the life advice they spelled out, but I don't. And after she gave us the gifts of yogurt, we found out that she and my friend Megan had been awarded shared custody of one of my daughter's friends whose parents were getting divorced and didn't want her anymore. *That* was random... but aren't dreams always that way? Here's to hoping our family's sleep can regulate in the near future. I'm taking Disney to the doctor on Thursday – I'm at the end of my rope. Luckily our pediatrician is also a sleep expert, so maybe he can help. I have so much going on right now that it would be SO great to be able to actually enjoy it!

A New Drive-Thru Pickup

There are several things one can do right from the convenience of their car. Fast food can be ordered and picked up. Convenience stores and pharmacies typically have a pick up window. In Las Vegas, a marriage ceremony can be performed while the couple sits in their car. On Monday, a bank robber was able to successfully obtain a large sum of money from a drive-thru bank teller. The perpetrator drove up to the window of the Lone Star National Bank in Pharr, Texas. He slipped a note into the box listing his demands. The female teller filled the order and the crook drove away.

I was torn on my reaction to this story. From what I understand, there was no apparent weapon involved and the teller was behind a bullet-proof window. However, there was no information regarding bank policy when confronted with that situation. Yet at the same time, I could not help thinking that this would make a phenomenal genius post, but decided to give the teller the benefit of the doubt.

PHARR, Texas – A bank robber in South Texas held up the place from the comfort of his car.

Police in Pharr say a man used the drive-thru lane Monday morning to rob Lone Star National Bank. Police say the driver slipped a note to a female teller, who provided an undetermined amount of cash, then he drove away. Lt. Guadalupe Salinas says the man was alone in the car and did not appear to display a weapon. Salinas told The Associated Press there's no indication that the robbery was an inside job. Law officers declined to release the contents of the note. Police are reviewing bank surveillance video. The FBI declined comment.

Did you know?

Trivial stuff. Its all good right? History, geography, arts, foods, science, hobbies. All fair game for trivia questions. Today, the trivia should be based St. Patrick's Day Right? I could come up with all sorts of trivial things about St. Paddy's day, but why go through all that work when someone already did it.

So for your enjoyment at [St Patrick's Day Trivia quiz](#).

Showing Signs Of Life

I just received an email from a former castmate who is in her high school production of *Grease* in the next few weeks. She informed me that this is the first musical their school has done in **20 YEARS!!!** I was shocked and amazed by this admission. If there is one thing I frown upon it is the decrease in the amount of arts related activities in schools (large or small). However, it sounds as if this school is at least making an attempt to reestablish an artistic presence. As our biggest rivals in what seems everything (at least in my day), I well remember the fun competitiveness between the schools. I knew the music director from the school reasonably well who has since retired from the position. Not sure who inherited the reins, but hopefully they can reinvigorate the program.

I remember assisting Emily direct several musicals after I graduated from EHS. I remember *The Wizard of Oz* (basically the 1939 movie with a few added sequences), *The Sound of Music* (which I helped from BGSU and on weekends I was able to make the trip home), *Bye, Bye Birdie*, and *South Pacific*. There was talk of doing *Annie* again. I emphatically offered my two cents on this. Not only had it been done (at that point) only 3 years previously, but at the time, it seemed that every high school were taking turns performing it. I remember watching a larger school's production a year after ours. I was not trying to be biased but their Rooster did not even crow. He simply said "Cock-a-Doodle-Do." However, musicals at my alma mater have also not seen the light of day for some time.

Something Wicked This Way Comes..

Strange thing. I remember reading the Bradbury novel, and seeing the movie. But, I am now watching the movie and I can't seem to remember it at all. Oh, I remember the basic story, but I don't seem to remember any of the details. I remember the carnival coming to town, and of course Mr. Dark. What I'm not sure of is how different the book is from the movie. I will have to read it again.

So far the movie is very good. But now my youngest just stopped it to watch a TV show... Hmm, am I going to have to get another TV just to watch what I want? I guess not, she'll be leaving on her own soon enough.

What I did find out is that Bradbury actually adopted his novel and wrote not only the screen play for the 1983 movie, but a stage play and radio play. The stage play was written in 2003... Wonder what the royalties on that show would be. Could it be done on a small stage? Where would the Carousel fit? I would love to play Mr Dark... Hmmm...

Maybe we could do another "Stage" version of this play.

Interesting.

Manners, Kid-Style

When I stopped at the gas station the other day to get the kids a snack, there was a “little person” working the counter – is that the preferred term these days for someone with dwarfism? I certainly don’t want to insult anyone, so pardon my ignorance...

So anyway, I decided to give my kids a talk about why it’s not polite to stare at people; I was especially targeting my almost-5-year-old since she is very curious about people and the differences in the way people look, that sort of thing – and she’s not very discreet about her curiosity. So I was explaining to her about why we shouldn’t stare at people, and she had a sincere question: Is it ok to stare at broccoli?

I told my husband this story when we got home, and he was wondering if she was joking, but no, her tone was indeed sincere. My eldest daughter and I laughed when she asked it, but not AT her, we only thought it was cute and silly. But like I told my husband, I really don’t think she was *trying* to be silly. Like us, my husband knows by now that Samantha is a very unique individual, and she just has strange questions sometimes. She was more than a handful as a two-year-old, but the further away we get from that stage in her life, the more we can enjoy her very individualistic personality and free spirit!

SAMMIE



The Bus Driver Did WHAT?!?

I read a news item a few weeks ago about Shawn Brim, a bus driver in Washington who stopped his bus, got off and adjusted his side-view mirrors, and then proceeded to punch a nearby McGruff the Crime Dog in the face! What was he thinking? He thought it would be funny, he said. Understandably, everyone failed to see the humor in punching a children's hero in front of a crowd of horrified kids, and the bus driver was arrested.

On the other side of the coin and the world, there was another bus driver whose actions can only be described as heroic. Seems Brim has something to learn from Meher Mohammad Khalil:

LAHORE, Pakistan (CNN) – His job was to drive the bus. But Meher Mohammad Khalil is now being hailed as a lifesaver. When gunmen jumped out of bushes and began spraying bullets at the bus carrying the Sri Lankan cricket team Tuesday, Khalil quickly sized up his options and got everyone to safety.

"First I thought there were some firecrackers going off. Then, when I saw the elite force cars in front of me taking fire, I immediately lost my voice," Khalil told CNN on Wednesday.

“At that time, the other elite car that was with us gave me cover, and then, when I saw he was giving me cover, my courage and my patience returned. I decided to take the vehicle from there, and one way or another, even if I had to drive over someone, I would take this bus and escape.”

Khalil returned to the scene of the attack in the Pakistani city of Lahore on Wednesday to honor those who were killed and to place flowers in their memory.

One of the dead was Zafar Khan, a friend and fellow bus driver who had been in a vehicle behind Khalil.

“My eyes filled with tears that these were people that I was eating with and who died in doing their duty.”

Khalil had been part of a convoy heading to Gaddafi Stadium, where the Sri Lankan cricket team was to continue a match against Pakistan.

Six police officers were killed, in addition to Khalil's friend Khan who was driving a bus with the match umpires.

The Sri Lankan cricketers praised Khalil's quick thinking and action, saying he saved their lives. Six team members were injured by broken glass and shrapnel.

Team captain Mahela Jayawardene wrote on his Web site of Khalil: “He probably saved our lives, showing remarkable bravery in the face of direct gunfire to keep the bus moving.”

Crowds mobbed Khalil as he paid his respects at the place where his life changed in an instant.

“He is a hero, a real hero, a real man of the people,” a man in the crowd said.

Private donors in Lahore have rewarded Khalil with 300,000 rupees (more than \$3,000) – a small fortune for a Pakistani bus driver.

Today, Khalil says all he can feel is pain of the loss of life. And he called on the attackers to recognize that their victims are humans just like them, with mothers and sisters.

“For God’s sake, please stop this terrorism and let this nation breathe a sigh of relief,” he said.

The Mayor And The Macarena – Part Deux

About a year ago, I had a blog post called “The Mayor And The Macarena”. It was about my family’s first roller skating outing (it was a birthday party for the Girl Scouts organization), and my post was so titled because our county’s only roller skating rink is owned and operated by the town mayor. Not quite being fully assimilated to small town living, I guess, I got a big kick out of watching the mayor play DJ; especially when he spun old has-been but essential tunes for us to dance to on our roller skates like “The Macarena”, “YMCA”, “The Chicken Dance”, and “The Hokey Pokey”. So it’s that time of year again – Happy Birthday Girl Scouts! – and we attended the birthday party at the roller rink again on Sunday. That reminds me, did you know that the infamous chicken dance now has lyrics?

“I don’t wanna be a chick,
I don’t wanna be a duck,
I just wanna shake my butt”
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

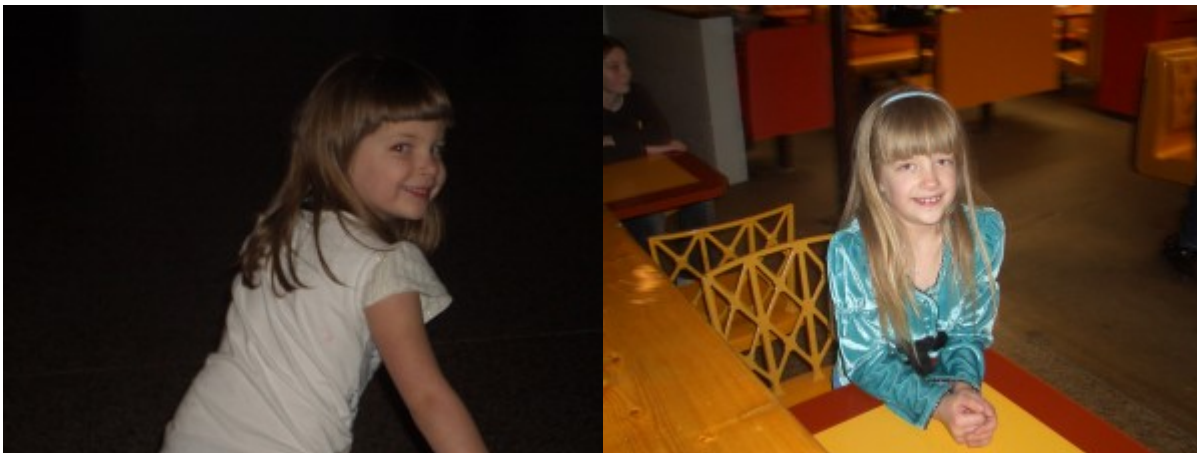
Well, that was news to me because as far as I knew, the chicken dance was just that – a dance with motions and no lyrics, but I bet you can guess which word the kids absolutely

LOVED putting the emphasis upon... ah, kids!

Coincidentally, our Girl Scout's younger sister was also invited to a birthday party at the roller rink on Sunday. Which meant 5 straight hours of roller skating! After 5 hours, the girls had showed so much improvement! We even got skates for our 2-year-old, but those skates were practically bigger than she was, and they were so heavy, she didn't have a chance:



But like I said, after a few hours on the skating floor, the older two really got the hang of it, despite a few spills and some breaks, err, rest periods, not broken bones, thank goodness!



The girls' baby brother even had a great time singing and bopping along with the music...



A great way to cap off an extremely busy weekend... we had so much fun, I think we'll make a few more trips over there even *before* the Scout's party comes around again next year!

The View From Here

As I read in the newspaper today, I was shocked but not totally surprised that one of my childhood mainstays is being retired. The [View-Master](#) is a small plastic toy in which was place a white white wheel full of 3-d pictures. The wheels initially contained scenes of actual places (The Grand Canyon, Disney Parks, I had a set from Cedar Point that probably would be worth something if only I had been a child who thought about such things). There was a [camera](#) made during the 50s with which you could create your own View-Master reels. Later, reels of movies, television shows, and other forms of popular culture were introduced. I had reels full of Mickey Mouse, Winnie the Pooh, superheroes (I had a series of Caped Crusader reels taken from the 60s television series featuring Catwoman), the Flintstones, and others.

In an effort to appeal to increasingly uninterested kids, new versions of the toy were introduced. I had the projector that enabled the images to be shown on a wall, or set up in a dark

room on a “screen” consisting of a white sheet placed over a few boxes stacked on top of each other. Friends would come into my theatre and watch as the scenes unfolded to improvised narration. I believe there was a “talking” version as well.

Over the years, sales of the View-Master have decreased exponentially. The majority of children are much more interested in video games, DVDs and the like. But for at least one 8-10 year old growing up in the late 70s-early 80s, it provided hours of imagination and fun.

The Lion In Winter

I am very glad we were able to arrange our obscenely busy schedule in such a way to be able to see the play The Lion In Winter on Saturday night. A great friend and fellow blogger, [Jamiahsh](#) was a ~~sucker~~ kind enough to babysit all four kids for us, as this was not a play for children. Not that it was “adult” per se, but our younger two especially would NOT have been able to sit still throughout the entire production.

The Lion in Winter tells the story of King Henry II and his family in 1183. Although the actual play is fictional, it is based upon real people and real events. King Henry has 3 surviving sons who share the same goal: to inherit the kingdom, although that is where their similarities end. Richard, the eldest brother, “growls out for gore”, as it is said in the play. He is the warrior of the bunch, and he has the temper to match. Geoffrey (played a little too convincingly, haha, by a great friend and fellow blogger, [justj](#) – great job!) is the scheming, conniving, if mostly forgotten middle brother. Geoffrey “hums treachery” and is the epitome of someone who suffers from middle child syndrome

– and it’s that much more hilarious when his parents actually admit to not giving him the time of day! John is the youngest brother, who is favored by his father for some reason despite his lack of... well, his lack of much of *anything* upstairs (I’m tapping my head). Eleanor, Henry’s estranged and imprisoned wife, is a tyrant in her own right, although she is largely limited by gender roles in the twelfth century.

This particular production was co-directed by a good friend – someone whose many talents I’ve long admired – she’s a gem! She is a very detail-oriented, hard worker, and the finished production illustrated those attributes. Because *The Lion In Winter* is typically an historical drama, it wouldn’t normally be one of my favorite shows – I’m the type to much prefer good stagings of upbeat musicals like *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The Wizard of Oz* or slapstick comedies like *Idol Night at the Karaoke Place*, *The Nerd*, or even a good melodrama. That being said, I can honestly say (and to my surprise) that I was never once bored during *The Lion in Winter*. And even being an historical drama, it’s not without its (large) share of comedy as well. The dialogue (and hilarious insults!) fly swiftly and smartly, and I honestly wish time would have allowed me another opportunity to see the play as I think there were many more things I could have caught, especially if I weren’t a walking zombie these days. The play is complex; its dialogue and characters almost too intricate to effectively absorb in just one sitting. The playwright, James Goldman, found many opportunities within the script to have the characters make clever satirical remarks, often making fun of the time period in which the play takes place. Among my favorites was the following exchange between John and his mother Eleanor, the Queen:

Towards the end of the first act of *Lion in Winter*, John is astonished and horrified when his older brother Richard pulls a knife on him. “A knife,” he says, “he’s got a knife.” To which his mother, Eleanor, responds by saying: “Of course he has a knife. He always has a knife. We all have knives. It

is eleven eighty-three and we're barbarians!" Just the memory of that line makes me smile, especially because the woman who played Eleanor was simply awesome – she gave one of the best performances I've ever seen on a community theater's stage. I would expect it to be difficult to give life to a character as complex as Eleanor; after all, in Henry's words, Eleanor "thinks heavy thoughts like molten lead and marble slabs." but she did it marvelously.

Actually, all of the acting was great in this production; King Henry came across as powerful yet emotionally weary and even a bit vulnerable, and King Philip of France seemed to be both a willing yet also an unwitting pawn in the treacherous game played by the royal family of England around 1183.

Also of note in this particular staging of the show was the remarkable set which exemplified an old European castle quite well. Although it amounted to hard physical labor for its extensive stage crew, the medieval set was easily (depends who you ask, I guess!) transformed into 6 distinct settings for the play.

Overall, a good show, and a fine job by both cast and crew. I only wish I had a chance to review it earlier so I could have done my part in recommending it to and recruiting audience members. Well, such is a busy life with 4 little kids, I suppose!