Conan's Last Stand

Tonight at 12.35 eastern time will be Conan O'Brien's final late show before he takes over the once coveted 11.35 slot from Jay Leno. I'm not sure how coveted the slot is but can well remember the battle between Leno and Letterman after the late great Johnny Carson retired. Fascinating that I do not see either host lasting nearly as long as the King of Late Night. Of course, Jay will soon be coming to Prime Time in some form. I prefer Dave when I feel so inclined.

I do have a connection to Mr. O'Brien. During my first adventure in New York City, a group went on the NBC studio tour. One of the other members of my group knew one of the writers on the show personally and we went to his office and scored tickets to that night's telecast. I do remember that Dennis Miller was one of the guests and I sat in the middle of the third row. Tonight's guest list does not seem to make me want to sit up and watch. The guide lists The White Stripes as the performers. Unless it is a group of performing zebras, I think I will pass.[poll id="17"]

Another Wonderful Zoo Visit

We went to the Toledo Zoo again last weekend (it was our second weekend to visit the zoo in a row; we visited on Feb 7 and 15). Almost a week has passed since our last visit, but I had other blog posts lined up and ready to go, so that's why I'm first writing about it now.

Having a zoo membership is awesome because you get to visit the zoo whenever you have free time, and you don't have to worry about seeing EVERYTHING on EVERY visit since you know you'll be back soon. The last few times we've gone, we parked in the back parking lot and stay on that side of the zoo, which cuts the amount of walking considerably — a great option for winter months since this parking lot is free in the offseason and very close to the rear zoo entrance. With 4 small children, this is the way that works best for us, even though it means skipping the other side of the zoo which includes the polar bears, seals, wolves, and giraffes. No matter, we still see plenty, and now we have a whole half a zoo to see sometime if we go without the kids or are feeling extra ambitious.

Every zoo visit is different, which is one of the things I love about going. The animals are always doing different things, and my favorite exhibits vary with each visit. Here are the highlights from last Sunday's visit:

Lions — The Toledo Zoo has white lions. White lions are rare and the result of a recessive gene similar to the gene of white tigers. The Toledo Zoo has 3 white lion brothers on loan from Siegfried and Roy, the famous Las Vegas magicians. Normally during our zoo visits, the lions are sleeping and up on a ledge far from the viewing glass, but last Sunday they were walking around, and one of them even walked right up against the viewing glass! I've seen lions up close before, but not for a long time and never the gorgeous white lion until last week.

Hippos — The hippos are in their indoor enclosure for the winter, and even though their room seems somewhat cramped, the animals don't seem unhappy, and it's very cool to see these HUGE animals up close. It's amazing to me that their small pool must get very deep very fast in order to allow the animal to be completely submerged. As we watched, the hippo was bobbing for apples, and he caught his apple and swallowed it whole. This hippo was so large that the apple in his mouth looked about as big as a grape would look in the mouth of a human being. And this provided an extreme close-up of his humongous teeth!

Gorillas — When we got to the gorilla exhibit, it was empty. But a friendly zookeeper told us to stick around for about 10 minutes for gorilla feeding time. We then got to watch as the keepers threw greens, fruit, and straw all around the enclosure; taking care to place some on the various ledges and hide some within crevices of the exhibit (seriously, am I too old to embark on this as a career?!? I'm afraid so...). Then they let the gorillas back in, and it was a frenzy. Well, an orderly frenzy — there was no pushing nor shoving; just some excited gorillas foraging in their exhibit. They quickly found all the hidden surprises, and we laughed as one of the females hoarded as much lettuce as she could carry and brought it up to a high ledge to enjoy it all by herself.

Elephants — The elephants were indoors, and the now 6-year-old baby Louie was using his trunk to eat jello off the floor. I really enjoy watching elephants use their trunks; it's fascinating to me how dexterous they are — almost like they have 2 fingers on the end. But we've watched Louie grow up ever since we've been coming to this zoo when he was just a year or two old, and now he's getting pretty big! Last time we were at the zoo, he was trying to get down a step so he could get to the water, and he ended up going backwards down the step — it was so cute!

So great day, awesome fun as always! Like I said, every visit is different, and I am never disappointed! I am a zoo-addict!

An Unexpected Song And Dance

Sunday afternoon is the annual All County Band and Chorus concert. While in high school, I always looked forward to this event. Not only did it mean two days out of school to

practice, (I went for both groups all four years), but it also meant being surrounded by fellow students who shared a passion for music. However, one of the schools in the county, until recently, never chose to participate. During my junior year, we had the privilege of having R.D. Mathey as the guest clinician for the choir. It featured, among other pieces, a medley of Andrew Lloyd Webber pieces. I was among the brave souls who tried out for a duet of "Unexpected Song" from Song and Dance. Unfortunately, I was not chosen to sing the duet. I do remember the performance of Jester Harrison's "Amen" which was a staple of the BGSU Men's Chorus under Mathey's direction. I tried to find a youtube video but they must not perform it anymore.

Another common occurrence was the typical winter storm that would either cancel the concert or postpone it for a week. One year, it was delayed twice before it was finally shelved for the year. Why it has always been in the middle of winter, I do not know. Justi, is your youngest involved this year?

Grandpa Meet The Trolley

Tonight Act numero dos with the orchestra went much better than any of us had planned. Perfection... I would not go that far. There were some problems. Missed qs or rs. Songs falling apart, but I have been in a show or two when during the final week of rehearsal, we had the same thing happen. "A Victim of Gravity" comes to mind. But, I am really getting into this Grandpa thing. I had everyone on stage, in the orchestra, and a few people sitting in the audience laughing at some of his antics... to which madame director was quick to admonish. Tonight was also bio night. "John Truitt" mentioned that he had no idea what to include so I let him glance at my

rambling. When he came to my favorite roles, he had to comment. Morat Notboratnichkov? Once again, the Liswathistani came out for a moment. Confusion arose since everyone naturally assumes this is Borat, but NO, NO, NO... not Borat... MMMMMMORAT. Plus, we attempted one of the most dreaded moments of any show: the curtain call. Has anyone EVER been in a show in which the curtain call went perfectly the first time? OK... maybe not the first. But I am sure we will need to work on it again and again. Especially when there is a 13 member chorus along with several walk on cast members and 11 principals. Grandpa took a seat on the trolley while everyone else fell over each other. Two weeks from tomorrow!

Something new, something old

Wow, three posts in one day!

I've been working on a very old laptop (Compaq Armada), and installing Ubuntu Linux on it. This little machine has just been collecting dust for the past few months, patiently waiting for me to install a working operating system.

With an old wireless card, I am now able to use this computer to access the internet anywhere in my house.

Why in the world would I want to do that? Well, I'm looking forward to download updates to this machine. Of course, I'm enough of a geeky nerd to like playing with a different OS. And finally, I really like giving this old machine new life for at least a while.

The machine is much too slow for any serious work, but it will give me a chance to work with something different. I may start converting some of my other old boxes to linux of one flavor

or another. If I can find good video and picture software, this may replace windows on one of my everyday computers. Still too early to tell on that.

So far so good. I was able to post on my blog, and read email. Maybe with additional memory, this things wouldn't be that slow either.... Nope, the processor is very slow.

If I make two posts a day..

If I average around two posts a day from now until the last week of March, I may end up with around 1 post per day when I reach my 1 year anniversary of blogging. I'm not sure that will happen, since I do have a few other things going on between now and then. Today is a fluke because I have a little bit of time to blog a bit, while I'm waiting for some things to download. I just noticed, with my last post on fish sandwiches that I only needed 1 more to hit 300. Then only 65 more for the 1 post per day average by the end of March.

Unless I really want that distinction, it ain't gonna happen..

I'm only adding more words, since on one of my other 'century' posts, I was given a bit of a rough time for the length of it. I do believe the comments on the post were longer than the post itself.

Fast Food Fish

There are 6 national Fast Food Restaurants that serve a Hot Fish sandwich at least during or around Lent. Yes, Subway exists and does server a tuna fish sandwich, but that is an entirely different animal. As I try them, I will give a short review.

McDonalds Fillet-o-Fish Served all year

The Fillet-o-Fish has been my perennial favorite. I'm sure this has something to do with eating so many growing up in a Catholic family, and of course spending lots of time hanging out in McDonalds. For those who don't know, this sandwich is a square fish stick on a bun, smothered in Tartar Sauce and a slice of melted American Cheese. This sandwich, as was usual with most McDonalds products is the same year after year, sandwich after sandwich. Even though my tastes have grown up a bit, I will still get one of these on occasion. I don't eliminate the meat from my diet during lent, or on Fridays, so the desire for fish has to out weigh my desire for beef. It happens, but the Fillet-O-Fish is not the comfort food that a cheeseburger is. □ These used to be a cheap sandwich at McDonalds, but the price has gone up in the past few years. There should be a two-fer sale in the next few weeks to coincide with the Lenten season. Not a bad sandwich, and it is my scale for all other fast food fish sandwiches... so it is a 7 on scale of 1 - 10

Burger King BK-fish Served all year

Been a few months since I've had one of these sandwiches. Always, and I do mean always overcooked. Doesn't matter what BK I go to. I'll stick to their Angus burger. Score 3. I may try this one again. I was told they got better, and it is Lenten fish sale time.

Arbys Fish during Lent

Decent fish sandwich, A large fillet with lettuce, tomato and

tartar sauce. When I last had it, no cheese was offered. Since I was used to the McDs sandwich I felt it was missing. They are usually only offered in the spring, with some sales during lent. I think last year it was during the entire period, but sometimes the sale is only on Fridays. With a sale price this is a very good value, not so good if not on sale. I'll choose it over the McDs sandwich when on sale. Give this one an 8 when on sale, 6 when not....

Wendy's Fish During Lent

I just had this sandwich a couple of weeks ago. I will have to try it again. On my first sandwich the fish was overcooked, but not served piping hot. Must have been sitting around a while. To give it a fair review, I will need to go back when they are busy on a Friday to make sure I get a fresh sandwich. Served with lettuce, tomato and Tartar Sauce with cheese as an option. So far the score on this sandwich is a 3.

Dairy Queen Fish Fillet sandwich (all year?)

I had the DQ Crispy Fish Fillet sandwich this week. What can I say? The onion rings were tasty. As for the fish, I would almost complain of some false advertising. It wasn't very crispy. That being said, it was a niced sized piece of fish. The sandwich also contained tartar sauce and lettuce. The bun was very fresh. Nothing really special, but not too bad either. I'm thinking a score of 6 fits this sandwich.

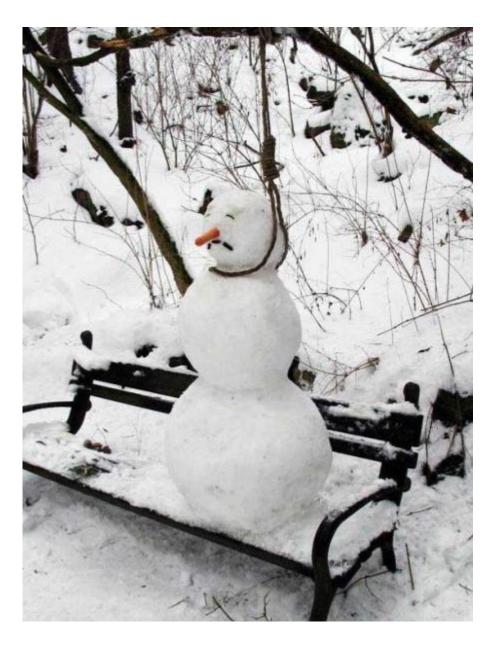
A&W/KFC Fish snackers during Lent

99 cent mini fish sandwiches. No frills, just Tartar Sauce, fish and a bun. I like these little sandwiches a lot. If our local KFC had better service, I would get it more often. Just not worth the time spent waiting to get them, unless I really want a draft Root Beer too. Interesting combination of KFC and A&W in our town, but I think that confuses the servers. Score 8

Your Favorite?

Sick Of Winter?

If you're like me, then you are sick of winter. I'm sick of getting snowed in, sick of bundling up the kids, and sick of the high heating bills. So even though it's a very dark type of humor, I did have to chuckle at this picture of a poor snowman I received via email; no doubt created by some poor soul who is a victim of the winter blues:



And since we're on the subject of snowmen, I read an article a few weeks ago with many interesting tidbits about them, so I'll share a few. After all, it's the least I can do after sharing such a depressing picture like the one above, right?

- Snowman art is one of the few activities modern man shares with his earliest ancestors. The earliest illustration of a snowman found was made in about 1380, and snow sculpting was a popular pastime during the Middle Ages.
- In the year 1494, Michelangelo sculpted snow figures in Florence, Italy.
- In 1999, residents of Bethel, Maine constructed the largest snowman ever built with 8 million pounds of snow. They beat their own record in 2008 using 13 million pounds of snow when they created Olympia (actually a snowwoman) who stood 122 feet and one inch tall and could be seen from 4 miles away! They used snow skis for her eyelashes, car tires for her lips, trees for her arms, and kids created her 6-foot nose from chicken wire and muslin. Her hand-stitched hat had a 48-foot circumference. Here is a picture of Olympia:



So don't let the winter blues get you down, especially since us here in the Midwest are having a winter relapse today with icy winds and snow flurries — yuck! Get some snowman inspiration, and go out there and try your hand at building your own winter work of art! Hurry — the first day of spring is only a month away — and thank goodness for that!

The preceding blog post contains information obtained from <u>American Profile magazine</u>.

I got cheeseburgers

During the summer, a contest in our local community was held to determine the best burger in town. I was unable to go to that event, and I don't even remember who won. I understand it will be a large undertaking, but I may be taking my own survey on the local burger scene. Since I really like cheeseburgers, I imagine most of the burgers will have cheese on them.

Let's eliminate the fast food burgers first, starting with the smaller dollar menu burgers. I'll have to make a trip to all the fast food joints in the area (Williams County), but I can start with McDonalds.

Recently to save money, McDonalds now have a new burger on the menu. It is called the McDouble. This is a standard double cheeseburger minus one slice of cheese. All this for 30 cents less than the old Double Cheeseburger. 30 cents for 1 slice of precut American processed cheese. Hmmm. Still, the Double Cheeseburger was a memory comfort food for me. Kind of like White Castle sliders only bigger. Not the best burger around, but a taste that remained the same from restaurant to restaurant. Since the introduction of the McDouble, I've been able to tell the difference from the restaurant in Bryan and the one in Montpelier and from the time of day it is purchased. I'm not sure what they do different, but it is no longer the comfort food I was used to. Being the cheap person I am, I'm not about to spend 30 cents for a piece of cheese. So I have to find another \$1.00 burger to replace my old standby.

I'll try to keep you posted...

Also on the list, in time for lent, Fast Food Fish sandwiches…. □

2-18-08 to 2-18-09

As taylhis pointed out in her recent post, today is the first anniversary of our foray into the blogging world. found it to be a very fun yet therapeutic experience in recalling the good and otherwise events of the last year. Memories that will be enshrined in this site forever unless something totally unfortunate occurs. Truly fantastic times spent with friends on and off stage, on vacation (still one of the greatest weeks I have ever had), and some family experiences thrown in. Then, one of the hardest times I have ever had to endure in my 35 years. I think about Ma2 everyday. I just know that she is in a far better place looking down on all of us who loved her so much and is there giving me a good swift kick everytime I fail to meet my potential (or maybe it is just me, but knowing Emily as well as I do… I don't think so). So… here's to taylhis, Derek, admin, and I. The rest of you tangential posters are just as good, too.