

Spread Your Wings And Soar

Boy, I am just now beginning to see that this blog can be therapeutic as well as entertaining. These past few days have been really tough but I am finding that with the support of some of the “bestest” friends I have ever had, grieving and remembering one of the best people I have ever known is bearable. I know that I will repeat myself so bear with me. I have already told you that Emily Curtis was much, much more than a music teacher to me. The last few years of her life, she gave up at least one of her lunch periods a week TO ME. I would go to school for a voice lesson on Tuesday mornings. Sometimes we would use them for other things as well. Upon arrival, I would always ask how Amanda and Jonathan were doing. Being the proud mother she is, Emily would boast about their latest accomplishments. On one occasion, she told how she and her daughter had just gone to see Jekyll and Hyde (WITHOUT ME!!! ☹). While Jonathan was at West Point, they would travel to NYC to see shows at least twice a year. One of my lessons was mere hours after Jonathan was sent to Iraq. I asked her if she wanted me to come that morning. She told me that she needed ME more that day than I needed her; just to hear me sing? I even called her at 10pm on a school night to tell her that auditions for an area production of *Joseph...* was in two days. “Get your butt (ok...maybe not that word, but, I like to keep this a family site) over here TOMORROW!!!”

The last show of mine that she came to see was *The Odd Couple*. Following the Sunday matinee, my crowd of admirers gathered at the Dairy Queen across town. When I entered the restaurant, a group of at least 10 rose to their feet and applauded all led by Emily. It was then that she again reminded me that I should not limit myself to musical theatre alone but to “spread my wings and soar” and to “not hide my light under a bushel basket”. Definitely, one of my staunchest supporters and biggest fans.

Let the water flow...up

As in up out of the sump pump pit when the sump pump fails... You may have heard of, or even experienced the weather happening around here while Ike was pounding the Gulf coast. Rain. Lots of it. It wasn't as bad as the storm system that hovered over us for days last year [EDIT: According to this morning's paper it actually was worse], but then last year we had a working sump pump. Apparently our sump pump got its intake clogged causing it to run dry and burn out. I learned this the other morning when I went downstairs to use the bathroom so as not to disturb the other occupant here. I tend to not turn on the light at the bottom of the stairs because I know my way around. Normally not a problem, but this day I put my foot down the final stair to a splash. Yuck. Four inches of water. Not so bad, but then think about where the water came from and what goes through that pit...

Bottom line, we needed a new sump pump. So did hundreds of others around here. After learning that Lowes, Home Depot, Sears, etc. were out, I found that Menards apparently stocks hundreds of the things as when I got there they had dozens left on the shelf and the cashier told me they sold well over a hundred that day. In the meantime, we do have a backup pump and my brother and I set it up. Unfortunately a hose was securely attached so its status as a backup remained firm. We had to run the hose up the stairs, buying and attaching another length to make it possible to run it out the door. Once set up, it took a few hours to drain the basement while the rain poured mercilessly down. Later that night, after church, I was able to secure that new pump along with the attachments my brother said we needed. We would have had it hooked up tonight, but the PVC cement takes several hours to

cure so we will have to finish tomorrow. Good thing the weather report shows that we are pretty much finished with the rain for now. After that, let the cleanup and damage assessment begin. Both of our dehumidifiers were caught in the indoor lake, but one of them still works. Hopefully once the other dries out it can be put into active duty as well.

Other casualties from the rain included a hot water heater that I only was able to restart a few hours ago and a closed road today next to a retention pond- pretty full when we passed it yesterday, and that was before another nearly 30 hours of rain. Another casualty was my lower back. It started hurting pretty bad yesterday to the point where I could only stand for a limited period of time and when sitting I had to make sure my back was supported. At one point I sat down and could not get back up it hurt so bad. It is a little better today and I am using a heating pad on it as I type. I did learn that Aleve does **not** ease back pain.

I am not looking forward to the rest of the week. So far I have $2\frac{1}{2}$ days assigned (my first elementary jobs of the year- up to now it has been middle school only) and a large cleanup job in the basement. By the way, the ELL assignment went without hitches. My boycott of ELL assignments in that school is over for now.

Purple, I like purple...

Since I can't seem to sleep (to be fair I did sleep away most of the day, and now I am bothered by my raw throat again) I thought I would blog a bit. Continuing in my countdown of the original 8 crayon colors I had in my first box of school crayons.

I had crayons before school of course, in fact I had my favorite crayon. I would take it with me where ever I went. Me and my purple crayon. I would use this crayon to write my name. For some reason, I liked to write my name. I'm not sure if this is the first word I learned to spell/read or whatever, but I wrote my name a lot. I wrote my name on bookshelves, pool tables, coffee tables, dining room tables, furniture, in cupboards, and of course on paper. I always wrote with my purple crayon. The funny thing is except for the pool table and paper, I never wrote where others could see. I wrote under tables and shelves, in cabinets and cupboards, on the back of the furniture. I would write my name in all of my 'places'.

I used the dining room table as a fort, I wrote my name. I would 'camp' under the coffee table, I wrote my name. I would hide in cabinets and cupboards and I would write my name. Kind of like "Kilroy was here" only I wrote my name.

Until we moved, my parents never knew how many places I wrote my name, and since we left the house, I'm sure they didn't find it in the permanent places in our old house. Mom removed all traces of my name from any place she found it. I'm glad she didn't make me do it. I still wonder if my name isn't out there somewhere in purple crayon still hiding after all these years.

And even when the [Crayola company](#) calls the color Violet, the crayon color has always been purple to me...

Getting To Know Me – Some

More

Got another 'getting to know you' quiz via email the other day. Since I still fill these out for some reason (don't really know why I do this – haven't my friends already learned all these things about me?), I figured I might as well post it on the blog. And this one prompted me to add a new category to my blogging also – fun forwards. Of course now I have a bunch of posts that should go into this category, but I'm not about to go back and re-classify all my posts.

44 ODD Things about you! If you opened this, FILL IT OUT!

Learn

44 things about your friends, and let them learn 44 things about you!

Send back to me and to several more friends!

1. Do you like blue cheese? yes
2. Have you ever smoked? yes
3. Do you own a gun? no
4. What flavor Kool Aid was your favorite? mountain berry
5. Do you get nervous before a doctor appointment? depends what it's for
6. What do you think of hot dogs? like em – especially Nathan's
7. Favorite Christmas movie? Elf, Christmas Vacation
8. What do you prefer to drink in the morning? water or iced tea if I'm tired
9. Can you do push ups? dunno
10. What's your favorite piece of jewelry? wedding ring
11. Favorite hobby? reading
12. Do you have A.D.D.? I just might
13. What's one trait you hate about yourself? impatience
14. Middle name? Marie
15. Name 3 thoughts at this exact moment? OUCH (my almost 2-year-old is doing my hair), is it too hot to cook pizzas at

the party?, what will we do with 3 pizzas if we don't cook them?

16. Name 3 drinks you regularly drink? iced tea, water, beer

17. Current worry? husband's health

18. Current hate right now? my kids' inability to appreciate things

19. Favorite place to be? anywhere alone with Chris

20. How did you bring in the New Year? pregnant

21. Where would you like to go? Madagascar

22. Name three people who will complete this? Jamy (already did), Vickie, Megan

23. Do you own slippers? no

24. What color shirt are you wearing right now? red

25. Do you like sleeping on satin sheets? yes

26. Can you whistle? yes

28. Would you be a pirate? what does that mean? I've got a parrot...

29. What songs do you sing in the shower? whatever is on the radio

30. Favorite Girl's Names? Taylor, Samantha, Disney

31. Favorite boy's names? Christopher, Jonathan, Michael

32. What's in your pocket right now? don't have pockets

33. Last thing that made you laugh? The Nerd

34. Best bed sheets as a child? Snoopy

35. Worst injury you've ever had? getting cut open at the last minute to have a baby

36. Do you love where you live? YES

37. How many TVs do you have in your house? 5 + a few that don't work

38. Who is your loudest friend? Lisa H.

39. How many dogs do you have? 2

40. Does someone have a crush on you? yes

41. What is your favorite book? Monkeys on the Interstate by Jack Hanna

42. What is your favorite candy? chocolate

43. Favorite Sports Team? Chicago Cubs, Chicago Bears

44. What song or songs do you want played at your funeral?

Canon in D – more appropriate for a wedding, I guess, but it's my favorite classical piece... it's not like I've thought about this!

TAKE LIFE ONE DAY AT A TIME. HAVE A GREAT ONE

In The Arms Of The Angels

Gloomy days always get me down (unless there is a great thunderstorm raging outside... I LOVE a good thunderboomer). However, today is a not such good day. Today, on the 7th anniversary that she began her great Troop Care Package campaign, Emily Curtis (Ma 2) passed away. It just amazed me how much she and one other lady from a very small town in our little corner of the country could spear-head such a massive undertaking; not at all surprised but just amazed. Right after the tragedy of 9/11/01, Emily began getting the word to everyone to start saving necessities to be shipped overseas to Iraq, and other places where troops were stationed. Drop off locations were set up at churches, schools, KMart (yes... my former place of employment did not allow a barrel to be placed in their vestibule). She traveled around the state as far south as Cincinnati. In chatting with Emily about the campaign, she said that some people went beyond the toilet paper, toothpaste, tube socks, etc and donated things like game boys, DVDs, phone cards, and other nonessentials. including 250 huge bags of DumDum Pops. The soldiers were so grateful to the program that letters have been sent by hundreds of the troops in gratitude. Emily even went to a hospital in Germany to see first-hand the wounded who arrived there from battle. You can read about her week-long Germany experiences [here](#). 4 TONS of items have been shipped over. Now Operation Support Our Troops has a real angel watching over them. It may not be the most popular area for U.S.

involvement, but Emily has always been a strong supporter of our military (her son is a West Point graduate). Just talking about all the wonderful things she has done helps immensely. My heartfelt prayers and love go out to Paul, Amanda, Jonathan, and the entire family.

Oranges and Juice

Well today I'm not sure if I'm suffering just allergy symptoms or I have caught a summer cold. It has been a year since my last allergy symptoms, but you would think that after years of having them, I could remember exactly what they were.

But today I have a slight fever and sore throat. Yes, the sore throat could be the result of the allergies, but I don't ever remember the fever. This could be the result of lack of sleep last night, even when I was 'sleeping', my rest was not very restful. Full blown Sinus headache this morning... Oh well, such is Sept in Ohio for me.

I have been drinking a lot of Orange Juice and had an orange today. Both seemed to feel really good going down. I'm not sure if the vitamin C is helping, but the taste of orange hit the spot today.

While eating my orange at lunch, I remembered that there is no English word that rhymes with orange. Then I got to thinking if there were any other such words. I recall that purple has very few rhymes, and they are words from the British Isles. So Purple has no American English rhyming word. Then there are the words Silver and Month. I found those in an internet search. If you can find or think of more words or find a word that rhymes with any of the above, my curious nature would be sated.

Three colors in this post, but the post color is still orange... 3 more to go for the box of eight.

9/11/01

We all know what that date represents. Well, most of us do. As I mentioned a couple of posts ago I worked with ELL students today. One student actually didn't know about what happened seven years ago as he just came to this country less than a year ago. I suspect there were others as well. Needless to say, he had a little trouble answering the journal question, "What happened on September 11, 2001?"

Believe it or not, I have been subbing for a few years but this is the first year that the school I was at had a big thing going for September 11. The morning started with the entire school crowding around the flagpole. No, it wasn't a "see you at the pole" event, though I would wish it would get these kinds of crowds. If more kids were followers of Jesus there would be so much less trouble at our schools. Back to the topic, the principal called out everyone to observe the all-too-recent holiday remembering what happened those seven years ago. There was the flag raising of course, a speech by the principal, and some students read poems they wrote. The principal made himself heard, but they really needed some amplification for the kids- I wasn't able to understand, or in some cases even hear a single poem.

After that, everyone went in and first period started (late). The 9/11 theme continued with the aforementioned journal question, and then we saw an interactive CDROM. Apparently the Chicago Tribune gave away these CDs back in 2002 commemorating the one-year anniversary. It provided archival

footage of ten days of the Tribune headlines following the destruction with some commentary and a Flash intro to start. I was hoping to provide a download link for this, but I guess after six years it's either off the map or I didn't look hard enough. Actually, I did find a torrent (peer-to-peer download) with the title (*When Evil Struck America*) but there didn't appear to be any seeds, meaning it couldn't be downloaded. I'll check Usenet in a bit, but I'm not holding my breath. To the students' credit, they really were engaged and asking questions. A few periods later I was helping in the 7th grade social studies classroom, and the teacher did his own presentation on 9/11. He chose some really thought-provoking pictures, including one building closeup where people could be seen to the side falling because they had jumped from the towers, perhaps hoping for a better outcome than death by fire or smoke inhalation.

These were the only periods I had dealing with this topic, but it seemed like half the day. The rest of the day had typical lessons. I either taught, helped out, or led a review. I could say more on that, but I think I will leave this post focusing more on 9/11. Until tomorrow.

EDIT: I may not be able to give you the Tribune CD, but the History Channel has it's own interactive media: [102 Minutes that Changed America](#)



(Not my picture. For more pictures like this, [CLICK HERE](#))

The REAL Bambi and Thumper

I'll admit I got these super-cute animal pictures from an email forward... they are just too cute... The skeptic in me says, are they real? I looked on snopes.com and didn't see anything, but in this age of photoshop, you never know. If they are photoshopped, the creator did an excellent job... Let's pretend they're real and that these animal buddies have such a wonderful friendship that it spanned at least 2 seasons as the pictures suggest – they're too cute not to believe it!





Optical Illusion Personality Test

This is pretty cool. Watch the video and figure out which way the lady is spinning. According to the video, if you see the lady spinning to the right, your right brain dominates and your thinking is black and white and fact-based. If you see her spinning to the left, you are more creative and open to seeing “gray” areas. Even if the personality assessment part is a bit off, the illusion is still cool to see. Check it out:

Sounds simple, but for some people she keeps changing direction. I saw her spinning counter-clockwise; I guess that would be considered left, but I could force myself to see her spinning in the other direction if I tried – weird! Once you've established which direction you see her spinning, try to get your brain and eyes to switch it on you if you can!

Yellow is the color of Ragweed

For the month of August, I thought I was going to get away with an easy allergy season. Usually my allergies start around mid-August. Right on time, I had the itchy eyes, but no other signs of my fall allergies. Yeah!!

All was good until the 10th of Sept. I woke up with the runny nose and heavy sneezing in the morning. That kept up all day to end with full sinus congestion. Ouch... My current medications don't seem to be doing any good. I realize that we just got some rain in the past few days, so I guess that is what really set the pollen and spores going.

Sinus headache is keeping me awake right now. I was sleeping, but someone sent me a text message and my phone kept beeping. Now with the sinus headache, I may be up for awhile..

I'm going to have to have the phone people turn off my text messaging, since I don't use it anyway, and I hate to pay for messages, I will never reply to.

On another note, only 4 more colors to go, and I have a box of Kindergarten crayons... I'll have to dig out the big box to see what colors there are now.