

Watchout for falling rocks

In the State of Utah, a rock arch in [Utah's Arches National Park](#) collapsed. Now I never have been to the state of Utah, and therefor have never been to this park. From pictures I have seen, it looks like a place I would like to visit. The pictures made me think of one of my favorite places that I've ever been is in South East Ohio. A wonderful State Park area called [Hocking Hills](#). As a family we've had many great vacations there.

The story of the collapsing arch, made me remember the rock falls around the hiking trails of Hocking Hills. Going back time after time, you can see how the rock falls change the area. Trails are closed or rerouted and each trip can be different than the last.

The thing is that even with this arch fall, people didn't see it happen. With all the times at Hocking, I never saw a rock fall but have seen the results. I know people do occasionally see them, most of the time they fall unnoticed. I would like to talk to someone who saw a large rock fall.

One thing I just thought about was the fact that these rock falls occur quite often, but people will go right to the edge of the cliffs, even if they don't know what is or what isn't under them. Oh well, I guess if they haven't seen a rock fall, they don't know the danger the could be in. And I guess I never saw anyone fall off either.

RIP Caray

Recently Skip Caray passed away, a son of famed Chicago Cubs announcer Harry Caray. Skip was actually famous for his work announcing the Atlanta Braves rather than the Cubs, but his death in the news made me think of his father and everything he brought to Cubs games.

Since I didn't watch many Braves games, I wasn't really familiar with Skip's work, so I looked him up on wikipedia.com and found the following:

Skip Caray's broadcasts were characterized by his witty and sarcastic sense of humor, a personality trait that endeared him to most fans, but alienated him from others. For example, during a particularly long losing streak in the 1980s, Skip declared at the start of a game against the Pittsburgh Pirates "And, like lambs to the slaughter, the Braves take the field". More recently, in a game against the Florida Marlins, the Braves had loaded the bases, to which Caray quipped, "The bases are loaded, just like (Marlins manager) Jack McKeon probably wishes he was." During the 2004 season, Caray frequently made fun of Braves relief pitcher, Jung Bong, declaring every time the opposing team got a hit against him, "that's another hit off of Bong". In 2008, a player popped a fly ball so high that Skip said "That would've been a home run in a phone booth."

Sounds like a funny guy, and I'm sure he'll be missed by legions of fans, much like his late father, Harry Caray, the voice of the Chicago Cubs.

Rollback, Shmollback

Now that I'm well on my way to full recovery after being unable to do normal things for so long because of the pregnancy and cesarean, I've resumed my big grocery shopping days at Walmart. And since I haven't been there much in the past few months, I was shocked to find how much many of the prices have raised. So this inspired me to make a list of all the prices I remember from when our Super Walmart opened 26 months ago. I did some math, and this is what I came up with. The first price is how much the item was for the first few months the Super Walmart was open. The second price is how much the item is now, and the percent is the percentage the price has increased in 26 months.

parmesan cheese – \$2.94 to 4.18 = **42%**
american cheese singles – 1.98 to 2.58 = 30%
shredded cheese – 1.98 to 2.58 = 30%
garbage bags – 1.67 to 2.98 = **78%**
bananas – 19¢ to 58¢ per pound = **almost 49%**
toilet paper – 1.00 to 1.24 for a six pack = 24%
baby wipes – 1.44 to 2.16 for one pack = **50%**
baby formula – 10.64 to 11.88 per can = 11%
milk – 2.00 to 3.80 = **90%**

I'm no math whiz, but if I did the calculations correctly, this is insane. I realize there is inflation, the economy is terrible, and food comes in on trucks which use gas whose cost has also skyrocketed, but this is still ridiculous. I used to love Walmart for their one-stop shopping concept, but now I hate them for ruining the little guy and for always changing their prices. It makes it impossible to shop around for the best price unless you have no job or kids – and they know it. **WALMART SUCKS!** But I will keep shopping there, and they know it. Why? Because with 4 kids, I don't have time to go to a bunch of stores trying to find the best price. I need to go where I can get it all under one roof.

Ok, I'm done venting... at least until my next Walmart trip...

10 DUI's in 16 Years

I feel very strongly against drunk driving. It's one thing to make the choice to drink too much; that's up to the individual, but when they make the choice for others and expose them to the danger of an intoxicated motorist on the road, that's extremely selfish and dangerous. It's also very preventable; if you really want to drink enough to make yourself unsafe behind the wheel, there is absolutely no reason why you can't plan ahead, find a driver ahead of time, walk home, call a cab, call a friend, take a bus, stay home and get drunk in the first place... the list of ways to prevent driving under the influence goes on and on. That being said, there was a story on dailyherald.com (suburban Chicago newspaper) recently that caught my interest. It was about a man who had been caught drunk driving 10 times in the last 16 years. How does this happen? I believe the guy had a serious problem, and I'm a person who believes in getting people help before throwing them in jail, however, it seemed that this guy was not going to learn until he killed someone... and unfortunately, that's just what happened – and it was himself that he killed. I don't know why he was out roaming the streets still after getting busted that many times; especially when you read the article and see that in 1996, he had drunk driving arrests on April 7, April 14, April 26, and May 1. 4 times in less than a month?!? I don't understand how he was released between each of these instances and not only that, but after all this, he was sentenced to a total of one year in DuPage County jail. He got out early, of course, had a few more busts, and then this latest one on July 2 of this year, which is when his story caught my attention. A few weeks

later, he died while in police custody. In the article, they say he had seizures and a brain bruise, and it's my theory that his alcohol withdrawal caused his seizures, which led to him hitting his head and causing the brain bruise. Whatever happened to him, it's a very sad story; a man with a severe problem who never got help. At least his family never had to deal with the added grief of his causing injury or death to another person. Here is the story and the mugshot, he's not the healthiest looking fellow. And note the oxygen tank; he had cirrhosis of the liver but still kept drinking:

Patrick J. Kolman, who was arrested for DUI at least 10 times in the past 16 years, died from chronic alcoholism Wednesday night, the Cook County medical examiner's office said.

Besides alcoholism, the Arlington Heights resident also suffered from a brain bruise and seizures, the medical examiner said. It was unclear when the contusion occurred.

Kolman, 58, had already been convicted of DUI nine times when police spotted his car weaving between lanes a few blocks from his home around 2:30 a.m. on July 2.

Kolman had DUI convictions dating back to 1993. Though he'd been in and out of jail, he received one-year sentences for many of his drunken driving crimes. He had also been convicted of bank robbery, for which he got a much longer sentence, and faced domestic abuse charges.

Kolman's downward spiral began in spring 1992. He was arrested for DUI in Rolling Meadows with a blood-alcohol content more than three times the legal limit at that time.

"I am an alcoholic," he told law enforcement officials then. "I can't drink at all."

Kolman was once diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver, but continued to drink after treatment and against medical advice.

He appeared in his July booking photo with an oxygen tank.

Details about the length of some of Kolman's DUI sentences is sketchy. A 1995 DUI arrest resulted in a one-year jail sentence and placement in a drug and alcohol program. But in 1996, he was charged with DUI on April 7, April 14, April 26 and May 1. He was sentenced to a total of one year in DuPage County jail.

Kolman likely served only half that time because of good behavior credits. He was stopped again in mid-1997 for driving after his license had been revoked. He was sentenced to two years and served time at the Dixon Correctional Center, according to corrections department records.

Kolman, of 124 S. Vail St., appeared in bond court for his most recent DUI arrest in Rolling Meadows just last month. After he told the judge he was unable to post the \$150,000 bond, he appeared to suffer from a medical problem and was rushed to Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights.

After the bond court hearing, Kolman was transferred to the Cook County Jail's infirmary where his health likely declined, said Cmdr. Nick Pecora of the Arlington Heights Police Department.

Kolman's car, a 1991 Lincoln, is still in police custody where it will remain until one of Kolman's family members pays the \$500 fee to get it released, Pecora said.

Knowing One's Place

In all honesty, I have to say that the current production I am part of is the most difficult time I have ever had and I do

not have to memorize one line of dialog. There are several roles both on stage and off in any show. It just so happens that my presence for [The Nerd](#) is strictly off stage. Not that it has not been and continues to be a thoroughly enjoyable experience. I get to sit back night after night and watch the thespians on stage create their roles. All eight of them are doing a fabulous job developing realistic personas not only through the written word but through movement and (to me) most importantly facial expression. Not only are the lines significant, what goes on along with those words may be even more so.

The character playing Rick is just bewildering. Even when he is not speaking, he is doing something that is just soooo hard not to focus your attention on, making the other characters on stage that much more uncomfortable. His mouth open, staring at a character one minute, wandering around paying no attention to someone yelling at him the next. The eyeglasses add an even greater effect. Once he gets his script away, I know that he will be able to take it to an even higher level. I cannot wait to see the costumes. And that voice?! ☐ Plus, I am so excited to be watching HIM on stage.

I have also been impressed by the gentleman playing Tocky (... or is it Ticky?). He has some of the best lines in the show and is very strong characterwise. Audiences will howl when he gets angry at his young son or becomes flabbergasted by the nerd's constant nerdiness. Thor (Ticky's son) is a very close relative of mine and he can be as bothersome as the character on stage.

Everyone else is doing great; I will make it a point to focus on others in future posts as soon as I can find intriguing things to mention about them. I stilll have a bit of time.

Dueling Headlines

People in our corner of Ohio often make fun of our local paper, and sometimes I can see their point. Sometimes the articles are not well-written or seem one-sided. But I think it's normal to feel this way because I read an online version of a suburban Chicago newspaper, and people are always leaving comments about how this newspaper's writing stinks. But here is a case in point from our local paper: a few weeks ago, they ran two headlines on the front page that had nothing to do with each other. In fact, they seemed to contradict each other. I think this was an example of poor journalism. They should have moved one of the stories to an inside page or saved it for another day because the front page headline was:

College on Its Way Here

And right there in the right column of the front page, was this headline:

Alcohol Deadly for Collegians

Enough said.

Archaeology Is A Dangerous Job

...according to the movies, anyway. Not one but two well-known movie franchises have plots revolving around adventure-seeking archaeologists, Indiana Jones and The Mummy. I couldn't

resist the hype of the [new Indiana Jones movie](#) and made that my first experience with Indiana Jones earlier this year. It was entertaining, though I still don't really get what all the fuss is about, although I'm told the latest (and last, supposedly) Indiana Jones movie is not the best one by far. So for date night last week, we decided to give the latest Mummy movie, [Tomb of the Dragon Emperor](#) a try, and again, I don't see what all the fuss is about. I did like it better than [Hellboy 2](#), but I really think that has more to do with how sick I was when I saw Hellboy 2 because I just wanted to leave the theater. My husband liked Hellboy 2 better. I'm comparing the two because they are somewhat similar movies; both action-fantasies involving the raising of ancient asian things. But anyway, back to the latest Mummy movie... Archaeology is dangerous in the movies!

[Brendan Fraser](#) plays an archaeologist who is hired to guard a precious artifact as it makes its journey to become a gift. There's a guy who is trying to raise this emperor from the dead; it has something to do with a curse. So the emperor is raised, and that's what I really liked about the movie. The emperor was made out of what looked like metal and fire, and I really enjoyed these special effects. When they were coupled with the emperor's voice, it made for a nice scary villain – I hope you appreciate the oxymoron of *nice scary villain* ☐ The one thing I didn't understand about the movie is why they threw in the random yetis. You'll have to see it to know what I'm talking about, I guess, but let's just say that there were some yetis all of a sudden and they didn't seem to have much to do with the rest of the plot. As far as the plot goes, it wasn't really my kind of movie, but it was a \$3 matinee, buy one get one free, so for that price, I was thoroughly entertained. Three random notes I have are: 1. I didn't realize the Mummy movies take place in the past, in the 1940's. 2. Is it a requirement for sequels to have extremely cheesy references to the original movie? This movie is no exception. 3. Anyone visiting Universal Studios in Orlando,

Florida should definitely try the Mummy ride. It is a thrill ride with special effects; a haunted house roller coaster, and it's unlike any other roller coaster I've ever experienced – totally awesome!

The Lucky Rainbow (And God) Saved Us

Ok, of course *all* the credit goes to God, but I was going for the catchy title. Yesterday I had one of the biggest scares of my life – a near-death experience. I'm going to start at the beginning of an otherwise wonderful day...

We were looking for a fun place to take the kids, and we decided upon the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo. The kids had their usual fun playing in the water hole, and the capuchin monkeys were quite active, enjoying a game of tag. It was really cool to see; one would chase the other and then when he caught him, they'd switch and the chaser became the chasee – is that a word? Doesn't matter, I think you get the point. Capuchin monkeys are smart.

There was a kangaroo separated from the rest of the roos, and we thought it was a baby, until we looked a little closer and noticed she actually had a little baby sticking out of her pouch – SOO cute! It must have been a different type of kangaroo or wallaby than the eastern grey kangaroos though because it was much smaller, and obviously an adult since she had a baby. But anyway, they were definitely the highlight of our trip.

Earlier in the day, when we were deciding where to go, we had brought up the possibility of go-carts, and our 4-year-old had not forgotten. Since the kids were being (somewhat) good and

it was still early (we were hoping for a triple kid pass-out on the hour-long drive home), we decided to stop for some quick laps around the go-cart track. I stayed in the car because we had 2 kids who fell asleep, and from there, I was able to watch the storm roll in. It was really neat; there was a lightning bolt that struck near the go-carting place, and everyone waiting in line said "whoa!". It was followed by a VERY LOUD crack of thunder, and that was the end of the go-carting. My husband had already ridden once with our 4-year-old, and they were waiting in line so our 8-year-old could go. But the poor kid has her father's bad luck because they shut the place down for the storm before she got to go. But she was a good sport about it; I actually think she was just so happy to be out of the storm and in the "safety" of the car... but you will soon see why I put the "safety" in quotes while referring to the car.

As we headed away from the go-cart place, it rained heavily. So heavily that the road flooded immediately and visibility was down to almost 0. I told my husband he should pull over, but you couldn't even see enough to do that. But then it cleared a little, and there was a huge rainbow. It was beautiful; I don't think I've ever seen one in a full arc like that. I tried to take a picture but we had now gotten on the interstate and were travelling fast, so we'll have to see how it comes out. I was distracted by the rainbow, and this is where everything happened so fast it's kind of a blur. But I'll recap best I can... The cars in front of us were braking, so my husband made a hard stop – not all that hard, so I didn't really feel like we were in danger. I see a car on the shoulder all smashed up and facing us. The driver is getting out and looking at his car, and that's when I realize that it had *just* happened – no emergency vehicles were on the scene yet, and it's still happening because I hear horns honking. Then my husband says very calmly, "We're going to get hit." I looked in my sideview mirror and saw a semi coming at us, and he's not stopping. Instead he's coming right at my mirror and

the next thing I know, the semi is next to us on the shoulder. Thank God there was a shoulder. Thank God my husband didn't pull onto the shoulder trying to save us, or he would have steered into the path of the semi. Thank God for a lot of things, but most of all, for the safety of my family. Turns out the horn that was honking was the *semi* warning us of our impending doom. All these news stories were flashing through my head on the rest of the way home about people whose vehicles got pancaked by semis. It was a split second away from happening to us, and there was nothing that could have stopped it, except Divine Intervention. I called 911 to report the accident, and that's when I learned that my cell phone makes a little noise when you do that – to make sure you really want to call, I guess. But the good news is, it didn't seem as if anyone was hurt because like I said, the driver of the car that caused it all was out and looking at his car. He was either brave or not very smart, because if that semi hadn't of stopped next to our car where it did, he would have been plowed over. Someone should tell that Subway guy from my last post that this is what 911 is really for! And this whole incident makes a case for my husband to try to get me to fly to Florida next time rather than drive. All I know is, in the car, we had a **very** close call. Rarely are there close calls on a plane – you either crash or you don't!

A reminder to all to be thankful every day for everything you have!

Ok, I thought you were

pulling my leg

Last night somebody mentioned something about guys wearing pantyhose. Well, being me, I thought they were talking about Mel Brook's *Men in Tights*. Little did I know that it is a new [fashion statement](#) for men.

Sometimes enough is enough. Most guys, myself included, have no fashion sense at all. Now people are trying to throw in another accessory for men to wear? I can see it now... When do we wear our pantyhose? What color is best for my outfit or legs???? I don't see that happening in NW Ohio anytime soon.

I'll stick to my kilt thank you very much....



Yes, this is a picture of me in a kilt on the occasion of my eldest daughter's wedding. It was a wonderful affair, but that kilt was extremely warm on that 80+ degree May day.

The things that fathers will do for their daughters..., but I draw the line at pantyhose...

Be carefull out there.

I'm not one to drink to excess very often, but when I do, I try to make sure I am in secure surroundings. I am one of those who will make sure I have a designated driver, or a place to stay if I will be having more than 1 drink. Even then, I have the drink finished early. It has been more than a few years since I've been intoxicated.

Now I come to the point. Seems like a bunch of kids in England found themselves someplace that wasn't so secure, and they were [too drunk to be rescued](#). I wonder how that story would have been reported here in the states. Would the rescuers have had that option? My guess is that the story would have been reported that "the conditions were just too hazardous to make further rescue attempts". I don't think much would have been made about the condition of the teenagers. Too many times have the rescuers been sued in cases just like this.

I really think it may have done those kids a lot of good sitting on a ledge waiting until morning to be taken out. But should someone be billed for the expense of the rescue? I didn't see anything in the story about this, but I have heard that is happening more often. The rescued party is sometimes charged with the cost of the rescue operation. Hmm, going to have to find a link for that...