

Four legged furry friends...

Yes, a post about dogs, cats, rats, mice, rabbit, chinchillas and all the other furry animals we share our homes and lives with.

I have a house filled with small animals. 1 dog, 1 rabbit and 7 chinchillas. Over the years we've had mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, and one hedge hog. I was never really a pet person, all pets in the house were my wife's or daughters'. Our little dog was a working dog. He was for part of his life a hearing-ear-dog. After my wife died, he quit that job, and just became a grump. But at times he can be a very good little dog. Because of who he is and what his job was, he does hold a special spot in the house (right behind the couch).

The chinchilla is probably the softest animal around. While they are usually very active and inquisitive, some of them will sit still for some cuddling time. Some like to be petted, some don't. I think they're as picky as cats.

Rabbits are also very soft animals, and will generally sit still for a while to be petted. They will let you know when they are done with it though. You generally find yourself with a wet lap.

The other little furry pets all have good points and bad, but they can bond and will bond with people. I'm not sure why that is, but it has happened in this house.

Now most of the animals in this house are coming to the end of their natural lives. I'm not sure if this house will ever be without pets, but the years with these pets is slowing going to pass. Dogs and chinchillas will both live 15 years or so. The oldest may be past that, I'm not sure she was old when we got her. The rabbits can live about 10 years, so our little rabbit is almost there. I'm not sure what we will do when the last little furry friend is gone. That can be thought about

later.

These little friends have meant a lot to this family, and sometimes even kept us sane.

A Place Where Nobody Dared To Go

Instead of giving the whole laundry list of nominees for the Tony Awards to be presented on June 15, I will touch on a few of the biggies.

BEST MUSICAL

[Cry-Baby](#) (the latest 1980s movie to be turned into a huge musical extravaganza a la Hairspray)

[In the Heights](#)

[Passing Strange](#)

[Xanadu \(have I not mentioned this before? Amazing... and no... it is not about the home of the future\)](#)

BEST PLAY

August: Osage County

Rock 'n' Roll

The Seafarer

The 39 Steps (based upon the Hitchcock movie of the same name)

BEST REVIVAL OF A MUSICAL

[Grease](#) (panned heavily by the critics... thank goodness for the reality series that cast Danny and Sandy)

[Gypsy](#) (Patti LuPone gets her Turn as Mama Rose)

[South Pacific](#) (the clear-cut favorite in this category... still find it amazing that this is its first revival)

[Sunday in the Park With George](#)

BEST REVIVAL OF A PLAY

[Boeing-Boeing](#)

[The Homecoming](#)

[Les Liaisons Dangereuses](#)

[Macbeth](#) (starring Tony nominee Patrick Stewart)

BEST BOOK OF A MUSICAL

Cry-Baby, Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan

In the Heights, Quiara Alegria Hudes

Passing Strange, Stew

Xanadu, Douglas Carter Beane

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE (MUSIC AND/OR LYRICS) WRITTEN FOR THE THEATER

Cry-Baby, Music & Lyrics: David Javerbaum & Adam Schlesinger

In the Heights, Music & Lyrics: Lin-Manuel Miranda

The Little Mermaid, Music: Alan Menken; Lyrics: Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater

Passing Strange, Music: Stew and Heidi Rodewald; Lyrics: Stew

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A LEADING ACTOR IN A PLAY

Ben Daniels, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*

Laurence Fishburne, *Thurgood*

Mark Rylance, *Boeing-Boeing*

Rufus Sewell, *Rock 'n' Roll*

Patrick Stewart, *Macbeth* (who was a well-established star in the Royal Shakespeare Company long before becoming Captain Jean-Luc Picard)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A LEADING ACTRESS IN A PLAY

Eve Best, *The Homecoming*

Deanna Dunagan, *August: Osage County*

Kate Fleetwood, *Macbeth*

S. Epatha Merkerson, *Come Back, Little Sheba*

Amy Morton, *August: Osage County*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A LEADING ACTOR IN A MUSICAL

Daniel Evans, *Sunday in the Park With George*

Lin-Manuel Miranda, *In the Heights*

Stew, *Passing Strange*

Paulo Szot, *South Pacific*

Tom Wopat, *A Catered Affair*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A LEADING ACTRESS IN A MUSICAL

Kerry Butler, *Xanadu*

Patti LuPone, *Gypsy*

Kelli O'Hara, *South Pacific*

Faith Prince, A Catered Affair

Jenna Russell, Sunday in the Park With George

What surprises me is the Best Original Score Category. Is it original to have the score from a movie possibly with a few extra songs added to be considered? Two of the musicals listed are indeed movies turned into Broadway shows. I guess [Young Frankenstein](#) was not original enough to warrant a nomination. I really need to find a copy of the 1980 movie *Xanadu* to see if it was really as good as I remember because it might help to explain why it seems to have gotten so many nominations. Or the Johnny Depp starring movie *Cry-Baby* that I do not remember at all. Will this become the next *Hairspray*? So much for originality.

[Premium Seating and Tickets to Sold Out Events](#)

“New” Kids on the Block?

Does everyone remember this boy band from the 80's? I remember them well because being a young preteen girl at the height of their popularity meant that their marketing was pointed directly my way. I went to 3 of their concerts, had my bedroom wallpapered in New Kids posters, and had everything from tapes (for younger readers – that's what we played music on in those days), buttons, t-shirts, books, magazines, and stickers to trading cards, shoelaces, and even a Joey McIntire doll. Yes, it was ridiculous and more than a little embarrassing. But girls will be girls, and the group had a clean-cut, boy band image, so my parents willingly obliged my fanfare.

You may have heard that the band has reunited. Yes, I'm

serious, and yes, I'm talking about now, in 2008, when the members of the group are over the age of 30 and some are pushing 40. Why now, you ask? Probably because pop culture has a way of recycling itself. They often resurrect fads decades later when people who were kids at the time of the fad can now enjoy them again as adults (now that they have their own money to spend) and share them with their own kids. They did this with a number of fads from the '80's – My Little Pony, Cabbage Patch Kids, Strawberry Shortcake, Transformers, Star Wars, Indiana Jones, and now, The New Kids on the Block. What perplexes me most of all about this whole thing, is that they didn't change the group at all. They are out there, singing the same songs they sang as teens and early twenty somethings, about dating girls and "Hangin' Tough". They are attempting to perform the same dance moves they made popular decades ago, and results are not pretty. I was one of the biggest fans of the group way back when, and now I say they're terrible. I don't like the music anymore (it was of a genre they used to call bubblegum pop – and it's definitely the type of music you grow out of), they sound terrible singing it, the lyrics are ridiculous, if not downright creepy, coming from near-middle-aged men, and the dance moves are horrible. They are actually going to tour this (circus) act come fall.

So why now? Why do we need an updated version of New Kids on the Block? Actually that's not even right. There's nothing updated about this group except their ages. Everything else is EXACTLY the same! An updated version would be better musically and probably make a whole lot more sense. There's what I talked about earlier – the fad revival tactic. I guess that's why they did it. But I find it amazing that they found enough people who thought this was such a good idea that they made it happen – including the 5 original members of the group. Some have gone on to mildly successful movie or solo music careers. Some have raised families. But how someone got all 5 to agree to resurrect the New Kids on the Block circa 1991 is astounding.

If you don't believe me about how terrible they are or if you just like to watch train wrecks in action, check this out. Help me figure out who looks more ridiculous – the group or the fans. This video is part one of three, but you'll only want to see the first part, if that, trust me:

To Do

This seems a little strange to me, but the other day my husband suggested that I should put everything into my blog. Every to-do list, shopping list, etc. Anything I'm putting into my computer should be in my blog, he says. I'm a person who makes a lot of lists. I've even been known to make a list of the lists I need to make! It might sound dorky or anal, but it makes me feel better and more organized – I'm a busy person with a terrible memory, so any way I can feel a little closer to keeping my head above water when daily life becomes overwhelming is worth trying for me. And often I do so with lists. So, upon the advice of my husband, a person whose knowledge of everything seems to know no limits (and no, I'm not being sarcastic!), here goes – hope it doesn't bore you too much, but here is my To-do List for when Grandma has my kids for just under a week – an event I am anticipating so anxiously that it seems to have SLOWED the passage of time... We were going to take a trip to New York, but we declined it because of gas prices and in favor of getting things done around the house, sigh. Besides, I don't know how a woman who is 35 weeks pregnant would fare walking around such a big city! Such a shame, though, it's the LAST time we will be kidless for a long period of time because Grandma can't fit 4 kids into her car to take them all at the same time ☐

To Do While Kids Are Gone

RELAX!

clean game closet

organize kids room – clean out their toys, add toddler bed, create play room

hook up hose

clean out laundry basket o' junk

clean out playpen

~~wash baby's clothes~~ – (now that we just found out we're having a boy instead of a girl, I have no boys' clothes to wash!)

pack away Disney's clothes (now that we won't be needing them for the new baby!)

fix pipe in upstairs bathroom – and the light that got broken and flooded because of the pipe!

Three days, three meetings

No, not *that* kind of meeting. I mean meeting three students from my church. I should add that none of them were in my class but rather I sort of just ran into them. Two of them approached me, and for the other I recognized his name and approached him. It started with graduation rehearsal the other day. They were going through the names and I heard his. I recognized it immediately. After all, I was his AWANA leader one year in addition to the 4th/5th grade ministry. Okay, that doesn't entirely mean anything as I didn't remember another such student right away who is one year younger than him and helps out in the ministry. Anyway, once I heard it I looked out for him and he was sitting in one of my (well, the teacher I was subbing for anyway) rows. I talked to him a little. I asked about his sister too who is two years younger. Now, sad to say I don't remember a lot of the girls but his sister... let's just say I had a reason to remember her. Something she will grow out of if she hasn't already.

The next meeting was the next day when I subbed for a librarian, who also helped out in the computer lab. There were four classes to come in that day, pared down to three when one of the teachers canceled. I sorted books when I wasn't helping students at the computers. Now aren't you glad

I didn't actually write about this assignment yesterday? The three of you who still read this blog would have gone down to zero! ☐ So, in the afternoon a third grader asked me if I played the doctor in the drama at church. Of course I told her I did, and not only that, but I would see her in fourth grade this weekend, even though she will still be in third grade for another week at school.

Finally, just today I ran into yet another one. She was in one of the four fifth grade classes I was not subbing in (five total at that school! ☐). She saw me in the hall and asked if I worked in 4th/5th grade at my church. When I said yes, I of course told her I *wouldn't* be seeing her there this weekend since she is no longer a fifth grader there, but a part of the junior high ministry. She was a little disappointed in this- I know I would, knowing I would have to attend regular worship from then on! True, now I willingly go and enjoy the service but I know at age eleven I wouldn't and didn't when I served as an acolyte once in awhile at the church I grew up in. And that was only an hour-long service. At my church now the service is half again as long.

Three students in three days- who would have guessed? Of course this doesn't beat the three students in one **day** a month ago, but still. As for my day today, as I said it was fifth grade. I corrected work with them, watched over their work on some projects in the morning, did some teaching in the afternoon, etc. The principal and I watched a few students play *Rock Band* in music. They were pretty good. Then he came and watched *me* teach science. About a topic I knew little about (cold/warm fronts, high/low pressure zones). Sigh. I hope he wasn't too disappointed, but then I'm sure he understands a sub will not necessarily be an expert in anything taught during the day. The students were pretty good. A few had their minds on other things during silent reading, but hey, summer's almost here.

Time To Clean The Mothballs Out Of The Closet

Now that the latest Indiana Jones movie has hit the theatres and has already been dethroned at the box office, I began to start coming up with sure fire ways to relaunch other 1980s blockbuster movie franchises... many of which ended on a sad or horrible note. We have already seen a new Rocky as well as Rambo feature. I kind of appreciated [Rocky Balboa](#) as a nice homage and wrap up of the previous movies (it was far better than the deplorable [Rocky V](#)). I lost interest in the shoot em up Rambo series after the second installment. I think Stallone should have come up with a good story for both franchises to interact; however, that might have been asking a little too much for his acting prowess.

How about a nice return of *Jaws* (not the James Bond character with metal teeth but the shark). [Jaws the Revenge](#) (I think it was called) was just too horrible to even get into. Anything anyone comes up with surely would be better than that debacle. How about a wonderful sequel to both the *Jaws* series and *Finding Nemo*?


The [Beverly Hills Cop](#) franchise took a serious nosedive with the third movie in the series. Audiences expected to see Eddie Murphy be funny as the wise cracking Detroit to LA detective Axel Foley (with or without the foul language). The third movie was almost a family oriented feature taking place at a theme park. I suggest combining *Beverly Hills Cop* with many of the movies in which Eddie appears as several characters. Why not have Axel go in search of the people responsible for the travesty that is *Norbit* and arrest them? I do see that a *Beverly Hills Cop IV* is in the earliest stages of development.

I think it is about time to dust off the [Police Academy](#) shelf. This could be another collaboration with Steve Guttenberg and company joining Eddie Murphy, Eddie Murphy, Eddie Murphy, AAAAAAND Eddie Murphy on a quest to find the villains who stole the careers of the other academy grads.

Or... how about *Revenge of the Killer Tomatoes*? I think we have had only *Attack* and *Return* so why not?

Of course most of these franchises were products of their time and reflected the period. Very doubtful that any of them would be able to start with anything near a fresh approach.

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[Indiana Jones Special Edition Trilogy Exclusive Lenticular Cover Collection \(Raiders of the Lost Ark, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade\)](#) 

Baby Christopher's Warm Fuzzies

When I was in high school, I was in a peer group called Snowball and one of our activities was to write "warm fuzzies" about each other. Warm fuzzies are kind thoughts. When we told family and friends we are now expecting a boy instead of a girl, we got lots of warm fuzzies, so I decided to collect them in one place so baby Christopher can read them someday.

Lisa,

How exciting to find out about your new son, we are so excited for you.

Love, Linda

YES!!!!!!!

I knew you guys could do it! Congratulations!!

Mary Beth

Hooray!!!

That is sooooo great. I can't wait for HIS arrival. I sure Dad is as excited.

Jamy

Wow! No wonder you are in shock! I'm excited for you. I had 3 boys and the last was a girl, and I didn't know till she was born – no ultrasounds in those days. All I can tell you from my experience is the girl was nothing like her brothers, from day one. For me, 3 boys were easier than one girl! I'll be interested to see how your experience is. Can't wait to meet little Christopher. I have one of those as well. (He is and was the "toughest", most bull-headed of my boys.)

Shirley

You are going to love having a son. I know I was very nervous about having a son because I wasn't sure if I could feel the same way about a boy as I did about Abby. Because she was a girl, I thought we had this unusual bond that couldn't possibly exist between a mother and a son, but it turns out that gender has nothing to do with it. I knew I'd love him, but I wasn't sure that there'd be that "click" I had with Abby. I'm glad to reports I was very wrong. I'm positively in love with my son and couldn't imagine life without a boy to raise. I've often said that I'd have a whole ball team of boys before I'd have another girl, so if that tells you anything, you'll LOVE having a son. HOORAY for you!

Tracy
