

5 Days More

Well... the last lesson before the recital went very well indeed. The second half of my duet adds much to the piece and it should come off with much hilarity. I have ALWAYS wanted to perform this piece and it was one of several I had picked out on my first lesson back in July (THANK YOU, C for recommending that I start taking them).

I would like to invite all of my fellow tangenteers to the event on Tuesday May 10th at the Little Theatre. The recital is divided into two groups. The first group of 12 takes the stage at 6PM, the second act (the one I am part of) rises at 7:30. Because of the limited amount of seating and the number of performers, I am inviting only a select few family and really close friends.

Hopefully, many of you will be able to come cheer us all on. ☐

10 Years

They say that time flies once you reach a certain age (or when you are having fun). To me the decade from 9-11-01 to the events which unfolded last night have flown by. I'm not sure if the killing of Osama Bin Laden will have the same, lasting impact as the destruction, devastation, and heinous mass murdering of that fateful autumn day. I wonder how many will remember where they were and how they found out about the death of the Al Qaeda leader. How many of us can remember where we were nearly 10 years ago? I was at home watching GMA when the announcement hit and rushed out into the beauty shop to tell everyone out there.

Last night, I was reading on my nook and happened to flip to the local ABC network to watch the 11 o'clock news after everyone else had turned in. And I saw the blurb on the screen: Osama Bin Laden Killed. The news held me captive for the two hours it was on. People in front of the White House cheering "USA, USA!" It really was like the gathering, camaraderie, and patriotism felt by so many hours and days following 911. Kind of an awkward feeling: although most of us feel glad and grateful that the murderer was silenced somehow, the Christian in me questions if killing him is justified. However, in my opinion, the feeling that the head of this organization of pure EVIL is gone THIS time and in few other situations justifies the operation.

However, we should not be so quick to celebrate too prematurely. My cousin came downstairs last night and I showed her the news and told me that her husband was informed that the military is on alert. They did not know for what. Her husband is not officially out of the Army until May 8th (or somewhere thereabout) and could still be called and returned to duty. Who knows what retaliation the sects of Bin Laden supporters could exact?

But until then... God bless our military forces. May the thousands left in mourning during this war find whatever closure they can.

Easter 2011

Easter is definitely a favorite holiday of mine. Can't be THE favorite because nothing beats Christmas, but it's proven to be even better than Halloween these days. No matter how you celebrate Easter, there is always lots to do this time of

year, and I think our family found the perfect balance between celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the traditional kids' stuff like Easter eggs and bunnies.

Every year, our community has an Easter egg hunt, and my kids always love it. My oldest is now too old to participate, but I was proud that she chose to come along with us and that she was a HUGE help with the little ones. Our community's Easter egg hunt is more of a candy scramble now. They used to have it in the park, and the volunteer teens from the high school would hide the candy all around the park, but they got tired of having to move the event indoors at the last minute because of inclement weather. With Easter being in April, you just can't guarantee a sunny, dry, Saturday morning without muddy ground in which to hide the Easter surprises. So now they have it in the middle school gym, and while they can't exactly hide the candy, the kids seem to love it all the same. If the kids find a piece of candy with a colored dot on it, then they win an extra prize, and 2 of my 3 kids did just that – those of you who know our family can guess who was the one with the (as always) bad luck – poor kid.

At church the following day, we had two special guests join us – one friend who doesn't go to church but began to come after falling on hard times in his life, and a new friend who is also going through tough times and looking to switch churches. I'm so happy to report that New Friend now calls our church her church home – she and her kids really like it! Also, Friend #1 has been coming to church every week since! God is amazing!

Monday, we were invited by some friends to attend "The Living Last Supper", a show near Fort Wayne Indiana staged solely for God's glory – to depict the last days and the death and Resurrection of Jesus. It was an **awesome, powerful** show; one I **strongly recommend**. This will be an annual tradition for our family for sure! Especially since all 4 of our children were moved by the performance, and we didn't even need to use

the child care!

Friday saw the annual kid-friendly tradition of egg coloring, and I think this was really the first year we've done egg coloring with a little BOY in the house. Our son is 2, and what a difference there was between his rowdy excited way of dropping the eggs into the colors versus his sisters' delicate quest for prettiness in their egg designs. Our son barreled through his allotment of eggs so quickly that his sisters were still working on theirs when he was done, and this is what happened:



After dinner, our family sat down in a circle to do another one of our favorite Easter traditions: [Resurrection Eggs](#). It's a set that was given to us by my sister last year, and I have to remember to tell her how much we enjoy doing this every year. We even lent our set to some friends this year for them to enjoy! It comes with a booklet, and we take turns reading the little paragraphs that tell the story of Jesus' death. The booklet asks questions and gives you places to pause, and you open each of the 12 eggs when prompted. Each of the different colored eggs contains a little something that represents the part of the story that was just read, and we have kids take turns opening eggs. It's a wonderful way to combine the eggs aspect and the spiritual meaning of Easter into a fun-filled educational family activity, and we love it!

Saturday morning the kids got a nice surprise – the Easter

Bunny had visited early and hidden their gorgeous eggs! I think the Easter Bunny thought it would be too much for us to search for eggs while trying to get to church on time Sunday morning, and he was right ☐ Oh, here's a pic of the kids with their eggs; Dude is still recovering from his egg coloring tantrum:



After the egg hunting , we attended a fun Easter event at the community theater up the street, and the weather actually cooperated. There were Easter egg hunts, games, lunch, and plenty of prizes for everyone, and the kids had a blast. We returned home and made a last minute decision to check out another Easter drama at a friends' church.

It seems that the Easter Bunny made another visit to our house on Saturday night since Sunday morning the kids woke up to a laundry basket for each of them full of surprises. We went to church, and I enjoyed a whopping class size of 13 first-graders to teach! Problem was, all of their jacked-up-on-candy brains could only think about the other aspects of Easter, and we had difficulty doing some of our planned activities. It's often difficult to accomplish much when I have a class of that size anyhow, so I took it in stride and we went to the gym early to run around and burn off some of that sugar! At adult worship, we were blessed to see enough friends join us so that our group filled up an entire row! It's not about quantity, but it was amazing to see some friends there who don't regularly go to church and some whom we've been inviting for years and haven't come until now. I

am so excited to see what God is doing in the lives of those I care about!!!

We went out to brunch, took a family nap, and then we took the kids to the movies. No, we didn't see Hop, which might have made sense for Easter, but our older kids have already seen it. So we took in Rio, which is a cute family movie about a couple of rare parrots – fitting for our family since we reside with a jerky parrot of our own, and we had fun.

Overall, one of the best Easter seasons ever; actually, this season just keeps getting better and better every year, especially as I become aware of what the season is all about and how to really celebrate it. I am truly blessed!

So a belated happy Easter to everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful Easter and have many more to come! Celebrate Easter, celebrate Jesus, celebrate love, celebrate family – Easter is great & we have God to thank!

Life Goes On

There's not a lot to write about in my life. I tend toward things remaining the same in my life, nothing really new that I haven't already mentioned in other writings (back when I used to write...). Still at the same job, doing the same thing, going to church, leading 4th and 5th grades, haven't been in a show since December, still never go out socializing, etc. As retrogaming me I did get two new products toward that end. Well, one has been ordered but not shipped yet as they never emailed me on it. That would be a small bluetooth game controller called the Zeemote that I understand actually works with my phone. You see, my phone has crippled bluetooth (oddly by HTC, not AT&T) that doesn't allow most game

controllers to function. People have bought and used Wiimotes with Android, but any phones like mine that use HTC Sense cannot use this and other controllers. In fact the one I ordered won't work as a controller, but as a generic input device that replaces the touch keyboard. As such, it has to be enabled only when used, then turned off when done so the touch keyboard will work again. Oh, well. The other item I ordered and have been using is a Supercard DSTwo for my DSi. This allows me to play older games on the DS, though it lacks good Atari and Genesis emulators, and some emulators don't exist at all like Intellivision and Atari 5200/7800. Of course newer devices like Playstation, Saturn, N64 and later generations can't be reasonably emulated on the DS.

So, other things? I have my eye set on a musical production called Noah next fall (same group as Wonderful Life), or if not MoS will be doing Dracula the Musical, another co-production with another group like they just did for Jesus Christ Superstar. Six weekends- wow. I just went to see it today- it actually wasn't that bad. I think they toned down the original to make it less disrespectful of our Lord and Savior, but there were still a few of those elements there. I suppose there is only so much one can do without starting to rewrite it. It's a little surprising though that they did anything at all, not being a Christian group. Do either of my readers happen to know if there are character roles in Dracula besides the title role? I fully expect that role to go to their resident lead. I suppose I am not a romantic lead type in any event, which is part of the role, in a way. Still, he is part character like Jekyll and Hyde (same writer by the way) so who knows? Maybe the lead will be busy with other things.

On a similar note, can anyone see me as Archibald in Secret Garden? That's a role I still want to do at some point if the show isn't completely dead. There's also Les Mis, but there is truly small hope in that show for the foreseeable future.

No More Truth, Justice, &

the AMERICAN way.” In [Action Comics #900](#), the Man of Steel renounces his U.S. citizenship to embark upon a more global “neverending battle”. Quite a milestone in the 72 year life of the superhero who was sent to Earth from a doomed planet, raised in America’s heartland by a kindly midwestern farm family who would instill within their adopted son the morals and ethics which would become his greatest weapons, and finally become the World’s Finest while disguised as a mild mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper. Flight, near invincibility, X-ray vision, and all the rest could be used for other things than engaging the likes of Lex Luthor, Doomsday, and Bizzaro if not raised in a loving environment.

Yes, I know that opinion could be debated infinitum but still...

In other Super-related news, Brandon Routh (rhymes with *south*) and Sam Huntington who played Superman and Jimmy Olsen, respectively in *Superman Returns* are teaming up in a new zombie-hunting film. Routh plays detective Dylan Dog in the aptly titled *Dylan Dog: Dead of Night*. Judge for yourself, but it looks like the curse may have claimed its latest victim.

12 Days & Counting...

Until my first recital! I cannot believe that I have never been a part of one and I am really excited! When I arrived at my rehearsal place, K reminded the young Herman lass (who is the student ahead of me) of this. As I made my way over to the piano, I was asked if I was going to be sitting for my piece or if I was going to go all out. The song I have chosen lends itself to a wide range of choreographed bits; to sing it while sitting would be doing myself and most importantly the song a great disservice. So yes, I will be adding movement to the piece. After going through the selection once with some of the movements I have been brainstorming, my partner in crime arrived to much fanfare and relief, Last week, poor Ca got stuck driving to rehearsal. Need not have worried because she fit the bill tremendously.

Actually, I did better practicing the song with the movement than sitting anyway. Just need the freedom of the stage to enhance them. The limited practice space did not lend itself well to BIG, THEATRICAL movement!

Just need to ask how many friends and family I am allowed to invite. Hope it is not like the *Brady Bunch* episode in which poor Cindy has to decide whether to give her one and only ticket to Mommy or Daddy to her starring role as the Fairy Princess. I don't think I have to worry too much about that.

No Italian this week although I was handed a few pieces to look at in the coming weeks.

Only One Can Live

Here is... the official trailer for the most anticipated movie of the summer. While there will be other blockbuster films this summer (*Thor* and *Green Lantern* are also on my list so far) none of been as long awaited as the final chapter in the Harry Potter series. The closing of the first part of *The Deathly Hallows* only increased my excitement. The Blu-Ray disc features an opening scene of the finale. The trailer premiered last night on television and previewed some of my favorite scenes from the books and they look amazing.

Another inspiration from a friend

While traversing through the world of Facebook this morning I came across a status that got me thinking again. Thanks!!

How do you know when you've met the "one"?

Now I came back with my first rough answer, but the question got me thinking. Once this started I knew that i would have a blog post by some time this evening.

First let's start with the meaning of the "one". Most people would take that to be a life partner. Someone you could spend the rest of your days with. Usually people have the underlying thought that this should be a good relationship. And one would think that with a name such as "the one", it would be a fairly rare occurrence. It has to be hard to find "the one", doesn't it? I certainly hope not, and I don't think so.

So just what is required? From my experience, I think you have to be open to finding a relationship. You may or may not be actively looking, but you have to be actively open to one. I think this is the hardest thing to do, because to really be open, you have to give a little more of yourself if you ever expect to find a relationship. The people you are looking for the relationship with also have to be open to one. Finding out who those people are can also be a difficult task.

So, you've taken that first step. You decided to give it a go. You find someone you are interested in, and it seems like they are interested in you. Is that the one? Maybe. Yes, maybe! Right from the start? Yes, right from that very first meeting. BUT (notice that is a big but), you need to take the time to

learn about each other. How much time depends on a lot of things, but it could be days, months or years. Yes, it can and does vary that much.

How do you know, when is it apparent? I think that all happens when BOTH (see the highly important both here?) of you can answer the following questions with a big YES.

1) Can we talk about anything? No subject is taboo? Are you comfortable when conversing on all subjects?

This one is a big deal. If you can't open up in a conversation, can you open up in other areas?

2) Do similar interests? Do you have fun doing the same things?

Basically asking are you compatible in life.

3) Do you have different interests? Are you willing to share or accept the differences? Are you willing to let each other have the time for activities outside of what you do together?

How bad are your green-eyed monsters. Jealousy destroys many relationships.

4) Are you willing to die for each other? Are you both willing to put the other first?

Just asking, how much are you willing to give. If you're not willing to give everything you have, I don't feel you found your "One". I don't mean you have to die for each other, but the willingness needs to be there.

Good, fulfilling relationships are about giving and receiving. Not give and take. Each person gives to the best of their ability and resources. Each person receives in kind. There should never be an expectation of getting something back when you do something for each other. In doing this you find that part of your giving, is making sure that neither gives too much. As with most things in life, balance is very important. When two people decide that they want this kind of relationship, then they have found their "ones".

Now What Do I Do?

The title of this blog post makes me think of the movie Forrest Gump – remember the part where Forrest runs and runs; pretty soon he has a pack of people following him, running with him, and then suddenly he stops and says, “I think I’ll go home now.” The pack of followers is suddenly lost and without purpose. “NOW what do we do!”

That’s kind of how I feel now that I’ve finished the masterpiece novel I was reading, Under the Dome by Stephen King. This book was a page-turner from start to finish, all 1000+ pages of it, and it’s one of those books that’s so good it sends the reader into withdrawal once they’ve finished the story. Not helping is the fact that I’m sick, and the only good part of being sick (if there is a good part of being sick) is curling up with a good book. But now I’ve finished my good book. I’m reading two others, but they’re not the same type of book.

One additional note about Under the Dome: I learned before I had read too far into the novel that they were making it into a tv mini-series, and as the novel progressed, I kept wondering how that would work given the book’s adult themes and graphic violence. Now that I’ve finished the book, I felt comfortable doing a google search on it since I didn’t have to worry about the ending being spoiled (don’t worry, I’m not going to do that to you – not when I recommend it so highly for you to read for yourself; it’s really very good!). Here I learned that it is indeed being turned into a tv mini-series – for **cable** tv. That makes more sense, and I will have to find a way to get my hands on it when it comes out; maybe that will help cure my withdrawal!



Florida 2011 – Trip Diary – Part 3

Tuesday January 18 – We began the day at Sizzler's breakfast buffet, again. If you are noticing a pattern, you won't be surprised to see this in the diary for pretty much every day of the week. The prices there were great (\$3.99 per adult and kids were free!), the food wasn't bad, and it left our group full enough to sustain us until mid-afternoon, which saved us a lot of money. Today was Epcot day, and it was a great day – the sun finally came out, and the temp was in the low 70s. We rode the usual favorites, and we got to take our daughter Disney on my favorite Epcot ride Soarin' for the first time because she was finally tall enough – and she liked it! Epcot has a World Showcase which is an area set up like different countries, so we took the ferry to Germany and walked to Japan for their delicious snow cones. We walked around the lake through Morocco and Italy, and stopped in Norway and Mexico for their boat rides which are very cool. Someday I would like to visit the countries in Epcot, sampling the ethnic foods as I go – but that's more of a retirement plan since the kids would never go for that now! Oh, and we ran into Stitch in America!



After the day at Epcot, we sent the little ones home with Grandma, and Hubby, Jamy and I attempted to find a good place to eat dinner, but to our surprise, there weren't many good dinner choices left at 10pm, even in Orlando. We ended up at Perkins – famished – and they were out of most everything I asked for. I stomached the sandwich I got, which wasn't very good, and Hubby was not too happy with his salad. We did end up with a box of Eclairs to go, and those were pretty good – well, what little of them we had anyway once the kids got a hold of them. Our friend Derek arrived that night while we were sleeping, so our next day would see one more joining our group..

Wednesday January 19 – Breakfast at Sizzler (did you think I was exaggerating about eating there every day?), then on to the Magic Kingdom where we spent a fun-filled day. We learned that there is an expansion planned and under construction to double the size of Fantasyland, so we are looking forward to seeing that on a future visit. Splashwater Falls was undergoing maintenance (usually does in January when we go, but this is a small price to pay for ideal weather and low crowds – BEST time to visit Orlando!!), but we enjoyed the classics like Big Thunder Mountain Railroad (and little Disney liked this one, even though it is a roller coaster!), Jungle Cruise, Haunted Mansion, Pirates of the Caribbean, and Hubby's and my personal favorite that many others find to be lame, The Carousel of Progress. We skipped out on Space Mountain this time, mainly because the kids wouldn't have liked it, and we don't find that its long wait it worth it for a herky-jerky

outdated roller coaster. If you are into indoor roller coasters in the dark, I've always liked the Aerosmith one at Disney's MGM, er, Hollywood Studios, although we never find that park worth the time for a visit since there isn't much there. And [King's Island](#) in Mason Ohio outside of Cincinnati has a SUPER dark coaster called Flight of Fear. But back in Orlando, the People Mover ride in the Magic Kingdom, an elevated train-type ride that goes all around Tomorrowland, treated us to a one-of-a-kind glimpse inside Space Mountain – *with the lights on!!* The People Mover travels into the Space Mountain building, but usually you can only see the glowing streaks of the ride trains as they zip past. Because of a ride malfunction, the lights in the building were on, so we got an insider's view of all the tracks and trains which was pretty cool!! After the Magic Kingdom, Derek, Chris and I took the two oldest kids to Fun Spot to try the extreme go-karts, but it didn't go over so well. The oldest hated them, and she made me go putt-putt-putt all the way up the spiral and around the track – that was not fun; I'm more pedal-to-the-metal! But we all took a spin on the bumper cars, and that was some great old-fashioned family fun that everyone was able to enjoy.

Thursday January 20 – Breakfast at Sizzler (every day – told ya!), then on to our second day at Universal, this time with Derek, although we lost one because by now, Jamy's back pain was so bad that he had to stay in the rental house and relax all day. Thankfully it did not rain this time, and we had a wonderful day. It was a bit chilly, but we couldn't resist the urge to ride Bluto's Barges 3 (or was it 4? I can't remember) times in a row – we were drenched! Smarter ones in our group (Derek and Grandma) opted to stay out and stay dry, but those of us who got off soaked (and shivered) had a blast. It's a large round boat that's propelled down a raging river of rapids; every time it dips, the riders on that side get drenched by a wave that cascades over the wall of the boat. Then there are waterfalls and waterspouts – it's so

much fun to bond with the strangers in your boat as you take turns laughing over who gets soaked and who dodges the torrents of water – whether everyone speaks English or not, there is bonding in the boat! Next it was on to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, and I think I talked about this earlier in this diary – it's amazing; that's all I need to repeat. We went on the Forbidden Journey ride again, this time with Derek, and he really liked it. Unfortunately, they decided that Sammie had shrunk an inch or two since Monday, and she no longer met the height requirement, so she had to wait in the child swap room – which is actually quite entertaining because they have the old Harry Potter movies playing, and I had forgotten how young Harry Potter (actor Daniel Radcliffe) was when the movies began.

After Universal, we went to the McDonald's largest Playplace where the kids had a blast. Grandma stayed with them while Hubby, Derek and I went to the Titanic attraction I've always wanted to see. Unfortunately, our adventure was a bit marred when Hubby was pulled over and ticketed for U-turn in a No U-turn intersection. In our opinion, it should have been a warning – clearly we were tourists, it was an honest mistake, he didn't do it when there was oncoming traffic present so no one was in direct danger, and of the 3 people in the car, not one of us saw the (supposed) no U-turn sign. Personally, I think Orlando should treat their tourists a little more like the guests that they are, especially considering how much money the average tourist brings into their local economy. Also, they seemed to milk us for every penny – the ticket itself was very expensive, and because we were from out of town, we couldn't even show up to traffic court and contest the ticket, not to mention that when we returned home, we were bombarded with offers of traffic school via mail, which showed that they were looking for even more money by selling our info to these traffic schools so they could bombard us with ads. A frustrating episode in our otherwise super vacation, but that's enough – traffic ticket tangent over!

So back to the Titanic exhibit... I've always wanted to see it,

but it's quite pricey, and we were always nervous about spending so much on trying something new that we didn't even know would be worth the cost or not. So enter Groupon – before we left, there was a Groupon for Titanic, and we got it. It kind of obligated us to fitting this in since we already had tickets, but with the money we saved on Groupon, it was worth it. And, we even made it on time, getting pulled over and all! Upon entry, each visitor gets a little card with the name and info of a Titanic passenger, and one of the rooms at the end of the tour has a wall with all the names of the passengers on it. The lights go down, and the names of the passengers who survived stay bold while the names of those who perished are hollow, so you can see if “your” passenger made it. Mine survived, which I had guessed correctly because she had been a first class passenger. Our tour guide (portraying the famous Titanic personality “Unsinkable” Molly Brown) was very knowledgeable about all things Titanic, but our friend Derek's passenger card stumped her – the name on his card was half-solid, half-hollowed, so we don't know if he made it through the ill-fated voyage or not. But overall, it was a lot of fun, and a well spent hour or two. I've always been a Titanic buff (excluding the movie which I feel really commercialized, cheapened, and capitalized on the tragedy and the great loss of life involved – enough about that), so this museum was right up my alley. There were re-creations to see and explore (a first class cabin, the deck, which they had even chilled to provide an example of the actual temperature that night, and the grand staircase, see picture below), as well as actual artifacts recovered from the bottom of the ocean, like dishes. There was room after room of signs to read and pictures to look at, and as much as I don't like the movie, they even had a few costumes and props from it which were interesting to see. Among my favorite parts of the exhibit: the hall of newspapers, which had newspaper editions reporting the disaster in 1912 from all over the country, complete with early 20th century advertisements and other news articles.

I also found this quite remarkable: it was an ordinary cooler, and the exploration staff autographed it and put it down at the bottom of the ocean where the Titanic now lies. I forgot how long it was there, but it's not nearly as long as the remains of the ship have been there, and this is what the ocean pressure did to it:



Interesting as it may be, it is a sad representation of what will happen to the remains of the luxury liner itself. Scientists estimate that it won't last more than 50 additional years if people don't find a way to salvage it and bring it up for study.



Hubby and I in front of the actual sized re-creation of the Titanic's Grand Staircase

After Titanic, we stopped at Dippin' Dots, but it was our only taste of the delicious ice creamish treat for this trip, and I was SO disappointed to find out they discontinued my favorite

flavor of Dippin' Dots: Root Beer Float. □