

So tired

I think my lack of any exercise this winter has caught up to me. I am having a very hard time sleeping lately. I will go to bed, usually at a reasonable hour, and I'll be able to fall asleep, but then throughout the night I will constantly wake up, then lay in a state of semiconsciousness for a bit, finally fall asleep and start dreaming again, then the process will repeat for several times during the night until I finally get up still exhausted.

I found a site that gave some tips and people seem to have had good luck with keeping a window cracked open for fresh air so I will try that tonight along with turning my fan on. Yes, even though the outside temperature is under 40 degrees. For the long term I guess I will have to start walking more and see if that keeps things under control. I've already told people in my church small group so they will be praying for me as well. Between all of these, emphasis on the prayer, I should be back to normal eventually. I really hope I don't have sleep apnea- I understand my dad had it. If I have developed it then these little cures won't really help. Except for the prayer of course. Well, I'm going to keep this short so I can get to bed sooner. Goodnight...

A Family Easter

With 3 wonderful kids, how could we not have a good Easter? We started by coloring eggs on Saturday afternoon, and it went so well that I even bought a spare coloring kit at the easter clearance sales today, figuring we can do it again in a few weeks. If colored eggs will entice the kids to eat them, then

coloring eggs doesn't only have to be for Easter, I say! Actually, we started our Easter celebration with a visit to the Easter Bunny at the mall on Friday. There was no line, but at those prices, I can see why! But I begged Hubby to buy me a picture of the girls with the Easter Bunny and said it could be my Mother's Day present this year because when we went to do our community egg hunt (candy clean-up), the batteries on the camera died before we could get a picture with the Easter Bunny. It's just something I like to do every year along with taking pictures with Santa because it's a good way to get them all to sit down together and track how they grow from year to year.

So anyway, back to hiding eggs... I got so tired on Saturday night that I forgot to play Easter Bunny and hide the eggs (can hard-boiled eggs even stay out of the fridge overnight?), but I woke up a little on the way up to bed and did remember to set the alarm. Except that when it went off Sunday morning, we heard the kids were already up, so Hubby and I scrambled downstairs and hid everything in a hurry so we wouldn't get caught. And we had to leave our dogs outside during the hunt, otherwise they would do some easter egg hunting of their own! And of course – every year this happens somehow – there was the one egg that slipped away somehow only to be lost until weeks later when its rotten smell gives away its hiding place. But, learning from the past, we counted how many eggs we had hidden and didn't give up until the lost egg was found! Overall, it was a GREAT Easter. The kids did have some candy comedown, but that is to be expected. Disney – she is 17 mos. – woke up today by asking for candy for breakfast. I think they'll get back to normal soon... just in time to get candy at the summer parades coming up! Hope everyone had a wonderful Easter and were able to share in the love of family and friends!

New Must See TV

Now... I have another show to look forward to on Thursday nights (one of the few evenings on which I actually find enjoyable shows). [The Office](#) is a hilarious mockumentary based upon a British series. It concerns the everyday workings of the Dunder-Mifflin Paper company. The ensemble cast is awesome. Steve Carell plays the regional manager, Michael Scott. Rainn Wilson plays Dwight, assistant to the regional manager, . John Krasinski portrays salesman Jim. Jenna Fischer is seen as long suffering receptionist Pam Beasley. Finally, B.J. Novak plays Ryan the temp.

I was lucky enough to become acquainted with the show the other night and tried hard to hold my laughter in as some children were trying to go to sleep so the Easter Bunny would come, but at times it was nearly impossible. I saw the first three episodes of the series in which the characters are introduced.

All three episodes were hilarious, but I would have to say that I enjoyed the health-care segment most. Michael is ordered to choose a new health care package for his staff which will dramatically cut the one already in place. He decides to delegate the responsibility to his assistant. Dwight chooses a plan that is so bad that Michael hides in his office to escape the employee's anger. Michael also attempts to ease the tension by promising a surprise which turns out to be ice cream sandwiches.

Also memorable was a faux-Punked scene in which Pam believes that she has become the victim of downsizing. I also loved the diversity-integration meeting. So much great stuff in only 3 episodes. Unfortunately, it was getting too late before I was

able to see all 6 episodes of season 1. Steve Carell is phenomenal as the jerky but hilarious leader of this fine ensemble. New episodes begin April 10 on NBC. Is Thursday night still known as "Must See TV on NBC?"

THERE'S NO NEED TO FEAR...

This afternoon after attending Easter services and eating our huge dinner, the kids gathered around the big television to watch what any red-blooded American child would... *Underdog* (ok... so perhaps not that many). I was pleasantly surprised by the live-action version of the cartoon I remember watching as a child. It remained fairly faithful to the cartoon rekindling enough memories for the old and being fun for the young ones who probably do not remember the television series.

A bomb-sniffing beagle is released from the police force after he mistakenly sniffs out a ham instead of a bomb. While roaming the streets, the dog is captured by the evil scientist Dr. Simon Barsinister and is injected with a serum which gives him amazing superpowers. The dog escapes and becomes the pet of a security guard (played by Jim not John Belushi) and his teenage son, Jack and is given the name Shoeshine.

After discovering Shoeshine's powers, Jack decides to keep the secret to himself and convinces the reluctant pooch to use his powers to help those in distress. However as *Underdog* begins his exploits of daring-do, Simon and his henchman Cad continue to hunt for the beagle to use in their own sinister plot.

Ok... while it may not be the most ambitious movie ever made, *Underdog* did keep 7 children occupied for 90 minutes. It also had many tie-ins to the cartoon (Shoeshine, Sweet Polly Purebred voiced by *Enchanted's* Amy Adams, Simon Barsinister

and his sidekick Cad, and Riff-Raff who was voiced by Brad Garrett). It was far better than what I expected. It also had a nice nod to another Disney animated film. Underdog and Sweet Polly's first date was reminiscent of Lady and the Tramp's spaghetti dinner (down to the single meatball).

Still More Mini-Golf

In case you haven't read the comments at the end of my Mini-Golf – The Sequel! post, I talked about how much I didn't like the new version I had posted because it was obscenely difficult. The first version was simplistic and easy to play after some practice. The second version I got (which was evidently the 3rd version of the game) turned out to be way too difficult, and the added complications (sandtraps, water) made the game lose part of its charm. Unfortunately, I did not play the game before I posted the link, so that's why I had to comment on it. I suggest you give it a try if you like these computer mini-golf games though, I did appreciate the "bounciness" of the ball off the walls. But, if you're like me, and you think the second game (3rd version) I posted was way too difficult to enjoy, then give this one a try also:

<https://www.gigarcade.com/full-744-Forest-Challenge-2.html>

[swf]https://www.gigarcade.com/swf/20754.swf[/swf]

It has some sand and water traps, but it also has the "bounce-back" reaction of the ball, and the slope grades are depicted in such a way that you can actually tell the difference between them. I think I may have noticed a scoring glitch in the game though. If there's no glitch, then I am very good at this and scored a 3 ☐

Watch out for hole #18 – it's a par 8, so that should tell you something!

Betcha I've Seen Shutter More Than You!

Not that it's anything to brag about, but I saw the new movie [Shutter](#) not once, but twice this weekend! It was pretty good, if you like movies like [The Ring](#) and [The Grudge](#). There are a few other movies people say Shutter is like, but I haven't seen them. It did remind me a lot of The Ring – they were both super-natural ghost stories. I should have known I'd like it, at least that I'd like it better than [Doomsday](#), because the guy who gave Doomsday an "A" rating on [movies.com](#) gave Shutter a "D"! I'm starting to think he's a moron. I gave you the quote he made about Doomsday in a previous post of mine; he talked about how great all the violence was, yada, yada, so just to prove his idiocy, here is a snippet of what he thought of Shutter:

"As unfrightening PG-13 horror films go, this unfrightening PG-13 horror film is the most unfrightening of the year. It's even more unfrightening than [The Eye](#), which featured such unfrightening scenes as [Jessica Alba](#) yelling into an oven. This one has unfrightening scenes of [Joshua Jackson](#) sitting in a chair. Okay, there is one jumpy moment. That happens when Joshua Jackson turns around really fast in that chair. All the 11 year-olds in the audience went, "AUUGGH!" when that part happened. So if you're 11, then that part is really going to freak you out."

So according to the movies.com review guy, a movie is not good

or scary if it doesn't have at least 3 decapitations, exploding animals, and some cannibalism. Whatever. He does have a point though – the 11-year-old in the theater with us was scared silly – which brings me to the reason we saw it twice in one day...

Grandma was in town for a visit. Despite the impending snow storm (again), she was able to travel the 200+ miles to see her grandchildren, thank goodness. Who would have believed that we'd have to deal with Grandma almost having to cancel her spring break trip to Ohio because of still more SNOW! Thank you, Grandma, for taking the time and energy it took to come early to ensure the special time you were able to spend with the girls wasn't ruined by yet another snow storm. So anyway, with Grandma being in town, that left Hubby and I with a whole afternoon and evening to ourselves! Snowstorm or not, we were going to make the most of it... So we saw a matinee of Shutter, which we enjoyed. It wasn't scary, comes no where close to the creepiness of The Ring, but it was entertaining, and it saved itself from getting unbearably cheesy several times... A lot of the reviewers didn't like it, but I think they're just sick of the whole PG13-Asian-horror-movie-remake genre. As a side effect of the PG13 rating, during our matinee, there were obnoxious teenagers in the theater. Their laughing and running up and down the aisles wasn't totally obscene, but it did take away from some of the enjoyment of a horror movie. When they left the movie at the end, they had a younger boy with them who looked scared beyond belief. I think maybe all the laughing and whatnot was because they were actually really nervous and scared. So, when we explained their antics to the movie theater manager, they were completely understanding and told us we could go ahead and see it again. I didn't really catch anything that I missed the first time (except for one itty bitty scene where I dozed yet again), but it was fun to watch a horror movie again that no one else in the theater had seen yet because it was its first day out in the theaters – you knew when the scary parts were

coming and could watch the whole theater jump and gasp.

If you are a fan of the PG13-Asian-horror-movie-remake genre, I think you'll like Shutter. If not, it might not be what you're looking for in a movie, unless you're between the ages of 14-23.

Happy Easter!, continued

I just wanted to get that Godtube video up before continuing writing. I can't believe it's been three days since my last post (not counting the first Easter post of course!). Well, yesterday was a busy day. Friday was, well, Good Friday. Like a Good Friday should be, it was a very dreary day outside- snowing for most of the day. After shoveling (for the last time until next winter I hope!) I headed out to the church.

The service that day was like a tour. The first stop of this "tour" was worship time. They basically played a loop of songs. From the bulletin we were given, it looked like they played the same five or six songs over and over for the five hours (with periodic breaks of just instrumental music). I hope they switched off bands throughout the night- playing the same songs for five hours straight would be kind of grueling.

Anyway, the songs would prepare our hearts for the next part of the "tour", which we could skip to at any time. This part had signs and card packets all around telling us why Christ had to die. There was even a projected image of this on the wall. There were many, many reasons along with Bible verses supporting each reason. I think I read maybe half of them as I walked through.

Next was a meditation area where we would see constant changing images of Christ's "trial" and execution. This actually wasn't working for some reason when I arrived, but they finally got the projectors going before I moved on. Step four of the our had us write our own sins and nail them to a large wooden cross. There was a long wait for this as there were I think only two or three hammers. We could also leave the cards in a basket at the foot of the cross.

The final stage was communion. We would go in the room, grab our own bread (small cracker) and wine (grape juice) and take some time to reflect, pray, and take in the two elements all on our own time. All in all it was a very somber mood throughout the evening, befitting of a day like Good Friday.

Saturday I was at the church after 1:30 (supposed to be at 1:30, but as usual I was late) for choir rehearsal. The worship music the day before had been somber, but the Easter music we had been practicing was anything but. Where Good Friday was a time of reflection, Easter is a celebration! We actually did very well according to several people. It was a **lot** of singing- not just the four special songs we were doing as a choir, but five worship songs as well. It was near constant singing from almost the time I got there on Saturday until after 5:30, and again today. The well-wishers' critiques must have been spot on as our time to be there this morning was pushed from 7AM to 7:25, but it was still a bit grueling with so much singing- two services plus the rehearsal (similar to what felt like two rehearsals last night plus the service). I was actually supposed to sing at the end Saturday night (about 6:25ish) but I felt I was needed in the children's ministry as there was only one leader besides another choir member and myself there, and the other choir member went back down to sing the final song. I was able to sing this song the two Sunday services however.

So here we are, voice resting for now. I really should practice singing more often. My voice held out this time, but

there have been times in the past where my endurance didn't last through all the services. I remember particularly from when there were **four** services at one time before the second campus opened and many people went there instead. That one extra performance turned out to be a killer of my voice. But I don't sing in the choir all for me. It's about giving back to God. He gave me this talent, so it's only right to use it to give some back to Him.

Once again, HAPPY RESURRECTION DAY!!!

Happy Easter!

Okay, trying to make people say Resurrection Day instead of Easter is just pointless. If you'd like, Happy Resurrection Day! The celebration of Jesus Christ's victory over death is upon us once again! Hallelujah! No, I wasn't calling you over, Hallelujah (private joke: there is a boy named Hallelujah in one of the classes I teach). Now that you're finished cheering, I have a Godtube video to share. Godtube is like Youtube (ya think?) only it's all about Christ. My pastor showed a video in church a few weeks ago that really shows using dance/drama what God's love is all about. He loves us so much He went through the humiliation of becoming a man and the pain and suffering of becoming a sacrifice- *the* sacrifice for us. Anyway, on to the video. Let me see if this works...

<edit> Nope. I guess we can't embed videos- hey C, any way we can turn this feature on? like embed, target = _blank also gets cut out of the code when trying to make a link open in a new window. Anyway, here's the link:

[godtube]https://www.godtube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=ee73e63418003b47d7d5[/godtube]

Can You Feel The Love This Morning?

Last night's excursion to Too-lee-doo was full of thrills, chills and did I mention I saw The Lion King? Getting there and enjoying the breathtaking splendor of live theatre was great, getting back was another story entirely. I will concentrate on the show and leave the adventure getting home for another time.

As I noted in a previous blog, the stage production of Lion King includes several songs which were not in the movie. Some of these include: Morning Report, Endless Night, and Shadowland. My favorite new song has always been Endless Night. It is sung by Simba in Act II. It is a beautiful soliloquy in which the lion struggles to decide whether or not to return to the Pride Lands and fight for the throne which is rightfully his or stay and remain hidden in his new life of Hakuna Matata.

Aside from the new songs, everything about seeing the masterpiece on stage is brilliant. The puppetry used to personify several characters (towering giraffes, leopards, antelope, and countless other animals) must have taken hours to design and be implemented. The choreography is stunning. Perhaps even more spectacular is the use of African-style chant to enhance the atmosphere. My companions and I were curious as to the English translation for the lyrics. Also of interest was the number of African natives who made up members of the cast. Surely some degree of pride must be felt among them as they sing words native to their homeland.

I would HIGHLY recommend taking the entire family to see this

excellent production. One or two of the scenes may be a bit intense for the very young; however, if they have ever seen the movie , it is no more intense than what is seen in it. There were several children in the audience (perhaps no younger than 5) with looks of utter awe and wonder. It is a great way to introduce the whole family to the spectacular world of live theatre..

I May Be Smarter Than But I Am Not A Better Gamer Than A 5th Grader

Tonight I had the privilege(?) of watching my brother's three children (ages 3, 9, & 12). Pretty wild until about 8 o'clock when I stated that it would be silent while we watched "Smallville" after playing the Wii. I did pretty well but got my brains beat in by a 5th grader playing Super Smash Brothers Brawl. This is DEFINATELY NOT my Super Mario Brothers game. Speaking of getting beaten by a 5th grader., I allowed the two oldest tykes to stay up and watch "Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?" This is a very fun show with America's redneck, Jeff Foxworthy, serving as host. Tonight's first contestant was a very pregnant female who seemed to draw inspiration by rubbing her belly. I hate true or false questions: "Africa is the only continent where elephants exist naturally in the wild."

Katherine eventually answered enough questions with the help of 3 of the five 5th grade students to win \$50,000. The second contestant did not fare as well. The orange grower needed help on his first three questions. If not for the assistance of two 11 year olds, Vince would have been one of the poor, unfortunate souls who left the show with zip, zero, nada.

“How many times does the letter z appear in the word (lizard)?” Vince’s answer: 2. Two other equally challenging questions followed. The orange man did however manage to go home with \$25,000. All in all a comparatively calm night to some I have had with the three little darlings. Since spring break begins tomorrow, I do not think big brother would mind the kids staying up one hour past their bedtime. Who knows when he will return from his poker game?