

The Office and The Anniversary

Our wedding anniversary is coming up – this year marks #9! – and there’s a pretty cool gift we get this year: the first new Office episode in months! Steve Carell gave an interview with TvGuide, and said that his character Michael Scott is hosting a dinner party, and it goes terribly awry. If you know anything about the show, then you know how hilarious this will be and are looking forward to it as much as we are. So on April 10, check out the first brand new Office episode since the writer’s strike saga!

And that reminds me, on April 10, 2009, we are hopefully going to have the time and resources to put together a “second wedding” for our tenth anniversary. We didn’t know any of our Ohio friends when we got married way back in ’99, so we’d like to renew our vows and “get married” all over again in Ohio, 10 years later! And, luckily for us, April 10, 2009 falls on a Friday! So, this year we will be watching the Office. Next year, we will be “getting married” again, hopefully!

Nothing today

I was home for most of the day (AM only job) but even so I don’t have anything to write right now. Sorry. Until tomorrow then.

The Wedding Singer

Yep, that is me. I've probably done five and will be doing my sixth on March 29th. The first was for my cousin about 10 years ago. I sang at my 2 brother's weddings (one of which is divorced) and my sister's (who is separated (wow... scary thought only 1 out of three is still married)). Then I sang for another cousin's ceremony. Last night, the organist and I met to go over what I am expected to sing on the 29th. Most of the songs I have done before... more or less traditional wedding songs (The Rose, Sunrise Sunset, One Hand One Heart, and Theme from Ice Castles (Through the Eyes of Love)). When I saw the list, I asked the organist why we were singing so few. We will need to add at least one to the Pre-ceremony list; there were two and I have been known to have as many as five. We must be going to rush those guests into the church in a hurry. Even with the organist playing between the two songs, it would take no more than 10 minutes to get through it all.

As for the songs themselves, I have sung "The Rose" during at least 3 weddings. I have been in two different productions of [Fiddler on the Roof](#), so "Sunrise Sunset" is familiar (but at a Catholic wedding seems strange). "One Hand One Heart" from [West Side Story](#) is about as traditional as "The Bridal March." The Ice Castles theme is probably the most unfamiliar to me but I have been to enough weddings to have heard the piece more than once. I have always wanted to do "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" but maybe for my own. At least they are all in English.

Gas Gouging in NW Ohio – Alive and Well

My fellow Northwest Ohioans, this is a call to action!

Have you noticed that we are being taken advantage of? Yesterday, the national gas price average was \$3.22 / gallon for unleaded. Yet here in NW Ohio, every station in this town had gas for **\$3.39 / gallon**. The price of gas in the Northern suburbs of Chicago has reached \$3.27. We (especially in our family since we have loved ones in that area who we have to watch pay through the nose for EVERYTHING) have always prided ourselves on having lower prices than they have, MUCH lower actually. We used to have gas prices about \$.25 / gallon lower than Chicagoland. This is no longer the case! Their gas is now \$.12 *cheaper* than ours! What will follow? Will we no longer have cheaper food than they have? Will we soon be paying \$10 for a hamburger, have an average restaurant bill of \$30 for lunch for two, movie theater tickets at \$10 each? Where does it end? I can't help but feel the gas stations have called our bluff. We can't boycott them, because let's face it, we're an island. We get to enjoy our relatively crime and pollution free existences because we are so far from the nearest large cities. However, the local gas stations are starting to take advantage of this, because they know it will cost way too much for us to get out of town to get some gas somewhere else. The average price in Toledo yesterday was \$3.22 / gallon , but to get to Toledo, it would cost about \$5-\$10 in gas, depending on your car! And who has time to run to Toledo for gas, anyway? But why is it that Toledo has cheaper gas prices than we do? Everything was always cheaper here... at least it used to be.

I'm just worried about how they will gouge us next. I looked into filing a complaint with the attorney general of Ohio, and their website said to contact the stores first. So I guess

it's only fair that we first let the gas stations know that we're terribly unhappy. I would write to the newspaper here in town also, but they've never printed my letters. Maybe I complain too much? Actually, one letter was very nice thanking the person who turned in my lost wallet with all the money still in it, but they still didn't print it. Anyway, if someone else wants to write to the paper, that'd be great. The more the merrier on this, I say, what could it hurt? Complain to the local gas stations and ask them questions, write to the newspaper, write to the attorney general, anything and everything anyone can do will help. Remember, driving season hasn't even officially started yet, and when it does, the price gouging at the pump will only worsen! Here is a link to the complaint section of the Ohio attorney general's website – it tells you how to fill out a complaint online, and also gives phone numbers and email addresses:

<https://www.ag.state.oh.us/citizen/consumer/complaints.asp>

Please help me – let's do SOMETHING!

Rollbacks Are Extinct!

Just a short little venting post because I made my weekly stop at Walmart today... and not one, not two, but **THREE** price increases awaited me!

1. drawstring kitchen garbage bags – when I started shopping at Walmart in Ohio only 5 years ago, these were \$1.33 / box of 20. Last time I went to Walmart, they were \$2.88 for the same box, and today, they are \$2.98 for the same box that was \$1.33 not more than 5 years ago! That is more than **DOUBLE** the price in 5 years!
2. bananas – when they opened our brand new SuperWalmart a

few years ago, they pretended like the regular price of bananas was a cheap \$.29 / lb. but the truth is, I haven't seen them at that price since! They have gone up and down constantly, and are now a whopping \$.67 / lb – the most expensive bananas I have ever seen and I refuse to pay it! And let's face it, Walmart has the worst looking produce I've ever seen!

3. dryer sheets – before today were \$.88 / box. Today, they decided we should have to pay \$.96 / box. If they go over \$1, I will no longer be getting my dryer sheets at Walmart.

To complete my complaint session, I actually had to email Walmart the other day to complain about their photo service. I used to get all my digital photos made into prints at Walmart because it was cheap and convenient. I would order between \$1-\$10 at a time. Since I have a lot of kids, they (used to) get lots of business from me. But now they won't let me pay for my orders in the store. I like to order the pictures when I take them; sometimes there are only a few at a time. And I refuse to sit there and make teeny weeny charges on my credit card over the internet every few days – it's a bookkeeping nightmare, not to mention how little trust I have in Walmart after all the other crap they always pull.

About the grocery prices, I understand that there is something called inflation, but this is ridiculous! No wonder Walmart has abandoned their "rollback" campaign – rollbacks are extinct!

10,000 B.C. – When Movies

Cost \$3

Oh wait, that was tonight. Seriously. We saw [10,000 B.C.](#) (a new release, no less!) for **\$3 for 2 people!** It was a 5:00 movie at matinee price, plus bring a guest for free night = \$3! Add in our popcorn and pop, and we spent less than \$10 for a new movie at the theater, with popcorn and a drink! Can't beat that! If we didn't live around the corner from the theater, we would have spent more on the gas to get there – more about gas prices in my next post, ugh.

We had heard that 10,000 B.C. was not a very good movie, but the other choices were [Spiderwick Chronicles](#) (which we really liked but have already seen) or [Fool's Gold](#), which I have no desire to see for some reason. 10,000 B.C. was exactly what the previews showed – an adventure movie set way way back into the past. I don't know how accurate it is, but the computer animation depicting early humans (though you forgot this fact given that many of them spoke perfect English) hunting woolly mammoths was pretty good, actually. In the movie, they also used the mammoths as “work horses” to haul blocks to build pyramids, which I didn't know, if this is indeed fact... interesting theory. Though they aren't clear if these are the Great Pyramids of Egypt, which I think were actually started more likely around 3,000 B.C. or after... but I'm no expert, this movie did get me thinking and wanted to research a bunch of stuff. It was neat to see everything interacting together, the early humans and the dwellings they built, the animals, the environment – a great way to envision the past, but it did have me wondering how much is based on scientific fact, like I said. I won't go into the plot, mostly because I sheepishly admit that I couldn't follow it. I didn't get my nap today, and I fell asleep during what were apparently a few pivotal scenes in the movie. But, for \$3, who cares? And don't think that the movie is boring either. I have 3 kids and I'm pregnant, I get very tired and could probably fall asleep

anywhere without that daily nap I've been so lucky to have most days. And I did get to see [The Dark Knight](#) preview, which was pretty cool. I'm not a big fan of the Batman movies – I've only seen 1 and 3, but this one looks really dark and creepy. I think the whole [Heath Ledger](#) (R.I.P.) incident will sell tickets, but the previews might do a little ticket-selling themselves... I can see why they say that role affected him in such a negative way – he looked really scary.

So, if you like lots of fighting; epic battle movies set in the past, or are just an admirer of CGI animation, check out 10,000 B.C. – especially if you can find it for \$1.50 / person!

Baby You Can Drive My Car

Finally, after 7 seasons on the air, American Idol contestants can sing songs from the Lennon/McCartney songbook. Of course, what better way to celebrate the feat of convincing Michael Jackson to allow it (since he owns the rights to the Beatles works) then to have an all Fab Five show. Let me also point out that (IMHO) after seven seasons, the show has lost some of its luster. It is no longer the “must see show” of the week. It is becoming tedious watching Randy say: “It was just awiight fo' me Dawg.” Or Paula exclaim: “You look beautiful” when what she really means is “That was really bad.” Or even Simon bashing the hopefuls. It has all become a bit formulaic.

Two of the performances stood out to me (one good; the other... welllll). The first was a performance of “Let It Be” (the final single released by the Beatles in 1970). Brooke White chose to perform the song while accompanying herself on the piano. It was a truly heart-felt performance.

However, Kristy Lee Cook decided to change the classic "Eight Days a Week" and give it a country flavor. Not only did the judges totally dismiss the brave choice, she will probably be in the bottom three tomorrow night. I am not what one would call a country music aficionado, but it was just a strange rendition.

So while it is becoming a bit tedious, I still do try to catch American Idol when I can. I can actually say I know where Carrie Underwood came from... and she is a country singer.

Half days

These are the bane of my substitute existence, next to holidays. No, I don't mean the days students get off early but rather days where the teacher take off only half a day. It seems I may have three of these this week unless I can find a full day to take their place (I can cancel jobs in two districts via the web) or find a half day job for the other half of the day. The latter almost never happens. As for the first, it can happen but on this side of spring break with the testing going on it is very uncertain. Yet I keep trying.

One of the half days was today, for the afternoon. At least I got to sleep in, but I depend on this income so I really need to work as much as I can. It was for industrial tech, what used to be called "industrial arts" when I was a kid, and "shop" even earlier than that. Naturally with a sub the kids can't do shop, but many times they are allowed to use computers. See, that is the "tech" part, technology. They could be running some sort of modeling or simulation program, or programming a robotic arm. Today one class was working on ifilm projects. All stuff that didn't exist back in the

eighties. We had metals, plastics, and wood. That's it. Now these teachers need to be trained on so much more to do this job. As for the other class (only two today! :)) they clearly were working on a project, probably woodwork, so they got to do some paperwork today. Oh well.

In The Beginning... .

There seems to be a fascination with franchise re-boots in movies today. If memory serves, one of the first was George Lucas' idea of deciding to tell the back story of Darth Vader. While the idea of *Star Wars* Episodes 1-3 seemed good in theory, it failed in many respects.

The plot of the trilogy had more to do with political mumbo-jumbo than actual lightsaber and space battles. It took three movies to explain how a Republic failed and became the Empire of the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Anakin Skywalker's transformation into Darth Vader almost seems like a secondary plot. And don't even get me started on the ridiculous concept of "midichlorians."

The acting seems stuffy in Episodes 1-3. Hayden Christensen's acting style is so wooden and forced that the audience really does not care about Anakin Skywalker. The dialogue makes it sound as if the audience is watching a Shakespearean play instead of the fun, swashbuckling atmosphere of episodes 4-6.

However, there are good moments in the second trilogy. [The Phantom Menace](#) includes a lightsaber duel between Obi-Wan Kenobi, his mentor Qui-Gon Ginn, and the evil Sith Lord Darth Maul. By the time [Attack of the Clones](#) came about, enough technology had been created to allow Yoda to become more than a mere puppet and engage in his own lightsaber fight. Finally,

[Revenge of the Sith](#) features the climactic battle between Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker.

On a side note, the title *Revenge of the Sith* is a nod to the title which Episode 6 was to be. *Revenge of the Jedi* was to be the title of the final movie. At the last minute after posters, advertisements, and merchandise had already been created, George Lucas decided that a Jedi does not seek revenge. Therefore, the title was changed to [Return of the Jedi](#). *Star Wars* collectors must have a field day looking for and selling these rare pieces of memorabilia on [ebay](#) and at conventions.

While both trilogies are among the most popular movies in history, the redemption of Anakin Skywalker as seen in episodes 4-6 are much more imaginative than the newer films. However, if you are a *Star Wars* purist and want to know how and why Darth Vader came to be then you should watch the newer films which are the first in the timeline of the series...
WOOLY SHEEP!!! MORAT CONFUSING SELF!!!!!!

Awake... but I should have been asleep

Last night's movie was called [Awake](#), and it starred [Jessica Alba](#) and [Hayden Christensen](#). When I first saw Jessica Alba, I was not looking forward to seeing the movie, and I don't know why. It's not like I've seen anything else with her in it, but for some reason, I was under the impression that I didn't like her as an actress. I think it might be an interview I saw with her on the Tyra Banks show – she came across as self-absorbed and dumb, and then the whole pregnant-out-of-wedlock

thing doesn't score her many points either... Anyway, surprisingly, she was not the weak link in the movie. It was the script. The movie had tons of accuracy flaws, and I really don't want to spoil it for you in case you'd like to waste your time on it, but let's just say the movie was kind of pointless. It's about a young man who has a heart condition and must undergo a heart transplant. When they put him under anesthesia, he does not fall asleep but instead overhears the doctors plotting his murder. There actually is more to the plot, at least they pretend there is, and there are some so-called twists and turns that anyone with any movie watching experience can see coming from a mile away. Aside from the unbelievability of the plot – and I'm not talking about staying awake during surgery; according to the movie's tagline, it's actually more common than you'd like to think – I'm talking about when this guy is getting his surgery, his "spirit" is walking around the hospital experiencing flashbacks. It's just dumb and ridiculous. Anyway, aside from the unbelievability of the plot, I have to share what the dumbest part about the whole movie is. And I'm going to risk spoiling the movie for you, so if you might see this movie, stop reading now. But I just have to say what the dumbest thing about the whole movie is: there is no point to the main character's overhearing his murder plot! His mother, while waiting for his surgery to be completed, overhears everything anyway, the cops are called, yada, yada! I still don't consider watching this movie a waste of time – it's really difficult for me to say that about a movie. It was only 84 minutes long, and one of the rewards of watching the movie was seeing [Christopher McDonald](#) (aka Shooter McGavin from [Happy Gilmore](#)) as an alcoholic doctor who is too oblivious to stop the murder plot. But I would much rather see him for the 100th time as Shooter any day – I would suggest you don't waste your time with Awake, and go for something with more substance instead – like Happy Gilmore! That sounds like a joke, but this movie was so bad, it's really not that funny – Happy Gilmore is a much better movie

in my opinion!