

And thoughts turn to spring

This past weekend was the start of actual baseball Spring training games. As a moderately avid fan, I take a bit of interest in these early games. It makes no difference as to the win or the lose portion at this point in time. i just like to see if it looks like my favorite teams will have a good year or not.

Too early to tell yet. Starting pitchers are still stretching out. First the 2 inning games, then maybe 3 innings, ect. Starters from the year before will get a couple of at bats before they are taken out to see the younger 'talent'. It is at this time of the year, when you can see possible future hall of famers work out with the big league squads. You also see the veterans trying for one more shot at making a big league team.

I've been told, but have yet to experience, that spring training is a fan's wonderland. The players are accessible, and tickets to games are inexpensive. Some camps even have open training sessions.

Someday I will make that journey. I will head south in the later parts of February to March. Maybe I will watch a game or two, or just spend a day walking around a ball field. A day in the sun, visiting a bit of spring in the fading days of winter.

Drifter

I really like this song our church worship band has been playing lately. Enjoy Drifter:

Truly Divine Intervention

The past few days have been a big ol' slap in the face, whack over the head, ice water thrown in your face. Monday morning, I got out of the shower and noticed that my left leg was swollen to twice the size of my right. I had a doctors appt made to see what he could tell me about my on-going aches. It is a good thing I did. Five minutes after arriving I was on my way to the hospital for an ultrasound. Shortly after, I was admitted with a "extensive blot clot that extended from my left groin to my foot." So much for a little nagging ache.

A few hours later, I underwent a CT scan which informed me that the clot had broken up and was now in both lungs so I was moved to ICU. I was indeed very fortunate. Someone was really looking out for me!

This is the first time I had been in the hospital since my tonsilectomy back in the 5th grade some 20+ years ago and that was pretty much in and out. I was home by Thursday but man... all that poking and prodding and not sleeping can take its toll. And more to continue... words like blood thinners and blood tests... YUCK! But I am here and mean to reflect on that and ask HIM to take control and help me go forward in whatever ways HE deems necessary.

The doctor is convinced that the 2 hour plane trip to Florida a month ago was a major factor in the clot. I know I am not as old as I was in '92 when I flew to Hawaii, but WOW!

Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers and hopefully with His help, I will be back 1000% soon.

Right Out Of Flipper

Came across this inspiring animal story, and since I haven't had the time to blog about any of the (mostly yucky) personal issues going on right now, I thought this would make a nice feel-good post. I'm still working on that Florida trip diary, really, I am!! But in the meantime, here is a story about some dolphins who saved a dog's life. This happened in Marco Island Florida, where we took our wonderful honeymoon almost 12 years ago.

[Dolphins Save Dog](#)

Monkey, Er, Ape See – Ape Do

To take a break from the vacation unpacking, I took the little ones to the zoo a few weeks ago. We had a great time – oh how I love winter zoo visits! There aren't many people around, and the animals can act like the animals they are instead of worrying about the hoards of visiting humans. Well, most of the time it's cool to see the animals acting like animals, unless they are doing disgusting things like the gorillas last week – don't watch this if you are squeamish, but I have to publish it because of how embarrassed the gorilla seems about her behavior. I felt so badly for filming her after she tried to hide that I turned off the camera, and that's when she got up and went and sat behind a post – out of my view. Why would she do something so gross if she is embarrassed by it?

WARNING: it's VERY gross!!!

The chimp was another story! His name is Harvey, and he is a senior citizen chimp – he just had his 52nd birthday, which is quite a milestone for a chimpanzee. Despite his age, Harvey is quite playful and has a penchant for young kids. When we walked over in front of Harvey's window, he was sitting in the corner wearing a sparkly lei, presumably from his birthday party which had just taken place days before.



When he saw us, he pulled off his lei and came over to his window to see the kids and play:

These videos were taken almost a month ago, and I've been trying to get back to the zoo, but my oldest child has decided that the zoo is "boring" – her words, *NEVER* mine. In fact, I'm wondering if I need a DNA test – how could someone with my DNA find the zoo boring???

During the week, I'm so tired and have so much to do that just writing this blog post is quite a challenge – I'm having a towel thrown over my head by my 2-year-old as I write! I think I fell in love with Harvey that January day, and I miss him!

Hambone Award Contender

Have you ever heard of the Hambone Award? It's a prize given out by Veterinary Pet Insurance, the nation's largest and oldest pet insurance company. Each month, the company selects the most unusual claims and chooses a monthly winner to vie for the yearly prize – the Hambone Award. Don't worry, all the contenders are pets who survived their ordeals. Last year's winner Ellie, a Labrador retriever from California, went to the emergency room after eating an entire beehive. She vomited large piles containing hundreds of dead bees, but Ellie was not harmed by the dead bees nor by the pesticide that killed them.

When reading suburban Chicago newspaper The Daily Herald's online headlines, the following caught my eye, "Owl Vs. Chihuahua", and that's where I read about Chico the Chihuahua's brave fight against a Great Horned Owl. Chico's owner was taking him for a walk in the wee hours of the morning, when a Great Horned Owl swooped out of nowhere (owls are silent flight birds) and picked up poor Chico, intending

him for his late night snack. Chico and his owner won the tug-of-war, and Chico won the VPI 'most unusual' story for the month of January, beating out such claims as a Labrador retriever that ate a marijuana cookie, a Golden retriever that swallowed a 5-inch barbecue skewer, a mutt that got wedged between banister bars and a Boston terrier who collided with a skier. If you'd like to read the other entries and be part of the public voting in September, you can go to the [VPI Hambone Award's website](#).

Oh, and how did the Hambone Award get its name? There was a dog insured by VPI who got himself trapped in a refrigerator and ate an entire Thanksgiving ham before he was discovered. He was treated for a mild case of hypothermia whereupon he fully recovered.

Look, Another Post! aka Lake Water Main

Two posts this month so far! Okay, that's the last I'll say about my lack of posting over the last couple of months. No essay here like other bloggers, just a news flash. Last week, less than a week after snowmageddon '11 (hey, that almost rhymes!), a village employee came a-knocking and informed us that a water main had burst under our driveway. Yikes. I knew there was water there, but I thought some of the snow had melted under the beating sun. In the past, when snow started melting a low point on our sidewalk would become a pond. The night before I saw this and tried to push the water to the driveway, thinking of letting it have somewhere to go. Later, I noticed the entire sidewalk in front of our house had become drenched- an obvious sign of something worse than melting, but

I didn't think much of it. Good thing the neighbors to one side never shoveled their walk, so no one would be walking on our sidewalk anyway. So back to the village informant, within a few hours they had called several trucks over, waited for the gas company to mark their territory with yellow (paint my friends, what were **you** thinking? ☐), and then dug away with a backhoe and other equipment, a good four feet or so underground. I was gone for much of this- by the time I returned the hole was nicely dug and they were fixing the pipe. My guess it was to the fire hydrant by the driveway, so good thing they fixed it quickly- just in case. Well, they filled it in once finished and satisfied, and went on their merry way. Wait- what about the driveway? Well, cold as it was, all they could do was flatten it out and put on a thin layer of asphalt. Personally, I wish they did away with the asphalt altogether for the time being. It is really uneven and very rough. They said they would make a permanent fix in the spring. Hopefully I will still have tires left come spring...

Oh, one unrelated thing- some might say a certain musical group at a certain annual Sunday event gave a "solid" performance, but I am with the bloggers/twitts (what do you call twitterers anyway? Not the name I just gave them for sure!) who are, shall we say, in disagreement with this. I say if the performance was solid, it certainly had cracks or chips in it due to one song. Let me just say to Fergie of the BEPs, you tried (I'm sure), but you have proven beyond a reasonable doubt that you are no Axl Rose. Never try to sing a GnR song publicly again please. Ever. Thank you, that is all. I think my ears are still bleeding... ☐

And I won't even mention another not-quite solid performance by another singer at that same event that same evening...

So you say it's my birthday??

Well not anymore. The birthday is officially over now. I'm older, I have my new license and sticker for the truck. Everything nice and legal.

I had dinner with a couple of my daughters. I had some me time (much needed). I got to talk with some very interesting people. I met a few friends. A good day.

I've never been one to put much into hitting a certain age on a birthday. I've hit the big 50 a couple of years ago, and honestly it didn't bother me much. Age and getting older doesn't happen in one day. I'm no longer in my 20's, but the difference between now and then didn't happen overnight.

The gray hairs that I have, I earned. They didn't come in on a specific birthday, they came in one by one. The daily complaints of my muscles and joints came in the same way. My eyes didn't start needing glasses to read when I put down a book and picked up the next one. Slowly, ever so slowly we change.

We don't have crystal balls to tell us how long we will stay around this little blue ball in space, so I could be way past middle age, or maybe just hitting it. Living to 104 really isn't that crazy of an idea. A lot more people do that these days. I could have something happen tomorrow, or next week. I don't know,, and I really don't care I get up in the morning (or sometimes after late night gaming sessions the afternoon), and go about my routine. I like life and living. And that makes it a joy to be here.

A wish?

I really need to thank a friend for the inspiration behind this post. A simple facebook question, "If you had one wish?" Implied, of course, is what would it be?

Should I wish for "One More Day" like Diamond Rio? Should I wish for a big lottery winner? Peace on Earth? More wishes? As the Disney Studio so aptly put in the movie "Aladin" are there limits on wishes? No wishing for more wishes? No wishing for raising the dead? No wishing for someone to love you?

There have been many stories about wishes. The wish granter always seemed to turn the words of the wishee to something that just didn't fill the general tone of the initial wish. That genie in the lamp, or the selling of your soul to the devil, either way, these two seemed to have fun with the game of words when wishes were granted. True, they followed the letter of the wish, but maybe not the intent.

So I guess, you have to be very careful with your wishes. Things may not turn out the way your dreams envision. Asking for too much could ruin whatever happiness you have now. Changing your life style may not give you the things you desired. Wishing to go back in time may actually make things worse than they are now. Wishes, if available, could be very powerful things for good or ill.

It is fun to dream about winning that lottery, seeing lost loved ones, finding that perfect person, getting all of those other wishes, but in the end it is a dream.

My wish, after thinking about all of this is very simple. I wish to live my life to the best of my ability, and be surrounded by friends and family who make life worth living.

The best thing about this, is that wish already came true.

The Status Quo

According to the Wiktionary (or probably some dictionary) Status Quo is "..., a commonly used form of the original Latin "statu quo" – literally "the state in which" – is a Latin term meaning the current or existing state of affairs." Of course if you want to keep things just the way they are, you would be keeping the Status Quo.

I find this to be a strange state of affairs myself. As much as I like things to stay the same, I also like some changes in my life. I have my own "comfort zone". When everything falls in my comfort zone, I am a very happy camper.

There are times when my comfort zone changes. Some are forced changes. Those things that I have no control of. These things have to be accounted for and adapted to. For me, depending on the severity of the change, I can be moody or down right depressed during those time. How long they last also depends on the severity of the change.

At other times, the changes are less dramatic, and mostly in my control. I actually look forward to some of these changes. They prevent life from getting too boring. They add zest. My comfort zone shifts just a little bit. Most things are the same with one or two things added or subtracted. In that I grow, learn, live and enjoy my life.

My life is currently in one of those less dramatic comfort zone changes. Mostly in my control, but not everything. I've had more than my share of unalterable changes, so this is a welcome relief.

Here is to living in a comfort zone, that doesn't believe in the Status Quo.