

CMA Time Already!!

It's that time of year again! Dust off your cowboy hat, put it on, and get ready for a rootin' tootin' time watching the 44th annual Country Music Association Awards!!



I'm going to try something different this year – I'm not going to watch it.

Not that I don't want to, because I really do, especially when I [go to the website](#) and see all the stuff about live streaming comments and things like that. It wasn't too many years ago when I made my own blog of live streaming comments, and I had fun doing it. But I won't be able to watch the CMAs this year because I have something much more important to do: I lead a small group of 6th grade girls at our church's youth group on Wednesday nights. I'm not about to put a tv show above those girls, and I certainly wouldn't be prepared to tell them the reason for my absence was because of the CMA awards – that would not be acceptable. If one of my own kids was sick and I stayed home for that reason (as it happened last year on CMA night), that would be a different story, but it's a great thing that everyone is healthy enough for me to have to miss one of my two most favorite tv events of the year (not including a year the Chicago Cubs would make it into MLB playoffs, but that hasn't been anything I need to concern myself with in quite some time, Grrrr – my other favorite tv event is the other big country music awards show, the ACMs in the spring).

If you watch the CMA awards, HAVE FUN!! I'm hoping that whatever recording device my husband has in mind to record these will work – we often have bad luck with recording devices. Part of me will miss being a part of the event, reading the live commentary and providing my own, and part of me was ready to move on anyway – seems I've become increasingly disconnected with today's country music scene (now I just sound old). I'll still give my picks, but they are guesses at best because I really haven't been following the genre lately. I didn't even know until I looked last night to find out what time the awards came on that Gwyneth Paltrow, the movie star, has a hit song on country radio right now. I'm actually more into Christian music than ever before; there is some pretty good stuff out there. And listening to Christian music gives me a chance to practice my dances I have on Sunday mornings with the 1st graders ☐ But all of that leaves less time to listen and keep up with country music.

But what the hey, I've had fun trying to pick the winners every year so here goes. My picks are in **green** with random thoughts in *itallics*:

◆◆**Entertainer of the Year – Brad Paisley**, Lady Antebellum, Keith Urban, Miranda Lambert, Zac Brown Band (*What?!? No Kenny Chesney?? That's great news for those of us who aren't big fans... now, who to choose to take his place?*)

Female Vocalist – Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Reba McEntire, **Taylor Swift**, Carrie Underwood (*So great to see 2 of my favorites (Martina and Reba) back in the game! I don't think Martina will win, but I SO WANTED to choose her!! Carrie Underwood is great too – I'm not a big fan of Taylor Swift, but unfortunately, I think she will win this one*)

◆◆**Male Vocalist – Dierks Bentley, Brad Paisley, Blake Shelton**, George Strait, Keith Urban

New Artist – Luke Bryan, Easton Corbin, Jerrod Nieman, Chris

Young, **Zac Brown Band** (*Explain to me how Zac Brown Band is still considered “new”? They have some great music and have proven themselves, as I would think being a nominee for Entertainer of the Year would prove!*)

Vocal Group – **Lady Antebellum**, Little Big Town, **Rascall Flatts**, The Band Perry, Zac Brown Band (*Let’s be honest, I think Lady Antebellum will take it. But I just love the music of Rascall Flatts, and can’t bear to vote against them. I’m not trying to get 2 votes in – officially, my pick is Rascall Flatts*)

Vocal Duo – **Brooks and Dunn**, Joey + Rory, Montgomery Gentry, Steel Magnolia, **Sugarland** (*The last year for Brooks and Dunn, and I don’t think they’ll pull a GARTH Brooks and pull out of retirement, so this powerful duo gets my vote – they are so talented, so they deserve it anyway. I was lucky enough to see them in concert 3 times, and they did not disappoint once!*)

♦♦**Single** – A Little More Country Than That by Easton Corbin, Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton featuring Trace Adkins, **Need You Now** by **Lady Antebellum**, The House That Built Me by Miranda Lambert, White Liar by Miranda Lambert

♦♦**Song** – A Little More Country Than That, Need You Now, **The House That Built Me**, Toes, White Liar

♦♦**Musical Event** – Bad Angel by Dierks Bentley feat. Miranda Lambert & Jamey Johnson, Can’t You See by Zac Brown Band feat. Kid Rock, **Hillbilly Bone** by **Blake Shelton** feat. **Trace Adkins**, I’m Alive by Kenny Chesney with Dave Matthews, Till The End by Alan Jackson with Lee Ann Womack

Music Video – Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton feat. Trace Adkins, Need You Now Lady Antebellum, **The House That Built Me** by **Miranda Lambert**, **Water** by **Brad Paisley**, White Liar by Miranda Lambert

Musician – Paul Franklin – Steel Guitar, Dann Huff – Guitar, Brent Mason – Guitar, **Mac McAnally** – Guitar, **Randy Scruggs** – Guitar

Hmm, 5 correct of the 11 I guessed... not too great. Oh well, it was a good show and fun to watch!

The art of making pie...

I like pie. Pie has to be one of my favorite dessert types. There can be so many varieties. Each pie can create an explosion of taste. It has been a while since I made my very first pie. That pie was a total artistic creation. From finding the ingredients to the actual serving, it was an adventure. Other pies that came after that were less of an adventure, but the ability to make a very good pie is almost an art. Over the last 30+ years I've made almost every kind of pie imaginable, ok not that many, only the pies I imagined I would like. I guess it is time to make another pie...

My first pie was my own (and lost) recipe for caramel apple pie. I was in college and had a bunch of apples that needed to be used (sharing healthy food in college didn't go over well), but little else. I was low on funds, so I started to beg, borrow and steal (ok, I just took more than my share of sugar packets from the lunch room) my supplies. I actually had a pie pan or two (mom eventually got them back...). I was able to find somebody with flour. Salt was easily picked up with the sugar (oops), And slowly the makings of an apple pie were gathered. I'm not sure what came over me to add the caramel candy to the filling. It could have been that I didn't think there was enough sugar or cinnamon. I could have been that they were sitting there and I liked the sound of

caramel apples. I unwrapped the bag and threw them in. Two pies made, from the absolute meaning of the word scratch. After baking and limited cooling, a group of us scooped up our first servings (No pie servers to be found anywhere, but we did find an old Ice Cream spade – think little shovel). It was a hit. The second pie didn't even last the night (funny how hungry college kids get for sweets, or pizza). My first foray in to pie making was a success.

As of right now, I have another hurdle to overcome when I make my next pie. No oven.. No, I still haven't replaced it since that fateful evening when it didn't turn off. Strange how stove makers and the sellers can't tell me how their ovens will fail if the computer breaks down. I won't buy one until I know that. Anyway, I've decide my next pie adventure will be in a dutch oven. Cast Iron oven over a hot fire and coals. Should be interesting. I've never done it, but I have had the results. I can't wait. Now to decide what kind of pie...

And to think this whole train of thought started with a piece of store bought thaw and serve pie. Did I mention I like pie.
□

Holiday Movie Try To Sees

Well... since I do not have a play to be in this holiday season, I will try to hit a few of the blockbusters coming to the multiplexes in the next few weeks. I have already mentioned the runaway train movie that I CAN NEVER remember the title of but it stars Denzel Washington and Chris Pine. Denzel always seems to be at the top of his game. Does anyone know of a less than great performance he has delivered? Also curious to

see if Mr. Pine can go beyond his role of Captain James Tiberius Kirk (that is the first role I have seen him in) [UNSTOPPABLE!](#) THAT'S IT! Opens Friday, November 12 (my day off, hmm).

Also Opening up this Friday is [Skyline](#) which looks like an entertaining alien invasion flick.

Next week's major opening is a definite must see! In fact, I have already made plans to see this next Saturday (it is my week to work Friday night). If you have not read/seen book/movie 6 in the Harry Potter series... may I suggest hunting out one of the two before heading out to see the first part of the final chapter. I have always thought that The Half Blood Prince was more of a transition to [The Deathly Hallows](#).

Although, I found the previous film to be somewhat of a letdown, there are some elements that I recommend discovering before going into what I anticipate will be GREAT!

[TRON:Legacy](#) will probably be best experienced on a good cinema screen and hopefully, I will be able to make a viewing.

Twentysome years is an awfully long time to wait for a sequel. However, with the technological advances made since 1982(?!), I'm sure it will be spectacular!

[The Chronicles of Narnia: Voyage of the Dawn Treader](#) opens in December, too. I really was not aware that this had been completed until I saw a preview a few weeks ago. This is the third movie based on C.S. Lewis' classic 7 book series. I really enjoyed the previous installments...primarily since they were some of my favorite tales growing up.

I think that is about it! It almost seems like summer with all of the action-packed popcorn movies opening up. I thought the last few months of the year were geared toward the Oscar worthy features. Maybe someone thinks that Yogi and BooBoo will be "contendahs" ☐ or the return of the Fockers?

So... hopefully with all the hustle and bustle the holidays

bring, everyone can take a few hours and escape.

Back To Blogging

It seems like I haven't had the time to blog as much as I'd like to lately. Put it this way – Halloween ended over a week ago now, and I still have a draft sitting here detailing how my family spent what's probably our 2nd favorite holiday. I think I will quickly summarize and get it churned out next, hopefully.

One thing that's been taking up my blogging time is laundry. When the seasons change, my laundry responsibilities increase from about 3 loads per week to 6 or 7. That's because my family of 6 is now wearing pants instead of shorts or sundresses, many of us dress in layers in the fall which adds sweatshirts to the mix, and then there are the added number of blankies that the kids use when it turns cold outside. The good news of all this is that when spring turns to summer, I find myself with about half the laundry I've gotten used to doing in the winter – kind of a fall back, spring ahead-type thing for laundry, I guess. But more laundry folding and less blogging for me in the mean time.

And that reminds me, a funny thing happened at church yesterday. When my class got back to our classroom after large group, there were 2 new kids sitting there. I introduced myself, and we were just getting started when their dad came to the door, seemingly embarrassed and very apologetic as he asked for his kids back – turns out their family had forgotten to set their clocks back an hour, so they were actually there for the next service ☐

Our family remembered to change our clocks, but we didn't get

to appreciate the extra hour of sleep it was supposed to bring – kids have biological clocks, they wake up at the same time every day regardless of what the clock says or what time zone they are in. This is especially good advice if you're going to travel with kids across time zones – don't fool yourself into thinking that your kids will adjust to the local time when you travel, or you could be in for a not-so-pleasant surprise. My wonderful, thoughtful husband is always the one who gets up early with the kids, but I had to be at church at 8:30 yesterday. Also, I was up all night with a killer headache – now that was strange.



I am very lucky to be able to say that I very rarely get headaches. If I don't get enough sleep, I will have a dull ringing in my head, but nothing like Saturday night's doozy that was actually waking me up throughout the night. Luckily it went away (with help) before I arrived in my classroom full of 1st graders. But I have to wonder about the cause of this colossal headache – could it perhaps be some kind of weird virus that had me laid up all weekend? Saturday I was knocked flat on my back by a sudden and severe mysterious back pain. It began on Friday, when I decided to take my kids to the zoo since they had a day off school. By the time we were ready to leave, I couldn't bend over and had to ask for help to tie my shoes. I thought maybe it was a pulled muscle or something, maybe a cramp that would work itself out – I couldn't remember injuring it. But I did not enjoy myself nearly as much as I usually do at the zoo ☐ And

thank goodness Hubby decided to come with or I don't know how I would have been able to handle 5 kids (my daughter's friend came along) by myself without hardly being able to bend or move right. When we got home, Hubby had some work to catch up on, and I fell asleep on the couch while waiting for him – something I haven't done for ages which makes me realize that I didn't feel too well on Friday. Then Saturday dawns, and I can't get out of bed because of the extreme pain every time I tried to bend. So I stayed in bed until 1:30 – played my cards right and got lunch in bed too ☐ – when we absolutely had to leave to meet our youth group kids for a service project. I got the easy job – waiting for the kids who were late – while the others raked leaves and picked up litter, and while I took it easy, my back started to feel better. But then came the headache which was to plague me all night. What makes me think this is a virus is because of all the stuff going around lately, plus the fact that my sister had this same exact sudden backache a few weeks ago – could it be a contagious 'backache virus'? I owed my parents an email, but I couldn't get in front of the computer with my sore back, so I called them from bed Saturday morning, and that's how I found out about my sister. Anyway, my point is, it was a busy weekend, but also one where I couldn't get to my computer even if I had had the time, hence the slow pace of the blogging.



And speaking of things going around... my parakeet JJ is feeling much better. He's even chirping again!! He hasn't lost his balance while sitting on his perch in days, and his physical appearance is starting to

look healthier. The lady at the pet store said that if a little bird is fluffed up and at the bottom of his cage like JJ was that it's almost always too late to save them, so I feel really great that my little guy seems to have another chance. I guess I should have bought this really cool looking toy I saw the other day, but my husband and I have a policy that we try not to buy anything unless we have an immediate use for it. This thing was a \$10 cabinet – you install it in your living room or somewhere; it's a nice looking wood cabinet, and it opens into a little play yard for small birds. Ugh, just writing about it makes me want it, but the store was an hour away, and JJ is a cage bird – I don't know that he would come out to play in a play yard. I think of him as so fragile, so it would be difficult for me to make him come out; I sure wouldn't want him to get sick again.

Well, anyway, I've rambled enough – guess I just wanted to share my relief at getting well and of being able to blog again. Until that overdue Halloween post...

My Stressful Job

Hmm. In the last month I had exactly two posts about my life. I tend to write longer posts, so I just felt I never had the time for such a post. I'd like to say I will start writing more often with shorter posts, but knowing me if I make that commitment I will break it, so...we'll see. Last week was a terrible week, especially Friday. One of the workers moved to Arizona, so we (myself and the two trainees) had to cover all his stores plus two more. The first two days were really bad- Tuesday I had to work until 8:00 to appease an angry manager, causing me to miss rehearsal. Friday was supposed to be a short day, then rest. Except there was a

crisis at another store. Another photographer and I were supposed to cover for someone who had to take off for court, only he only was able to shoot two out of the dozen cars they had while the first store I was at had twenty cars (some disappeared so I didn't actually have to shoot twenty, but what I had still took time) so I wasn't able to make it there at all until after sunset. The manager was furious and ready to fire us, but two of us (yep, me included) spent a few hours Saturday stickering cars. Thankfully he didn't want us taking photos, my guess because there were so many customers around, so it wasn't an all-day affair.

This week, I am letting one of my trainees work two stores by herself, so that will remove most of the pressure this week.

What a way to end an afternoon...

Nice afternoon at the theater, and nice company. All was well until my drive home. Some jerk in a old white pickup decided he didn't need to pay attention to the local road signs. Apparently the red octagonal signs mean to speed up and go faster instead of stop.

I ran through many things as I came to that intersection. I was traveling somewhere near the double nickel speed, and I had a choice of stopping very fast, or trying to get through the intersection quicker than the other guy. Funny how fast you think in those situations. I hate being in them, but I am glad that I have been blessed with a fairly quick mind.

I decided to speed up, a collision was avoided by a few feet. I'm not sure the other guy really ever saw me until I passed

him on the road. And he blew his horn at me. Hmmm.

Other thoughts passed through my head during those tense moments. Time spent with family and friends. Time that I should have spent with them. Flashes of the past, thoughts for the future. Strange how fast you can think of things.

In thinking back to that event, I was wondering why I decided to speed up instead of slow down. All the years of driving experience, past Physics classes, Statistics/Probabilities all rushed to my head. A vehicle even the size of my truck does not stop on a dime. But thanks to a feisty little five cylinder, the truck accelerates just fine. I knew this, and was proven correct. (Thank goodness!!!)

I'm very glad to say that I had a wonderful afternoon. I'm glad I have the chance to enjoy more of my life.

My little truck is showing its age...

Normal wear and tear on my poor little truck. The little beast that helped move a man-eating plant to our local theater. The one that moved things for all of my daughters. Moved firewood to keep me warm in the winter. Carried my dearest family to their home in Florida. 6 years and 175000 miles of travel and hauling. Last week some of its age showed up.

There have been the little things like worn out tires, slightly balky windows, a worn out battery. But last week the poor little beast lost its muffler. Nothing prepared me for the sound that the little 5 cylinder engine made without that noise reducer. It was hard to hear myself think. So of course

I needed to get it replace/fixed before the big trip Friday evening (more on that later).

Started out as a nice simple fix, no problems. A loose joint welded together and everything would be back to normal. Except that after they did that, they noticed something else was wrong... Hmm more time and money gone.

I drove off with a new muffler and fixed Then something else in the exhaust came off. Back the the shop.. Grumble... More time spent, but at least this time no money... Most of the day shot.

Except, I was able to memorize were everything was in our local WalMart. But they moved everything now, since Halloween is over.... ☐

Breathing is Necessary

One more rehearsal and then I will have the Thanksgiving break. All is Well. I got to my lesson today and there was an anthology of Christmas favorites on the piano. Oddly enough, I have been getting in the festive mood just a bit.

Perhaps it is the facebook friend who has taken up the mantle left by Emily who always had her house ready by the beginning of November (not exaggerating). On to the lesson:

I decided to focus on some of the more serious songs this week. The first went well... some lyric problems but nothing monumental. The second is one of those traditionally, deceptively simple pieces... beautiful but deceptive. We decided that this piece is a study in when and when not to breathe. More of a pick the song apart and put it back together. I can't breathe in the middle of the word "loooong...

iiiiing” when it is held for 6 beats. Phrasing, breathing, don't forget to breathe... fill up the belly. HEHEHE!

“No Breathe... No Life.” Wise words Miyagi-san.

You're telling me I missed Halloween?

Last year I was unable to celebrate Halloween with friends due to some ailment. I was all set to bring some 'frightening' festive holiday food to a party, but was unable to make it.

This year was going to be different. There as another party to go to,. More festive food to prepare. And I had a choice of many costumes. But somehow I missed the entire weekend plus a day or two.

Harumph No party, no costume, but one heck of a cold/flu/sinus infection.

Too make things worse, my oldest was moving and I was unable to help. I think that made me feel worse than my flu. Well, I understand there may be more to move, so as soon as I have my strength back, have truck will haul again.

Oh well, maybe I'll just have to make my next get together with friends my own personal costume night, complete with bloody fingers and toes. Yes, that may be on my list. It isn't like me at all to miss two Halloweens in a row.

My Poor Little Bird

JJ, my parakeet, is very sick. I had parakeets when I was younger, and I know enough about them to know that we are lucky that he's still alive. His chirping and squawking gradually decreased until I realized the other day that he doesn't vocalize at all anymore. He is very lathargic, and sits puffed up on his perch where he loses his balance every few minutes. His tail is bobbing when he breathes, which is a sign of respiratory distress, and he has some discoloring around his cere (nose), which indicates discharge. The other day, I noticed that he was sitting on the bottom of his cage, which is a sign of imminent death in parakeets. Based upon my research (past experience, the internet, and bothering the heck out of the local pet store), JJ seems to have a respiratory infection – something that is often fatal for small birds.

But he's hung on a few days now from when I first believed his death was imminent when he was at the bottom of his cage. After all, parakeets' instincts are to hide their illnesses. If they show any sign of being sick, wild birds will be cast out by their flock, so if captive birds allow signs of illness to show, it's often too late to save them. I got some birdie antibiotics, and I'm hoping that he is drinking his water where the meds are. He is still eating, and that's a great sign. We put a blanket over the cage, and are trying to keep him warm and calm so he can rest and get well. It's just touch and go at this point, so I'm praying for my little bird. I got so attached to the little guy! I got him right after my beloved dog passed away, and seeing my happy little bird helped me feel at least a tiny bit better. And now I'm watching him suffer; it's hard. I want to move him back upstairs where it's a little warmer and quieter, but I'm afraid of stressing him out too much, which is basically the same reason I don't want to take him to the vet. I guess I'll

wait for him to improve a little more before moving him upstairs; that's the only plan I have right now.

Like I said, he does seem to be improving – the loss of balance on his perch seems to have subsided anyway. But he still does not look well, and he is not vocalizing. He is less than a year old, so maybe his youth is keeping him strong and resilient. Poor JJ! He is just a little parakeet, but he means a lot to me. If you could send out a little prayer for JJ, we'd appreciate it. And pray for my husband while you're at it; he's fighting a nasty cold. Obviously, Hubby's health is a billion times more important than JJ's, but if I wrote a blog post every time Hubby got sick... well, I wouldn't have time for that! Besides, Hubby's illness is not life-threatening. I wonder if Hubby and JJ have the same thing? That's one thing that stinks about this time of year – all the illness! Wish I could transfer some of my super-immune system over to Hubby, who seems to get EVERY single thing that comes our way...