

Cute Things From Kids

I get all these email forwards quoting kids and the cute things they say. With 4 kids of my own (ages 10, 6, 4, and 2), I have fodder almost daily for such emails. If only I could remember to write down all the cute things they say...

Here are a few that have stuck in my mind from recent months:

end of april 2010:

5-year-old Sammie – We're in the drive-thru at the ice cream place, and we ask Sammie what she would like. She says "I don't know; I think I have gastritis."

seperate incident:

3-year-old Disney – "Does Santa work at the gas station"

10-13-10 – Disney (a week before her 4th birthday) holds up the snow brush that was in the garage. "Mom, why did you pack a giant toothbrush?"

I'm still smiling about that one!

Farewell To A Couple Of TV Parents

This week, fans of 50s and 70s television lost two beloved character. On Saturday, Barbara Billingsley who played June Cleaver on *Leave it to Beaver* passed away. Throughout the 1950s Ward and June were the parents of Wally and Theodore "Beaver" Cleaver. It is almost inconceivable in today's world to have a mother who wore a pretty dress and apron all day long and would have a plate of cookies and a pitcher of milk

waiting for you when you got home from school. It seems that some of the biggest problems she had to deal with was the Beaver's refusal to eat Brussel Sprouts. Of course, there was the time when Beaver and his pal Larry Mondello were stuck in the giant coffee cup on the billboard. Not to mention enduring the frequent visits by one Eddie Haskell and his "My that's a very lovely dress you are wearing, Mrs. Cleaver." Not only did she later reprise the role of one of tv land's favorite mothers, Ms. Billingsley also was the voice of "Nanny" on the animated Muppet Babies series.

Tuesday, Tom Bosley who played hardware owner/father for eleven years on Happy Days lost his life. Week in and week out, Howard Cunningham leant and ear and sage advice to Richie and Joanie. Not so much to Chuck... who wasn't around long enough but maybe to bounce a basketball during the first handful of episodes. Long after Fonzie "jumped the shark" on skis in his trademark leather jacket, Howard and Marion watched their children grow, move out, and (in their daughter's case) move back in. Years after the series ended, Mr. Bosley originated the role of another father, Maurice (Belle's father) in the Original Broadway Cast of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

AH... simpler times with simple problems. Rest in peace June and Mr C.

Looking Ahead

Tonight was my introduction into a new theatre board. I think this organization will be a fun, challenging, and ultimately rewarding crowd to be a part of. Hopefully, the passion I have for the dramatic arts will be beneficial. This summer,

the group will be presenting the beloved, immortal classic *The Wizard of Oz*. I have dreamed of playing one particular role for as long as I can remember.

However, another nearby group will be presenting another of my favorite shows. I believe that I have mentioned a time or two that I have been in two separate productions of *Annie*. Back in 1992 at good ol' EHS, I played Rooster. Daniel Francis Hannigan will forever be one of my most memorable and favorite roles. Back in 2001 (I believe it was), I was cast as a Hooverville-ite and as one of Daddy Warbucks' servants. As we approach the 35th anniversary of the musical's Broadway debut (and it's planned 2nd revival in 2012 as part of the celebration), the opportunity to audition for Rooster once again would be a delight!

Thank goodness, I have a few months to ponder the conundrum.

For any lurkers who may be out there who deem themselves qualified to fill one of the PAID technical (director, pit director, vocal director, etc) positions for a full-scale version of the *Wizard of Oz*, visit the [Fountain City Festival](#) website within the coming weeks for more information. If you drop by the website now, you can take a tour of the past few summer shows the group has produced.

Fun At School

Some random kid-related stuff to report...

First, my "visitor" showed up to my Sunday morning class. I haven't had the time to blog about it, but basically there is a parent who came to drop her daughter off a few weeks ago at the worst time possible, and the kids were all over the place

(it's not normally like that, a set of circumstances culminated to create the 'perfect storm' – long story). On top of that, her daughter is a 1st grader, which means that she has just come over to the north campus of church. Our first graders "graduate" from the preschool wing and move over to the other building when they get in 1st grade, and their curriculum changes. So this parent had concerns about what her daughter was learning and specifically where her weekly "coloring page" was. So she asked if she could come "observe" my class, and I was all upset and nervous. I sat and pondered this, I prayed about it, and I decided to give it my best shot and show this mother what a wonderful childrens' ministry we have. I wasn't even nervous, and I used the entire ride home from Illinois planning out my lesson for class the next day. And what happens? She is a no-show. Fast forward to the next week, which was in reality this past Sunday, and she shows up. Luckily I had kind of figured this would happen, so I was well-prepared again. But I also had 9 kids to look after – of course she couldn't come observe when I had 4 kids last week when games and lessons are much easier... But I think it went well! I can't speak for the "observer", but the class ran as smoothly as it could have with 9 kids running around. She wasn't just a statue standing in the corner making me nervous during class, but an active participant (after some encouragement by me) in the crafts and games. It is my hope that she came away from experiencing her daughter's Sunday school knowing that our childrens' ministry program at church is wonderful! We have so many components (there is music, dancing, skits, big group games, small group games, storytelling and crafts – all in one hour every week!) and super volunteers who bring it all together which provides a variety of ways for kids to learn one lesson and virtue. I am so proud of how well my 1st graders are picking up on this month's virtue, which is "initiative". I know, a huge word for such small kids, but the lessons are broken down and relate to kids so well that they really are getting it – especially my 1st grader at home, which really surprises me!!

So anyway, I just wanted to express my relief about how I don't have to worry about my "visitor" anymore. At first I was terribly upset, but after a lot of thinking and praying, it all worked out for the better! I was able to step back and take a look at our childrens' ministry and appreciate it even more when it was under scrutiny, so I am very thankful to God for opening my eyes and getting me through this.

Next bit of kid news – last week was National Eat Lunch at School week, so us parents were invited to eat with the littles. My husband and I folded ourselves into the kiddie-sized lunch tables and visited with the 1st graders. One problem I didn't see coming though – we brought little brother (he is 2), so of course he starts running around the lunchroom, but... Mom and Dad were so crammed into the little lunch tables that we could not get up to chase him unless someone else got up first – we were packed in like sardines! Finally we were able to get out and get him before he caused too much trouble, and we had a great time for the remainder of the lunch. I think Sammie really enjoyed haaving her family at lunch. Here are my 3 youngest at 'big kid' first grade lunch:



And at recess it was so neat to see some of my 1st graders from Sunday morning childrens' ministry!!

So after lunch in 1st grade, it was time to head to the fire station for a field trip with my preschool-age daughter and

her class. I brought my 2-year-old along to this also because I thought he would enjoy it, and he did, even if it was a challenge trying to get him to hold still while the fireman was talking. But as soon as the fire gear came out and the fireman began to put on his boots, gloves, hood, hat, etc, my son was very attentive. After that, each of the kids got a turn "driving" the fire truck! My son made his way up to the front of the group and reached his arms toward the fireman – it was really neat to see because a few of the pre-schoolers, one being my daughter, were nervous about being lifted up by the firefighter and into the big fire truck. But once they saw the little dude have a turn and how much he loved it, they were all eager to try too!



So overall a great week! October is always so busy for our family, but I enjoy every minute of it!!

Exhausted...

Wow, I had this title waiting for me in my draft blogs. I think I remember starting it, but I was too tired to actually write anything down. I am almost that tired, but I can write a line or two.


First things first. The Hound of the Baskervilles is over, done, complete. Wonderful time. I really like playing evil characters, I should search out more of them. The local playhouses need to do more psycho-thrillers. Maybe somebody could do "Wait Until Dark". I was in that one once, but I didn't get to play the evil ones in the show.

Second. Lovely youngest daughter is well on her way to finishing her schooling. She will be back home while she does her externship. That will be interesting.

Third. Halloween is coming, I'm done with the show and I may now have a bit of free time to see a haunted house or two. Except some kids are doing this moving thing again. Still, there is hope.

Finally!! I may have time for blogging again. I've had things filling my brain, so the outlet may be needed.

Baskerville Hall No More

 In a most shocking affair, Baskerville Hall has fallen. The caretaker and his wife, the Barrymores were so shaken by the

tragic passing of Sir Charles that within days of the heir's arrival the couple decided to leave service in hopes of succeeding in some other business. The Baskerville fortune left the loyal servants enough money to set out on themselves.

In order to start their life afresh, Mr. Barrymore altered his facial appearance not an hour following their departure.

The walls, curtains, furniture, bookcases, and all the trimmings lay in rubble. Unfortunately, the relater of these events failed to have his camera to add photos to illustrate the unfortunate event.

However, the good times shared by all will be remembered in the coming DVD which chronicles the events of the last days of the once great estate and the mystery surrounding Poor Sir Charles' demise.

Thank you Mare and everyone else involved in the Village Players production of the immortal Sherlock Holmes mystery *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Once again, a delightful time was had by all (even those two people who fell asleep who shall remain safely anonymous). And who knows... it may not take another 9 years for another facial hair growth. I'm sure there are several roles which call for it. I am also pleased to announce that the [ghost upon the moor](#) failed to wreck havoc with Selden's death... if only for the show's swan song.

EVEN BETTER THAN I IMAGINED!!! (part 2)

(This is a continuation of my previous post of the same title which can be [found here](#) in case you missed it.)



(This is us with Jack Hanna! In case you don't know who he is, I included a brief description of him in my previous blog post about the show!)

Before we went into the theater to see Jack Hanna's live stage show, we were just standing there gawking at Jack Hanna signing autographs. Suddenly, a group of young people came up to him, and he was so thrilled to see them that he quickly grabbed his cell phone and called his wife backstage, telling her that their 'special friends' would be coming backstage to see her. The friends are then ushered away, and Jack announced during the show that they are the [Von Trapp Children](#), a singing quartet of descendants from the family who inspired the infamous memoir, stage musical, and movie *The Sound of Music*. Apparently they had been in the Chicago area to tape an episode of Oprah (which will air on October 29), and they're family friends of Jack's and stopped by his show to surprise him.



(Me waiting patiently while Jack signs just one of my many books that I brought!!)

Back to the show... we are seated in the Paramount, and Jack Hanna comes out!! The show itself was a mix of live animals being brought out on the stage and video clips shown on a large screen, all narrated by Jack with his trademark anecdotes and sense of humor. In fact, at one point near the beginning of show, Jack Hanna began to tell a story, and all of a sudden he stops and looks off to the wings of the stage. "Do I have time to tell this story?" He asked (presumably the producer backstage), but then he didn't wait for an answer and replied to himself: "Of course I have time to tell it – it's my show!" It was not said in an arrogant fashion, but rather it seemed as if he were almost reminding himself that he is in charge. It was glimpses of genuineness like this that made his show so special. Jack Hanna is very real and down-to-earth (when it comes to being a celebrity anyway – often he is dreaming about ways to help animals with his head on the clouds!), and these traits take precedent in his live appearances.

So the story he told was hilarious! It was about his appearance on "Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader", and... well, you can listen to it if you'd like:

So between video clips of a few animal causes that are near and dear to Jack Hanna's heart ([Rolling Dog Ranch](#) and Mountain Gorilla Conservation, among others), the following live animals were brought out on the stage for Jack to tell us about: a Red-Ruffed Lemur, blind Barn Owl, Flamingo, 2-Toed Sloth (did you know that there is a bed and breakfast in South America where you get to take care of a baby sloth in your room overnight? I just might get over this fear of flying thing quicker than I thought I would!!), 3-Banded Armadillo, Siberian Lynx, baby Coatamundi, baby Bennet's Wallaby (got to meet him earlier at the Jamboree Lunch), Grey fox, Fennec Fox (got to meet him at lunch also), Lesser Anteater, an albino Python, and the finale – a full grown Cheetah! Seeing the animals was great of course, and hearing live 'Jack facts' about them was even better. But I think my favorite part of the show was the end – we watched a blooper reel of Jack getting licked, bitten, squirted, tossed around, etc. by animals, and one clip was of Jack Hanna making an appearance on David Letterman's show in the '80s. Jack is showing Dave how to milk a goat, and as usual, Dave is cracking jokes. Jack Hanna (the live version) cuts in, saying, "I didn't even mean to do this!" and the video clip shows him accidentally squirting Letterman with a spray of milk from the goat's udder! There is only one more thing that can make watching Jack Hanna on Letterman even more entertaining, and that is watching Jack Hanna on Letterman WITH Jack Hanna while he narrates it!!

We laughed (plenty of laughs when Jack and animals are involved!), we cried (that video clip of the Rolling Dog ranch was so heartwarming – the ranch takes dogs who are seriously ill, and many of them have extreme physical ailments), and then it was time to go. But not before we got to hear Jack's bear spray story again, and he even called on one of his assistants to act it out. He told this story during his previous appearance on Letterman, and it was hilarious then as it was hearing it and seeing it live. Funny, that is, until

we found out during the live show what *really* happened during that previous Letterman appearance. Apparently it wasn't demonstration-style bear spray, but the real thing, and Jack got sprayed in the face, causing loss of vision for over 10 minutes and some minor facial burns. Jack warned us (and David Letterman!) that he is planning revenge for his next appearance on the show in December, so stay tuned!!!



A sloth relaxing at a sloth sanctuary in Costa Rica. While we were on the subject of sloths, this picture was too cute to pass up!!

The Ghost Upon The Moor

Well.. last night's opening night performance of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was quite a success. What began with reservations numbering 17 turned into a crowd of over 70 before curtain time. Quite a feat when the small village had a home high school football game. Of course, everyone is not a sports fan and the weather is starting to get that chill once again.

The audience was very good in their reactions to the events which unfolded on stage. As predicted in at least one review, Holmes received the most chuckles. However, there were some

unexpected guffaws as well. One involving a ghost which must just now have decided to wreck havoc with the lights upon the moor. Holmes and Watson come upon a corpse and investigate. Usually, this is done with the assistance of not only their illuminated lanterns but a greenish glow surrounding the deceased. At the end of the scene, the ghost decided to raise the stage lights prior to the "corpse's" exit from the stage. "He's **ALIIIIIVE!**"

The cast was brilliant! Even Sir Henry seemed to have relaxed and created an entirely new dynamic to his character. Wonderful what a great audience can do!

After the performance, the cast and some VP members gathered for a small reception. I got to chat with my favorite Teveye (who was to be "Potter's goon" but more important matters arose) , his wife, and their growing little one who was a wee babe the last I saw her at January's awards banquet... now she is up toddling around. I was surprised to see Me and Ca in attendance... no idea they were going to be there. Ca is bringing a bus load of students to this afternoon's matinee.

So shortly after midnight, the last of the revelers departed. Good thing I convinced the boss to let me skip my 8am-10am shift. She did not even realize I was supposed to be there this morning. Now.. if only I can convince her of that on Sunday mornings.

One down... three to go.

love stories

It was the spring of 1983 when I first met my future wife. At this time, we were not aware that we would be together in a

few short months. What I did realize was easier to identify. I found her to be very attractive, with a strong personality, an infectious smile and a bit reserved in the setting. Most people would have said she was shy, but I noticed something else was holding her back, shyness had nothing to do with this. At that time, I wasn't sure what it was. I observed, that she was watching the group intently. I was intrigued and captivated, too bad she came with her boyfriend. □

About a week later, I met her for the second time. I realized at that point why she was reserved and observant. She had a hearing loss, and this helped her compensate for that loss. The second time we met, we both knew we would be good friends. Two weeks and two meetings and we felt some connection. Nothing yet to indicate that a different relationship was in our future.

A couple of weeks later, this wonderful lady brought another charming lady with her at the weekly gathering of our little group. She was not quite two years old. I'm not sure what this little girl was told before she got to my apartment, but I got the biggest leg hug ever. She sat with me most of the night, and I was smitten. (So yes, little draclet, I loved you before I fell in love with your mother.) She became a common addition to our weekly game night group. I knew at that point I would do almost anything for that little bundle of energy and spunk.

Weeks went by, and as my love for the daughter grew, the relationship with the mother grew too. I was there when a tearful lady needed someone to talk to after a break up. I was there when her first trial at seeing others went askew. At the end of May, I finally asked my future wife out. Somewhere in the many walks and long talks after that date, I fell in love a second time. Whirlwind romance occurred and marriage followed the following January. In less than 1 year's time, I went from a single man, to a husband and father. The father part came first. My love of the daughter won me the heart of the mother. Without that initial caring, the second

relationship may not have happened as quickly.

My lovely wife always told me I had 3 strong characteristics that pushed her toward me. I was dependable, stable and loving. For many years I thought it was how I treated my wife, but later I found out it was how I treated the daughter. Yes, my unconditional love of another woman gave me almost 20 years of love from a wonderful wife. Through the years, she loved her daughters more than she loved me. I can't say the same thing, but I loved them almost as much. And one of them I loved longer....

She taught me what love was, after I showed the ability to love.

Classic Sherlock Holmes Tale Told

Last weekend, we drove some 200 miles on Friday night, which culminated in rush hour in Chicagoland. Saturday was go-go-go, but no complaints here since we got to see Jack Hanna's stage show, something I have been waiting over a decade to see! After a (much too) short visit with family, we were on the road again late Saturday night, and traveled the 200+ miles back home again, arriving about 2am. We got up early for church, and with my blurry tired eyes, I carefully went over my lesson plan for my 1st grade Sunday school class since I was anticipating a special guest. I'm happy to report that my class went off without a hitch, so thank God for answering my prayers – after leaving it in God's hands, I was not even nervous about it, which speaks volumes if you know me and my ability to let my nervousness get to me!!

So needless to say, by Sunday night, I was wiped. But I had been asked by some friends to attend the special press night of their stage play, the Sherlock Holmes mystery *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to write a review for our local paper. I happily obliged, especially because seeing the show on this particular night helped our finding-a-babysitter situation. I didn't know how I would like a Sherlock Holmes stage play as I had never found the books entertaining. But I was entertained by the show, so I decided to put my review on my blog since some of my readers won't be able to see it in the paper. Note that each actor brought something unique to the show, but I was unable to include rambling accounts of each individual performance due to spacial limitations. If you are anywhere near Hicksville Ohio this weekend, I hope the following review will make you want to stop by the Huber Opera House to enjoy a great autumn mystery on stage!

From the Bryan Times – Thursday, October 14, 2010:

HICKSVILLE – While the leaves fall outside, an early darkened evening or a chilly autumn afternoon spent taking in a live stage play is especially enjoyable while viewing a chilling mystery.

*This weekend, the historic Huber Opera House in Hicksville comes alive with a classic Sherlock Holmes whodunit, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Join the Hicksville Village Players this weekend as Holmes, Watson, and other curious characters guide you through the tale of the hound that haunts the halls of the Baskervilles. Intended for the audience to piece together, the show is a puzzle whose clues are carefully and individually laid out by the intriguing cast of characters.*

Sherlock Holmes, the know-it-all yet admirable mystery-solver is extraordinarily portrayed by Bill Murphy. The audience is held captive while Holmes connects clues between puffs of his pipe. Nicely complementing Murphy's natural Holmes as the ever-faithful, always reliable assistant Watson is Travis

Heffelfinger of Hicksville. Heffelfinger's Watson is dependable and sharp-witted, and he is observant enough to attain the job of Holmes' eyes and ears while protecting their client, Henry Baskerville. John Robinson of Bryan portrays Henry, a man who is fearful for his safety while he remains inquisitive as he tries to deduce who – or what – might have murdered his uncle. Providing clues and distractions alike for the famed detective are Dr. James Mortimer (Corey Fowler) and Beryl Stapleton (Lindsay Clem).

Once the investigation carries Holmes and the audience away from Baker Street and into the isolated countryside, strange stories are spun of murder, mayhem, thievery, and betrayal. Around the mysterious moor, the secrets begin to spill, and it becomes apparent that the odd collection of characters might not be as they appear. The audience joins Holmes as he tries to figure out if either the peculiar Mr. Stapleton (compellingly played by John Overberg of Montpelier) or the lady-like Laura Lyons (depicted elegantly by Courtney Widdifield) can be trusted. Can Holmes' client, Henry Baskerville, presume that the keepers of Baskerville Hall, The Barrymores (persuasively illustrated by Jamy Shaffer of Edgerton and Amber Garza of Antwerp) are truthful witnesses? Why, "It's elementary, my dear Watson!"

*In the atmosphere of the historic Huber Opera House, the wonderfully directed *The Hound of the Baskervilles* will transport you back to 19th century London and directly to Baker Street with Sherlock Holmes himself. The curtain opens Friday and Saturday nights, October 15 and 16 at 7:30pm and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons at 2:30pm on October 16 and 17.*