

Bingeing Bieber?

Those who know my family are aware that we have a son named Beeber, pronounced the same as the last name of that popular young male singer, Justin Bieber. But my son got his cute little nickname from his big sister, who was not even 2 years old when he was born – she could not say his real name, Christopher, and so “Beeber” stuck. That was way before Justin Bieber became so popular, I might add..

So now that my disclaimer is out of the way, I can share the following story, which has nothing to do with my son Beeber and everything to do with Justin Bieber. A few weeks ago, someone spotted Justin Bieber drinking beer at a bar, so they called the cops to report underage drinking because apparently Mr. Bieber is just a teenager. But when the cops showed up and ID'd Mr. Bieber, they found that the “underage drinker” was a 27-year-old **woman** named Katie. Given the pic below, honest mistake, don't you think? That would be Katie on the left and Justin on the right.



(Thanks to tmz.com for the story and picture)

Take me home from the ballgame..

Not a post about Major League Sports, but of girls fast pitch softball and a coach I knew.

We started helping out because our girls were on teams. For my last few years of coaching girls softball I was his assistant. We tried to instill some knowledge of the game, but our biggest task was to get young teen and pre-teen girls to have some fun playing ball.

We had many good players, but sometimes their interests headed away from the ball field. We took this in stride and hoped that the girls had some fun. Funny I can't seem to remember how many years I coached with this man, but I think it was 3. They were good summers.

Through the following years, we failed to keep in touch, even though my youngest was friends with one of his step-daughters. When we did see each other, it did bring back some of the those good memories. For years he walked in the "Walk for Life" to remember my dear wife. He will no longer walk that walk, he lost his own battle to the very opponent he walked against. I will miss the occasional meetings at Wally World or Taco Bell. I will miss a friend. Children will miss a father. A wife will miss her husband. And Cancer takes one more...

In the beginning...

Sunday morning. Most of my things were packed the night before, so I thought I would make it on time without a

problem. Big mistake. The few things left still occupied enough time to make me about 20 minutes late. There were no worries of course about missing the bus as leaders were scheduled to be there before dropoff time, so instead I got there in the midst of things. Good thing I was only assigned to help load gear onto the bus. At about 9AM everyone was checked in and we were off on our four-hour bus ride to Michigan. The kids watched videos all the way there, but I later learned that our friends from Iowa only got to watch one video- on the way home. In case you missed it, they are from Iowa and therefore had a trip time over double ours. That means a lot of time remained for social activities, to put it mildly. Anyway, we arrived at about 1PM (time zone change, you know) and were welcomed by big banners held by a cheering staff. After unloading and moving into our cabins- I had a group of six plus a junior leader- we headed to the swim front for swimming tests and a fort-building competition. Note the non-mention of lunch. The kids brought their own lunches, and I even remembered my own this year (it was last year or the year before that I had left it sitting on the freezer at home). This year I was a representative for the army team, moving out of the air force from the last two military themes prior two and four years ago.

Starting a new paragraph just because I can, the fort contest began while various cabins two-by-two (or one by one in the case of a few very large girl cabins) took their swim tests. The sand forts (remember- this is a swim front so there was a beach) generally had moats around them because digging in the sand was probably the easiest thing for the kids, but there were buckets for making buildings like garages for tanks and whatnot. No air strip this year, though I suppose they could have done a helipad had one of us had thought of it. The Iowa team, the marines once again, was not present for much of this but they did arrive in time to take 2nd place. Army ended up

3rd, the highest we would ever get this week outside of the upfront games. As for the swim tests, just about every cabin has its non-swimmer. Mine had three, half the kids. Well, it doesn't mean quite as much for this age group as water activities are limited anyway.

Since this along with cabin check-in and welcome/rules took up most of the afternoon, we can move on to after dinner. Throughout the week post-dinner would mean the daily game competition, but for Sunday we just moved on to the teaching time. It was here the theme for the week, the armor of God in Ephesians 6, was introduced. Each day would focus on a different part of the armor but not until Monday. The format was typical of a weekend service, but longer. Game activity time (the competition game in the case of this week, gym or crafts in the case of weekends) followed by worship, teaching, and small groups. Mornings would replace the field game with an up front game- unfortunately I missed most of these as I took this time to put in my contact lenses while the Nico, my junior leader, stayed with the kids. This first small group time was a great way to really start to know the kids, most of whom I already knew through small group time over the weekends. This year they tried to keep small groups from the weekend when possible- a matter simplified by there being three service times plus Iowa to make the four teams, each team then being divided into 4th/5th grades and boys/girls. four cabins per team. Since I stuck with my 4th-graders from last year, my cabin was all 5th grade.

Finally, there was free time on the courts where kids could play tetherball, nuke-em (played on a volleyball court where any number can play catch with the ball- dropping or missing causes an "explosion" so someone is out), four-square, trampoline basketball, regular basketball, or just hang around

and talk or play in the sand. They also had the opportunity to buy treats at the canteen. I was disappointed to see that they doubled the price on pop this year, though I think they also lowered ice cream a bit though I didn't buy any. They told me that the higher price on drinks balances with the loss they take on ice cream, and keeping most things at \$1 just makes managing the accounts that much easier. I can't argue with that, but I did make sure to stick with the one 20-oz offering all week- Dr. Pepper. Everything else was in cans. Of course, being right before bed, many kids chose Mt. Dew... Speaking of bed, it was a little difficult getting my six to sleep that night. I could blame the Dew, but it was really mostly the excitement of being there. Unfortunately Steve, the man in charge and two cabins away, had to visit our cabin not once but twice that evening. Oops...

more to come.

Take me out to the Ballgame

and so I did. Back before the beginning of Baseball season [I made a promise to myself](#) to go to at least 1 Major League game. That promise has been kept. The Tigers played the Mariners and won 7-1. There were fireworks after the game. Not a bad way to start the 4th of July weekend.

Comerica Park is a gem, a great place to watch a ballgame. The food was expensive, but very good, of course nothing else tastes like a hotdog at the ballpark. Wide selection of vendors, and most had TVs so you wouldn't miss much game action.

Then there was the game. I've said before that I don't usually care for blowouts, even when my team is winning. That is still the case, but the game seemed close until the later innings. It was 4-1 until the 5th, and then 7-1 after 7 innings. Even with that, the best play of the game came in the 9th inning with a double play off a fly ball deep to left center. Little Bits and I had a fun time at the 'old ball game'.

A couple of pictures from the Ballpark will be added soon.

How Long Did'ya Stay Fresh In That Can

Over 70 years and still as beautiful as ever. I may have seen *Wicked* on Easter Sunday. I may have enjoyed it... even appreciated it but there is not even a remote chance that I will ever LOVE it as much as the original 1939 masterpiece *The (Wonderful) Wizard of Oz*. I remember watching it as a young boy on CBS once a year on a Friday night pre-empting *The Dukes of Hazzard* and *Dallas* (heartbreaking that my mother would miss a week of J.R.). I was one of those kids who held a cassette recorder up to the television every time a song came on. I memorized where every commercial break would be. Tonight, Turner Classic Movies had its first of two trips down the Yellow Brick Road over the holiday weekend (tomorrow at 8PM is the final showing this time around).

Why is the movie so beloved? I don't think any two people has the same reason. For me, there are many reasons why I watch it year in and year out. The theatricality for one. The set looks like it was created on a huge stage. Painted backdrops. You can tell that the land of Oz is created artificially and

that is part of the movie's charm.

The casting is brilliant. Even at 17, Judy Garland portrayed a magnificent young Kansas farm girl. She won a special miniature Oscar for the role in Best Performance by an Adolescent (I believe the official award was). To generate the on-screen chemistry between Dorothy and Toto, the dog Terry lived with Garland for a time prior to filming. The actress became so enamored with the dog that she asked the owner for permission to adopt female canine. The trainer knew what a gold mine he had as he turned to offer down.

As has been reported quite frequently, the classic "Over the Rainbow" was actually cut from initial screenings of the film.

The song was thought to have slowed the action of the film. However, level heads soon prevailed and who can imagine the film without it. 1939 is considered to be the year of the classic movie. More classics were made during that year than any other in history. Another little film, *Gone with the Wind*, also premiered and was the odds on and run away winner at the Academy Awards. Oz was a cinematic hit from the start but it took a few years and re-issues before MGM felt that it was a financial success.

Of course my favorite part of the masterpiece, is one of my favorite character roles... The Cowardly Lion. But to carry around an 80+ pound costume must have needed a large amount of physicality. I could do it, though!

Who wouldn't mind getting up at 12; starting to work at one; taking an hour for lunch; and then at 2 be done? Or being clever as a gizzard? Wait a minute, clever as a gizzard?

Unless there is a reference to something other than a bird's internal organs.

Getting behind

Ugh. I ended up working late the last two days, no interest in blogging. I guess I do need to write something though considering my last post was from before camp. That turned out to be an enjoyable experience which I'll write about shortly. We left the morning of Sunday the 20th and returned last Friday. I could have stayed another week had it been a two-week experience, but then again the possibility exists for a trip with my OH friends next winter so I wouldn't have wanted to get in the way of it. So this week we started work on two new stores. There are actually four, but someone else is doing the other two. In fact, I won't be doing these stores for more than a couple months because I'm training someone to hopefully take them over if the two who have been training don't snatch them up first. In addition, I am now in charge of the equipment and so had to order some yesterday. They attempted delivery today- that's quite the service but too bad nobody was home. I'll have to call them tomorrow to find out how to proceed, whether they will try again or I'll have to pick the packages up- I know nothing about this delivery company. Today's training went s-l-o-w by the way. I started the morning with a technical glitch that cost me almost three hours to fix, and then was only able to do one store afterward. Hopefully the other store won't be too upset. I wanted to call them but it seems that I have misplaced the business cards they gave me. Sigh.

Sorry- more positive ramblings next post I hope!

Look At This Idiot

He is our puppy and he's cute. But still, you've got to appreciate the idiocy of this puppy predicament – a delicious scent awaits in the baby's playpen. What is one to do? Why, get stuck in a moron's photo opp, of course...



A Wonder Through The Ages

Since 1941, my favorite Amazonian princess has undergone slight changes in her costume. However, beginning in the 600th edition of the Wonder Woman comic book, Diana's [costume](#) will dramatically change. In the beginning, she wore basically the same outfit that millions of fans would come to recognize with one difference, her blue, white-starred lower half was a skirt. By the '50s she was in the short short version which Lynda Carter would famously adorn for three seasons over a 40 year time period on the television series.

I see a certain logic in this I guess. Who would take a gorgeous female Amazon fighting crime in a skimpy outfit seriously? On the other hand... why mess with tradition?

Let's look at Princess Diana over the years:



Classic version
from 1942



Fall of '42.
Skirt to
shorts




Remember this horrid
costume from the horrible
failed pilot of the early
70s? Starring Cathy Lee
Crosby from That's
Incredible.



The 1st
Season
WWI
outfit.
Almost
there...



No THAT is a classic look.
"Modern" 70s look. How did
they explain the forward in
time with the same actor
playing Steve Trevor?

 And finally...



The new look. Not as revealing but there is something there.

So... what do you think... classic or new look. I seem to have forgotten how to create a poll. So comments will do! I just discovered how to add a poll so here we are:

[poll id="20"]

That Candle Smells Like WHAT?!?

Something to put on my birthday list?



The White Castle slider-scented candle. That's right... if you are familiar with [White Castle restaurants](#) and their famous products, be warned – they have made a White Castle-scented candle. Yes, the steamed onion scent of the famous little burgers can now be brought into your home!

According to an article that ran on [nydailynews.com](#):

“The candle has a top note of diced sweet onions and crisp pickle, the middle notes are beef patty, cheese and ketchup, and bottom note is a warm burger bun. It all comes together to create this amazing aroma of a White Castle Slider.”

Ok, so I don't really want the White Castle scented candle for anything other than a conversation piece. I am curious about how it smells, but for my birthday I would much rather have a terrifically fun weekend, which is always probable thanks to my wonderful family and the awesome local 4th of July events that are usually planned. On my birthday, the 3rd of July (please don't remind me that I share my birthday with one of my least favorite actors), we will probably catch some fireworks somewhere, as that is one of my favorite thing to do every year. Since the 4th of July is on a Sunday this year, we will be going to church, so we have to find a way to get out to the airport as well for the annual fly-in breakfast which is always a lot of fun. After church, probably during the little dude's nap, we have a lot of packing to do for a super-fun week in the woods of southern Indiana with the extended family – more about that when we return in a week or more.

HAVE A VERY HAPPY AND SAFE 4TH OF JULY WEEKEND!!!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA!!!



Runaway Parrot

As you might have read in my blog previously, we have a pet Scarlet Macaw parrot. His name is Squawky, although he is more 'screamy' than he is 'squawky'. Occasionally when the weather is warm enough, we take Squawky outside – he either

goes for walks with our family or he gets tied to a tree (so he doesn't fly away) to enjoy nature. A few weeks ago, we were sitting in our dining room having lunch when we saw the man from our local pet store approaching Squawky in the tree out front with a towel on his hand. "He's going to take your bird!" I said to my husband, "You have to go outside!" I guess this is where I should get it in that I didn't think it was a good idea for Squawky to be outside alone in the first place, but we had to give the kids lunch and Squawky was enjoying himself so we didn't make him come in with us. So anyway, we ran outside, and told the pet store guy that he was our bird – apparently our neighbors were unaware that we had a parrot (guess they hadn't seen him outside before; sometimes we put him in the backyard). So the neighbors called the police, who called the pet store, who sent the bird-catcher. He thought it was someone's lost bird, and he was going to "rescue" Squawky – and lose some fingers in the process. It's not an exaggeration when they say that adult Macaw parrots can snap a broomstick handle with their super-strong beaks. Check out a few of my husband's parrot battle scars or use your imagination to see what one of those beaks can do to a fleshy finger. Luckily we got out there just in time to save the pet store guy's fingers, and he apologized profusely, as did our neighbors who had called the police. The pet store guy found it unbelievable that we could have a macaw parrot (a notoriously loud bird) and not have the whole neighborhood know about it. I told him that the neighbors on the side of the house where Squawky's room is probably know about him, but the neighbors who called the police live across the street – plus Squawky doesn't scream when he's outside.

But all's well that ends well – as much as that bird irritates me sometimes, he has been a part of our family for 8 years now, and I don't want to lose him. Well, not to have him stolen or lost anyway – getting paid the going price of an obnoxious Scarlet Macaw might be kind of nice... A joke, sort of. ☐

I looked around for a picture of Squawky in the tree, but I guess I don't have one. So here he is having a tremendous amount of fun taking a bath. He is a bit larger now because this was taken 7 years ago.



****UPDATE**** – Squawky was back in the tree tonight, so this time I made sure to get a picture of him enjoying his tree:



If only his personality was as beautiful as his plumage