




More Pictures


As requested... here are a few more photos from the Relay:

 Ma2's luminaria



 Aunt Carol's luminaria. I would have liked the full effect lit only by the glow stick in the bags, but this will do.


 False alarm with Jerry at the non-functional clippers.

 Amber and her new friend, Zoe.

 Jen and the first clip.

 I recognize the arm, but who took the picture?

  Does Travis look slightly too happy about his turn?

 Beth's turn

 The next Sweeney Todd?

Well that's all I's got. Hope you enjoyed! But wait... here's one more!



Beth and Morat walking the path on my 12 lap walk.

I forgot a photographer was around snapping pictures and caught up with us. He must have liked the Super hat.

They grow up don't they.

My youngest is now ~~18~~ 19.

Funny, I started this blog post way back in December and I only got the first line typed. I have no idea what I was going to write about. But today I will actually write about my youngest turning 19. Today was her birthday. We had some burgers, brats and hotdogs. I did my turn at the grill. There was swimming before the storms came in. And there was conversations with family.

Today was a good day. Cake and presents (at least for the birthday girl) were enjoyed. The spirits were high.

But my youngest just turned 19. She has been a legal adult for the past year. I've allowed her to make her own choices. I would have allowed her to make her own mistakes, I'm not convinced that she made any. ☐ She is a lovely, wonderful young lady.

Today on her birthday, I wish her all the best. While times won't always be good (we know that don't we.), I hope she has the strength and maturity to handle the times she has. My main job as a parent has been 'finished' for the last year. I only need to advise and listen. She does have what she needs to succeed or fail in life. I hope for success.

Happy birthday little one.


Tornado – Err, Weather Siren

If you've read my previous blog post, then you know that I wrote a letter of complaint to my local newspaper about our town's policy change regarding the ~~tornado~~ weather siren. Our siren is now activated for any severe thunderstorm warning, a policy which I consider hazardous since we seem to now be left without any warning of actual tornadic activity. Ironically (or not, since the sirens have gone off no fewer than *eight* times this June 2010), today we got another dose of the siren. As has been usual lately, we got an average thunderstorm, nothing more than some lightning, thunder, and rain. I decided to videotape my street as the sirens were going off, with the intention of adding it to my blog to illustrate my point about writing a letter to the newspaper. At the very least, the following video will help my daughter and I – we are getting really good at doing impressions of the ~~tornado~~ weather siren – enough to drive our puppy crazy anyway. ☐

Walking (and shaving) For A Cure

All day Saturday and into the wee and lit hours of Sunday morning, I participated in the Defiance County Relay for Life and the Actors for a Cure team led by co-captains [Mare](#) and one of my favorite directors, Beth. It all began when I arrived at the fairgrounds shortly after 9AM to help Travis in his logistical duties (read, moving benches, picnic tables, and chasing a red head pulling two garbage cans behind him while we followed with a pickup... GOOD TIMES!).

The 23 hour fest found our team and other groups walking a 1/3 mile track in order to raise money for a cure. Don't ask me how many laps I completed but during one session, I completed 12 laps walking with Beth who only completed 11.5. Please leave comments if you want to hear the reason for Beth's .5 mile loss.

 Later in the afternoon, Megan and Carol came over and we sat and enjoyed some of the dancers and singers who were part of the entertainment. Maybe next year... The girls had to leave but would return following the city band concert and fireworks at the B-town Day in the Park for a special event.

At our teams' table, Mare had a jar in which she collected donations (including the dollars collected from putt putt and popcorn sales). If she raised \$500 before midnight, she would sit in the barber chair and get a nice shave. After some rather strategic donation collecting by Jen and Jerry, we topped that total and more!

At dusk, the moving luminaria ceremony got underway. In years

past, people could purchase candles that were placed around the Relay track. For the ceremony, these candles were placed inside paper bags with the name of cancer survivors, those currently battling the disease, or to remember those who have gone. This year, it was decided to place a canned good in the paper bag and break a glow stick inside to provide the illumination. Apparently, there were some bags set aflame in years past. Also, a huge screen displayed the names of those honored as they were each announced. I purchased a luminary for Ma2 and Aunt Carol. Being my first ceremony, I was deeply moved when I saw first Emily's and then Carol's name.

After the ceremony, it was time for the shave. We had a false start as the clippers brought did not work. A beautician in the audience volunteered to go and get her set. Good thing, because Megan and Carol had not arrived. When the moment arrived, Mary was placed front and center of the entertainment stage. The entire Actors for a Cure team took a turn playing barber.

Then, Megan and I took a few laps around not only the Relay track but the entire perimeter of the fairgrounds. I thought we had done at least 5 cycles, but my companion informed me that it was only four. I surely walked a good 10 miles in the 23 hours.

By the time 7:30 arrived, we were all ready to load the putt putt course, tent booth, and other equipment and go home! It has been a long time since I have gone 24 hours with no sleep, but all fun and for a good cause.

✘ The good captain preparing for a shave.

✘ After the cutting!

Moving Day...

I rented a BIG truck today. I then went to the Froggy's house and help load up things into a van, a couple of pick-ups and The BIG truck. With this thing and that thing happening, the move didn't start as early as we would have liked. It got hot, very hot. The vehicles were loaded up and we left B-town at around 1:45.

BIG truck liked to BOUNCE. I'm not sure if I would have been sore with just moving stuff, but I was sore after driving that BIG truck. It actually handled well, but it bounce me up and down in the seat for the entire trip to T-town.

At 2:45 we were emptying the vans and pick-ups. We had more help on the unloading end, so it went much faster. We took most of the stuff for storage. That was another adventure that I may write about when I have a bit more energy.

I'm still wondering why today reminded me of George Carlin... The link is not really kid friendly, it is George Carlin on stage...

<https://youtube.com/embed/MvgN5gCuLac>

I'm Published – Again!

The title of this blog post is kind of a joke, just as it was the first time our local newspaper printed something from me. A few months ago, they printed a picture I took of some baby doves in our tree in the front of the house, and today I am

happy to see they printed my letter in the public forum! Here is a copy:

Siren Rules Need Clarification

I appreciated your article about the weather sirens called "Siren Rules Given" that was printed on Tuesday June 22, but it seems that further clarification is necessary to ensure the safety of the community. Because the rules were changed regarding when to activate the sirens – they are now being activated for severe storms, not just tornado warnings – what type of warning system does our town have in the event of an actual tornado? When did the guidelines change and why were they changed?

The seemingly constant activation of the sirens lately (at least 6 times in the past month; with 3 sirens in ONE day on June 23!) is very scary for my 4 children. Other local parents are having the same concerns. Today there was a mild rumble of thunder at my daughter's T-Ball game, and at least one little boy began to cry. We can reassure our children, but it's concerning that in an actual tornado emergency that many people might not take it seriously since the now so-called 'weather sirens' are being activated weekly if not more often – it's a 'boy who cried wolf' scenario that could lead to a tragic disaster. I would like to see our city go back to the old guidelines on the weather sirens – call them tornado sirens once again and only use them when the threat of tornadic activity is severe enough that us citizens should be taking shelter in our basements.

I wrote this letter the other night and sent it in before I learned of [what happened to a town in our county](#). Edgerton was hit by a microburst and sustained devastating damage to many trees and a few buildings. Thankfully, there is only one report of an injury that was not life-threatening. I hope

that people aren't confused by my letter; clearly the people in Edgerton should have been in their basements on Wednesday night. Their tornado sirens were warranted (as were ours probably since Edgerton is only about 10 miles away) on Wednesday night, and thankfully the injuries were kept to a minimum thanks to the smart people who took cover. But we did not go into the basement on Wednesday night. As I said in the letter, the sirens had gone off 3 times on Wednesday, and the kids panicked each time. And since the sirens had been going off all month and it had been published in the newspaper that the siren was now for severe thunderstorm warnings, we decided that going down to the basement added to the drama and aided in keeping the kids alarmed and up late. After Wednesday's storm moved through, our town was spared any major damage, but this storm did cause tornadoes to the east in Indiana as well as that dangerous microburst in Edgerton. Looking back, we probably should have gone to the basement, but we have been desensitized to the seriousness of the siren, and it didn't seem like a big deal. Part of the purpose of writing this letter was to vent my frustrations, and I also wrote it partly because I want some answers to the questions I raised. I was hoping that maybe someone from our local branch of the National Weather Service will reply or perhaps we'll hear from the fire chief, who was quoted giving the new siren rules in the original newspaper article to which I referred. If there is any follow-up, I will keep you posted, and in the meantime, we will have to continue to calm the kids any time that now weekly 'severe weather siren' gets activated.

ringtones?

On my last phone I could set ringtones for each caller if I wished. I could also download ringtones (usually for some

nominal cost, but I never did that). On the new phone I can make my own ringtones. I can record something and set that to be a ringtone. Bits and pieces of MP3 files can become ringtones. The only limitation I can see is my very fertile imagination and the time I would need to spend on each ringtone.

I thought of recording each daughter saying "Hey Dad it's me.", but then I remembered that over the phone they all have similar vocal characteristics. I could record myself telling me which daughter is calling, but then anyone within earshot would know which daughter is calling me. Interesting concept, but not enough imagination yet.

I guess I could do my Stitch or Bullwinkle impersonations and make a slightly different message for each daughter. Maybe, maybe???

I could find bits of their favorite songs and set those as ringtones. One daughter is very, very easy to pick – Anything Star Wars or Frogs. I don't think I've heard any phone that rings with a Bullfrog croak. Dogs barking for the young Vet Tech student?

Something that sounds tropical for the daughter in Florida? Or maybe the sound of a zoo, since I hear she has the start of one. And the oldest, hmm?? I will need to think on that one.

I currently have some picked out, so I can recognize some of my callers, but what about friends? Should each friend have their own ringtone? Should I group some friends together? Group my work contacts together? Have some annoying default tone for anyone not on my contact list? The choices seem to be endless, but I will get tired of this soon.

Do you want to have you're own ringtone. What would it be?

A Buckeye In Wolverine Land

On to another great post! Thursday afternoon was my first voice lesson in about two and a half years. I am pleased to say I am very ecstatic about the next coming months! We began with a review (for me) about breathing, support, the diaphragm, the mask, and other technical terms that we quickly glossed over. Then, we determined that I have an octave and a half range with the same above that in falsetto which totally surprised the both of us. Then, it was time to get down to business... FUN TIMES!

I decided that "Younger Than Springtime" would be good to warm up on. It would have been if the copy I had was complete. We got to the last page and discovered that there is something missing. So I dig and find the book with the song... only to discover that it was in a lower key! But manageable... only slightly lower. But I prefer the higher range. I like to shoot for my POWER notes, but those would come later.

Next, I dug out "This is the Moment." Kathrine is unfamiliar with *Jekyll and Hyde*?! Blasphemy! Just don't listen to the Hoff's version. Then, we went to "If I Can't Love Her" from the stage version of *Beauty and the Beast*. The big ballad which closes Act I. The only suggestion she had for both pieces is to find the soft moments in both pieces. They are both powerful songs but powerful is not always meant for volume.. Build up to the big moment! Then you will have them eating out of your hand. Sounds like homework. But she said that with a slight polishing they are already prime for performance. I wanted to do the Beast's number previously; however, the gig I wanted to sing it for was limited to musicals of the past decade. So, I sang "Under the Sea."

It is a good thing I was introduced to *Miss Saigon* earlier in the week via youtube. My new coach had me read (sight reading... YUCK!) two duets from the show with her. Not the character driven pieces I had hoped for but those will come in time. It has been advised that I check out both the Engineer and Thuy (although Vietnamese I am not but...). Kathrine mentioned that we should sign up for one of the weekend gigs starting up again in the fall. I am totally against that idea ☐ HAAAAHAHA! Just need to get some more cool character pieces in with the big dramatic ones. Several I can think of easily... maybe go dig an old fossil of 18 years ago. Go in there and blow everyone's minds. Of course, provided that anyone would actually come and see me?! I'm sure I could get at least 3 people there... and that is a crowd.

Who knows what the next few months will bring? I just know that the next musical on a nearby stage is not my cup of tea.

I better stop with those two songs. When I do perform, I don't want to spoil it all for those three in the audience ☐ Two big, powerful ballads now for a few duets and at least three character pieces.

As I was pulling out my checkbook, my new coach sneered at the picture of the Script Ohio on my first check. "Since it is money, I guess I can accept it." Oh, we're going to get along REALLY well. At least she is not a BoSox fan... I hope.

Eric And The Beast On A Rag

I did get to sit in the audience of the City Band Wednesday night. I wasn't sure if it was going to be at the bandstand or at its alternate venue. Before finding that out, I decided to locate the place of my Thursday afternoon voice lesson

which was easier to locate than the directions given by my new coach. I googled the address and it was a breeze to find.

Especially with the number written on the mailbox. The house was buried by a wooded area but really easy to find. All I had to do was turn off of U.S. 6 onto County Road 13 and it was .3 miles away. Then, with plenty of time to spare, I went to Wal Mart and ran into some old friends and saw the truck belonging to another but was not able to find him. I must have been on the wrong end of Electronics (or he could have been hiding). ☐

After discovering that the concert would be at the ice rink with five minutes to spare, I decided that given the choice, I would have rather directed Stars and Stripes this week as opposed to last (not complaining, just sayin'). I just think this week's concert had better music. Many songs I was already familiar with... "12th Street Rag" I had sung in choir and played sometime. Of course, a different arrangement than I am accustomed to, but I would have enjoyed sitting in the low brass section playing "Selections from *Phantom of the Opera*" and the title tune from the animated classic turned hit Broadway show "*Beauty and the Beast*."

Speaking of Phantom, my brother turned to me and stated that the high school at which he serves as the tech advisor will be performing the musical next year. I did not believe him until I looked [on line](#) and discovered that the rights have just indeed become available from R&H productions for high school and amateur productions. There had been "test" runs a few years ago overseen by Lord Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Group company. But how did the small school get the rights so quickly? Hicksville had better "Got Talent" to pull this off.

I imagine that the rights are probably for a tailored production of the musical.

I asked Liz if they were going to come next week for the announced ice cream social "before and during the concert." I don't think she realized where she will be next Wednesday

because she didn't know if they would be or not. Probably not since they will be at Disney World. Maybe they could borrow Aladdin's magic carpet, Carpet. I'd rather be there when it is not so hot!

A fun concert moved to a different venue to be "safe rather than sorry."

Edgerton Bombed

It seems we have been inundated with storms, storms, and more storms for the beginning weeks of the summer. Our little area has been relatively lucky... UNTIL Wednesday night. I was fortunate enough to get off work in time to go the the City Band concert (more in that later). I got home around 9:15. I went out to the beauty shop to finish cleaning. At 9:30, here go the sirens (**AGAIN**). Looking out the window, there wasn't a lot to see at the moment so we decided to step outside and see what we could see. In the west, we could see the sky lit up up lightning. However, as our neighbor pointed out, it was eerily silent: no birds, no mosquitos (I noticed that myself).

A half hour later, I felt a rather large raindrop and decided that was enough for me. Thirty seconds later, the power went out. So... my brother, his wife, and two kids, my sister and her two little ones, my mother and I all headed to the basement. Someone failed to get batteries for the flashlights or the radio so Dad was upstairs lighting candles. The rest of us lit our way into the chamber of secrets armed with cell phone illumination.

Around 11, we headed back upstairs. The corded phone in the kitchen rang. A neighbor was just informed that the town hall had been hit. Dad and a neighbor went up to check it out.

The night was so dark that they could not see any sign of damage. Our side of town was completely black.

By this time, the excitement was over. Everyone decided to stay the night and hope that there was no damage in the morning. It gets hotter than... upstairs with a fan/air conditioning so I slept on the couch. About midnight, a car pulls up and someone comes in. Still not being able to see, I shouted "Who goes there?" "It's me!" Well... that helps a lot! It was our oldest sibling who had been out driving, surveying the damage. And HE had power at his house. Go figure.

The next morning, I walked around a bit before going to work. Limbs, branches, trees toppled. The east wall of the Flea Market wiped out. VERY noticeable now... the gaping hole in the 120+ year old former town hall. It really looked like a missile went through it! Also gone was poor "Clem" the one casualty of the war. He had been standing guard in front of the building for years whether he was in the courtyard or in the middle of State Route 49. I am too young to remember his transfer from the road, One of our fine firemen was injured while he was outside rolling up car windows... nothing life threatening but a broken femur.

At work all day, we joked out the condition of the town hall debate. For the last few years, the historical society had been wanting to purchase the condemned building, restore the second floor opera house from yesteryear, and create a museum dedicated to the town. A worthy ambition to be sure. But where was the money for this undertaking to come from? Well, I guess that debate was settled Wednesday night.

Like many storms, it is just amazing the spottiness of the devastation. Indiana Street was definitely the hardest hit. Two blocks north along North Michigan Avenue, I found a small branch lying on the ground. Family safe... could have been so much worse.



town hall



sign from
the bank
across from
town hall



what's
left of
"Clem"



a new
window into
town hall



clem's old
home buried



flea market (former True
Value store) across from town
hall)

The strange thing the weather "experts" have yet to assess the situation fully and state unequivocally what caused the damage.