

Sorry...

Regular program to be continued soon... One thing about no longer subbing is that I no longer have a lot of time to pass reading books as I did during specials (elementary) or free periods (middle school). I typically don't even take a lunch break- I just eat while driving to the next dealer. For the last couple of weeks I have been heavily reading the tome from Robert Jordan known as book one of the Wheel of Time. Yep, many more will follow, but I will take a break between books.

So besides skipping out on reading my friends' blogs which I will remedy soon, I have missed out on some topics to blog about, like first week of May holiday crunch with three celebrated days in a row. We all know about cinco de mayo, but bookending May 5 are Star Wars Day (May the 4th... be with you) and the National Day of Prayer which a liberal judge recently decided was "unconstitutional," but in his graciousness set aside his Judgment while appeals are made. How nice. Yeah right it's unconstitutional- as if asking people to pray is advocating one religion over another. How many religions pray now? Of course I personally advocate only one and believe only prayers to our one God are heard and answered but that's beside the point of this day set aside for our nation.

Dandelions- all over the place. This menace to lawns everywhere is really bad, at least in this area. One of the guys in my small group runs a landscaping business and has personally testified to this Spring 2010 epidemic. Mow 'em over, they are back in less than two days, spewing their poison as little white puffs in the wind. Pick 'em, and the next day they are back with a vengeance. I would readily

believe after this week that the Greek myth about the Hydra started with these small yellow creatures- cut off one head and two take its place.

So what does the future of posting hold? Well, I still have a couple of yearbook posts in me and I haven't started on any retrogaming posts. Those will be starters. And I am hoping Saturday the 15th will bring a post, when we try again to do a small group outing for our young 4th-grade boys. And there is yet another holiday approaching this Sunday. Well, time to pick up the pizza- gotta go!

PS. For certain OH readers, it looks like I am good to visit Memorial Day weekend- I am 95% sure I can stay through Monday. I have cleared it with my boss, but I still have to mention it to the two dealers I serve that day. I'm sure they will be happy to not have me come on Memorial Day though.

I Am Published!

It doesn't take much to amuse me, I guess, because today I'm happy that my local newspaper printed a picture I sent in of the baby doves that resided in our tree. You have to subscribe to the paper to see the picture, so if you're local, pick up a copy to see my picture; it's on page 5 ☐

For the rest of you, [follow this link](#) and you can read my post about the baby doves – the photo that was printed in the newspaper is the middle picture.

Not a review, but a recommendation...

IRON MAN 2 – Let's see... Comic book movie? check. Cool FX? check. Decent story line? check. Some humor? check. Believable comic book action? check. Downey plays Stark as a Jerk? Check.. Bad guys, good guys? Check. Cool fights? check. Entertaining for me? Double check.

Ok, it had everything I wanted in a movie tonight. With most comic book movies, I don't really care if it follows the storyline in any comic before. Heck, most of them have had multiple dimensions, timelines, worlds anyway. What is one more? When you go to one of these movies, you should know what to expect. All you need to ask is if the story you just watched was fun. That's what comic books are all about, and that is what movies based on comic books should be.

Iron Man 2 was fun. That's it! No terrible acting that made me remember it was a movie. No strange bad effects to ruin the believability. The CGI was integrated into the live shots well. 2 hours of escapism. Fun stuff.

Full review comes later with spoiler alerts but not here. Just my recommendation. This is a movie I will go to the good theater to see again. Maybe more than once. And then when it comes out on home disk, it is coming home with me. Can anyone say Marvel Comic Movie Marathon?

Weird Wednesday

Wednesday nights have been really strange at work as of late. This past Wednesday was no different. A female customer (who sorry to say looked as if she was a few Aces short of a full deck) asked me if we carried fresh cranberries. Legitimate question. I politely explained that we did not. After I was asked the reason for this, I came up with the most logical response I could: I really do not think fresh cranberries would be a popular item in a small store at any time of year except for the holidays.

She then asked if we carried canned cranberries. Those we do have! She was not done. Do you have cranberry juice in a glass bottle. Unfortunately, we don't. The plastic bottle contains harmful chemicals that the glass does not. She finally decided on canned cranberries.

I won't go into the ordeal that the cashier went through as the customer attempted to purchase her cranberries with her electronic food stamp card. But she did successfully make her purchase and proceeded on her way. Interesting lady whom I had never had the pleasure of meeting before. Hopefully, she enjoys those cranberries in whatever form they are. It did bring back memories of a customer whom I actually know quite well who asked if we carried sun-dried tomatoes. My former employer laughed at the audacity of such a question! I'll make a point to check on the availability of fresh cranberries and glass bottled juice on my next trip to Wally World.

Zoo Snoozin' – Part 2 – And Then Some

Bright and early at 7am last Friday at the Toledo Zoo, we were gently awakened by one of our guides (or not-so-gently awakened at 5am by the screaming parrots if you were in the Michigan group sleeping in Nature's Neighborhood) after hitting the pillows at 1am just hours earlier. No problem, what better motivation could I have to get out of bed than already being IN the zoo? We got dressed and packed up our gear and headed to the Carnivore Cafe for a generous breakfast of bagels, cereal, yogurt, applesauce, juice, and coffee (thank goodness for that, and I chugged two cups for fuel). Oh yeah, if you're not a regular reader and happened upon this post unintentionally, then you probably don't know that I'm talking about the Zoo Snooze my daughters and I went to last week – [see installment one here](#).

After breakfast, we headed over to the gorilla exhibit, but we got stopped halfway there because there was mis-communication – we were supposed to be at the primate exhibit instead. So we did an about-face, and headed over to the primates to watch them play with our tubes we had made the night before. THEN we headed over to the gorilla exhibit, and we had to take the long way since they were re-doing the sidewalk between the primate and gorilla exhibits. For those of you who aren't familiar with the Toledo Zoo, there is A LOT of walking. Not as much walking between exhibits as other zoos, such as Brookfield Zoo near Chicago, but still a lot of walking. As frequent visitors to the Toledo Zoo, we've found ways of cutting down the mileage, especially when pushing the double stroller. But on the second day of the Zoo Snooze, we were all over the place. And I loved it. It was a nice day. My kids were tired, but I was rarin' to go, so I didn't even mind any of the detours. So we watched the gorillas play and

tussle over their enrichment treats, and we listened to the gorilla keeper tell us about their personalities. The gorilla troupe of Toledo holds a special place in my heart – their silverback (male gorilla leader) Kwisha, was born at Brookfield Zoo in 1988 – right about the time when I was a frequent visitor there as a child. I remember ogling the gorillas and especially the babies in the (then) new Tropic World exhibit, and it's quite probable that I admired Kwisha (who is the youngest and last son of Samson, a famous Brookfield silverback) way back when he was a gorilla tot.

After the gorillas, we had to walk across the zoo to the elephant exhibit (the long way, remember, because of the construction) to watch Louie play with our enrichment treats. Louie is the zoo's baby elephant – well, not so much anymore... he was celebrating his 7th birthday last week when we were there. I have a video of Louie popping our treat bags into his mouth – whole thing, bag and all without even opening it – but I put that in my previous post, so refer to the link above if you'd like to see it. And then it was time for the Zoo Snooze to end, and the gates to open and let the real visitors come into the zoo.

So we hiked back to the car, and we got many a strange look from regular zoo-goers who were wondering why we were carrying sleeping bags and backpacks and pillows. We stashed our stuff and spent some time in the gift shop, which is not normally something I do on zoo trips, but it was a nice change of pace. Besides, I was missing my little ones so much, and I had that zoo membership card burning a hole in my pocket – I just had to buy them something. At this point, it was starting to get rather warm outside, and my kids were exhausted. The rest of the group was going quite well, but my kids kept asking if we had to go back into the zoo. Keep in mind that we come often, so they were old hats at the zoo who were extremely tired. I patiently explained that we were going to do whatever the people who we were riding with were

going to do, and that was that. As it was though, everyone was exhausted and the people we rode with seemed to be asking us for permission to **not** go back into the zoo. FINE with us! I explained – not because I had had enough of the zoo – that would never happen, no matter how little sleep I'd had... but I wanted to be on their schedule, plus I had the potential for two very tired and crabby kids on my hands AND a trip to Illinois scheduled for the next day. We ended up staying on the side of the zoo where our car was parked (Toledo Zoo straddles the Anthony Wayne Trail – a major thoroughfare, and the zoo has a walkway above it. But it requires a lot of walking to get from side to side, and most of the exhibits are located on the opposite side of the parking lot), so stayed on the one side and still got to see the Polar Bears, Wolves (who were passed out because of the heat), giraffes, and zebras. And then it was time to go.

During the entire Zoo Snooze, I had planned on napping the whole way home, but I found myself having an intriguing conversation with our drivers instead. We arrived home about 5pm, and I unpacked and then I re-packed for the trip to Illinois the next day and made up some lost time with my little ones. By the end of the night, I was seeing things and not making much sense because I was so tired, but it was well worth it!

We awoke bright and early Saturday morning and left at 8am headed for Chicago, and wouldn't you know it – a traffic snarl. It was too early for the kids to nap, and they were awesome in the car – at least until we hit stop and go traffic just outside the Loop. An hour and 4 miles later (yes, you read that right – it took us an **hour** to go **four** miles!), we discovered the reason for our delay – a bridge had begun to crumble, so they had to close down 2 lanes to repair it, which left all the traffic to merge into ONE lane. Ah, Chicago traffic, don't you love it? NOT!!!

The kids were pretty great during all of this, as was I for

running on fumes – I think I was still high off my Zoo Snooze. They did start to lose it a little, but luckily I had some powdered donuts packed, so between those and the Veggie Tales dvds I put into the car's player, we managed to not kill each other. We arrived at my mother-in-law's house 55 minutes late, even after Jill the GPS had predicted us getting there an hour early all morning. This would have been fine, except that my mother-in-law had previous plans, so we got to see her for a whopping 15-minute-hi-goodbye-here's-this-here's-that-I-love-you-hug-kiss-goodbye session while my husband's sister and brother-in-law managed to avoid us completely... long story, there's bad blood there, but I thought we were over it by now. Guess not. Whatever. We moved on to a local Chicago beef place (NOTE to non-Chicagoans – just because you call it Chicago Beef, **a French Dip IS NOT CHICAGO BEEF** no matter how hard you try!!) where we shared great food and even better conversation with a friend from way back, Derek – SO glad he called us and that the traffic jam didn't ruin this part of our trip!

Our next stop was my Grandpa's nursing home, and that was awesome. It's pretty much on the way from my husband's family's house to my family's house, and I wouldn't dream of going to Illinois without seeing him, especially since my grandparents do not travel and have never been to our home in Ohio. Going to ~~Hellinois~~ Illinois is the only way I can see them and so every time I'm in the area, I make sure to stop by and let our kids have a visit with their great-grandparents. My little boy, who will be 2 in July, had a special buddy in my grandmother; it was really sweet, and I don't even know why. But we were there for over an hour, and the whole time, he kept saying "Grandma! Grandma!" making sure that she was doing everything right along side him. My grandpa made me a bet – will the Chicago Cubs (my team – he is a St. Louis Cardinals fan) or the Chicago Bears (a football team, also a favorite of his and my husband's, for that matter) win their respective championship first – World Series or Superbowl?

Stay tuned to find out... ☐

Next it was on to my sister's house, where there was a birthday party for my nephews who both have April birthdays - they turned 2 and 7 this year. It was a great party; a wonderful chance to see family; immediate and also my sister's in-laws who are very nice and interesting people to chat with. My sister's nephew is my oldest daughter's age (10), and he has been interested in the weather since he was about 3 years old. His hero is Tom Skilling, a local Chicago WGN weatherman, one whom I've always liked also. Tom always teaches about the weather and its systems and patterns rather than just simply forecasting it. But anyway, my sister's nephew has his own weekly weather newsletter that he writes and send electronically himself, so I put myself on his mailing list. When I got the newsletter this week, I was impressed - just as I was when talking to the little guy and being dwarfed by his weather knowledge. As is usual, my kids had such a wonderful time with their cousins that they hid when it was time to leave, and we had to dig them out, this time out from under my sister's bed. I'm done with being embarrassed about this; especially since my sister dug up some memories of us hiding from our parents while playing with our cousins! I don't remember this, but I'll take her word for it...

Anyway, time got away from us, and we left my sister's house at 9pm - which was 10pm Ohio time. Arrived home at 2:30 in the morning and had two crazy dogs and some kids to put to bed, and we begrudgingly gave up our church dreams for Sunday. But lo and behold, we were all up and ready for church on Sunday, so we went, and almost one busy week later, I'm still catching up on sleep as I write this, no surprise there. But thanks for reading my rambling, and may this Mother's Day find you blessed, happy, and healthy - hope you have a good one!!

I didn't know that.

A few years ago a movie came out and was release to critical defeat. As for myself I enjoyed the movie except for a few minor problems. I found it to be an enjoyable waste of time (just what I like in most movies).

The movie was [The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen](#). One of the biggest things that bothered me was the introduction of Tom Sawyer into the movie. On top of that he was a Pinkerton agent. I kept saying to myself, why bring in that character as a detective. Didn't make much sense to me. Of course Dorian Grey wasn't in the original comic either, but that didn't bother me as much.

Then I got my Nook! (Yep, another Nook post. Think I could get money to write reviews for my Nook?) I just finished a short story, from Mark Twain, that I never read or heard of before. The story was called [Tom Sawyer, Detective](#). While he was not a Pinkerton agent, he did use observation to solve a crime. So now after the years I've complained about Tom Sawyer being a detective in that movie, I guess that following the path that Twain left, it isn't that far out into left field.

There is another story that I have yet to read about Mr Sawyer and Mr. Finn called [Tom Sawyer Abroad](#). Tom and Huck are on a balloon expedition in Africa. I guess that allows the trip to England for Tom anyway.

Just one question about the movie, if the film people actually knew about these stories: Where was Huck? ☐

Nook again

I currently have around 200 books/stories on my Nook. I have read or started to read about 20 of those books/stories. I also have a number of MP3's. So I do have a wide selection to read or listen to. I can add research books that are available. I have new authors who started by publishing free books. I have old authors whose works are now being digitally archived and made available on the internet. A wonderful array of things to keep this old mind busy.

There is no physical way that I would have been able to read the past few selections in paper. Living in rural America, our local libraries can not be expected to have complete libraries of old classic books, they can't be expected to have all of the latest authors. And if a book is out of print? How will they get it? That doesn't even include books that are found only on the web. Stories only found in back issues of old magazines. Nope, I would not have been able to find all of the things I've read.

In my lifetime, I've had to move a 'library' of books from place to place. I've moved, my children have moved and we all have had books. A box of 20 hardbound books is heavy. 200+ books would be almost a truckload. I can carry them in the palm of my hand. And I can and will put more books on the Nook. I'm not sure I will ever read all of them, but it will give me something to do.

And I am assuming that in the years to come, more books will be available in electronic format. I will probably still buy books, go to the library or borrow a book or two from friends. Hard copy books and the feel in my hand are things I don't want to give up just yet. But I'm thinking if the improvements

to the reader itself and the books available, I may be able to carry a complete reference, entertainment library wherever I go. I think that is a wonderful thing.

The 5th of May...

And I didn't go to a Mexican Restaurant. Other plans (thanks C and L) prevented my normal trek to a Mexican Restaurant today. I had Greek Food. No flaming Goat Cheese, but it was very good. Not that I would have wanted to go to a Mexican place without at least one of my daughters, but in a way I missed the trek.

When plans were made, I didn't even think that the 5th of May was in the near future. I'm not sure that would have changed anything. I really want to try the flaming Goat Cheese.

Oh the memories of dining out on Cinco de Mayo. I don't think we missed many. If we could not afford to go out, most of the time we celebrated at home. Why such a big deal about a Mexican-American Holiday? ([not really celebrated much in Mexico](#)) The only reason we had was it was another excuse for eating Mexican food. Not that this family ever needed an excuse. My dear wife's favorite kind of food was Mexican (*other than chocolate), and we went to Mexican restaurants often. And it did help that the girls never really would mind another meal of Tacos.

So today I had Greek food. I was able to share the company of two very good friends. Nice evening, even without the Flaming Goat Cheese. Other than dinner with my daughters, I could not think of a better way to spend the early evening.

Ah, how things change.

I'm still wondering why we never went to Oriental Restaurants to celebrate Chinese New Years. Could it be that somewhere near the time of that date, we were almost sure to go to a Chinese restaurant? Yep, my birthday is near that day every year, and my favorite food is Chinese food (even better than Chocolate!!)

And why do I keep using the extended title of "Flaming Goat Cheese" for the dish Saganaki? Just because it is more fun to type and say. ☐

And the movies never did it justice.

and probably never could, but I haven't seen the TV series.

What am I talking about?

I just finished reading [Alexandre Dumas'](#) book '[The Count of Monte Cristo](#)'. This is a very long book. It loops here, there and everywhere. Characters have many interactions with others. There are friends, sons, daughters, parents and of course enemies involved. Plot twists abound.

I remember back many years ago, I read this book for High School. It was just after we moved out into the boonies. The house had no heat, it was the middle of the winter and my parents and younger sister were living in a camper. With very little room to move around, reading was the activity of the day. It took me a weekend, plus a day or two to finish the 1000+ page book. I enjoyed it, but all recollection was pushed aside. I saw at least [one movie](#) and a [TV adaptation](#) of the book and enjoyed those too. I even liked the '[Mr. Magoo](#)'

version.

I will tell you that as an adult (maybe in name only), I enjoyed this book more than any of the previous encounters with the work. Maybe I got a better translation this time, but the writing was crisp and clear even when the plot was not (and the plot was meant to be foggy).

I knew the story, but was compelled to turn to the next page and read the next chapter. I will recommend this book to anyone with some lonng reading time they want to fill.

Oh, and the best thing about this. I was reading it on my Nook and I wasn't trying to hold up pounds of paper. ☐

Sad day in Tiger Town

I just read that [Ernie Harwell](#) passed away. This was expected, since he had an inoperable form of cancer.

I grew up listening to Mr. Harwell on the radio. As a Tiger fan, he was the voice of the Tigers. I would have the game on TV, but the sound would be off and I would listen to the guy on the radio. His strong voice would carry Tiger games over the airwaves of WJR from Detroit.

Of course things change with the Tigers as I grew older, but for the most part the voice was constant. Until one year he was no longer there. He had been let go!! Outrage by Tiger fans eventually brought him back to the booth until he retired. Oh the many good memories he provides me. That old transistor radio hidden under my pillow, just what was needed for those West Coast Series. That same radio hidden at School to listen to day games in the fall or spring. Driving in the

evening tormenting my wife and oldest daughter because I had to listen to the game. I grew out of that (mostly) when Ernie left. He was the voice for me.

He retired many years ago, but would visit the booth from time to time. Often in spring training to recite the following:

*For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*

I never knew what that had to do with baseball, but it was a springtime tradition for Tiger fans.

Sad day in Tiger Town, and in the world of Baseball.