

# Crazy things

Well, us moving is up in the air. Tony, I think, has decided that we won't be able to get a loan, but I won't give up. I know that something will work out, I have to believe that. I can't give up before we have even started. Amie and I are planning on looking at houses if we have a day off together. Maybe it will be a waste of time, maybe we won't be able to get a loan, but I don't want to give up before we even start! I love Tony, and I know that he can be pessimistic, but that is who he is and I wouldn't change him for the world. I will just have to keep up being the one who has the faith, keep him from going doubting too much.

I know that Tony will be reading this eventually, and I just want him to know, I really believe we can get a loan somewhere! We just have to keep trying. We are already outgrowing this house and we really need that \$8000 tax credit next year. So, keep praying for us. Thanks.

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## Finally cleaned up another problem.

I've been complaining that my laptop is broken for some time now, but I never used that opportunity to fix my Power Box. I've had stuff to do on it for a couple of years now, but it just wouldn't boot up properly after I installed a new hard drive. I thought I knew what the problem was, but I never undertook the job of actually looking at it. So today I did.

Yes, the problem was exactly what I thought it was. It was trying to boot from the old disk drive. Unfortunately, this

drive no longer had any operating system on it. It was still formatted as a bootable drive, but there was nothing to boot to. Quick spin through the bios, and that drive is no longer on the boot list. YEAH.

Now I just have to find all of the stuff I needed to do and finish it up. Yes, there may be a Godspell video in there somewhere. I guess I'll have to stop blogging after my software updates from more than 1 year of inactivity.

More work for me. I'm glad I took a break from theater for a while... ☐

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## **This really won't work...**

For a while, my laptop's screen started working again. I took it in to have it checked out, and they cleaned some contacts in hope that it would solve the problem. It did for a while. Buy now, it stopped working again. I guess I need to fork over some cash now to get a new backlight.

Right now I have it hooked up to my TV, but I have to sit too close so I can see the writing. Just not a comfortable way to do this unless I move the couch to within 2 feet of the TV, or set the screen resolution to a bigger size, so I can see the print from across the room. Oh well, I hope to back up the drive tonight and take the machine in tomorrow.

I also finally hooked up a wireless keyboard to the machine. This actually works very well. I've had the keyboard/mouse for a long time, I just never bothered to hook it up. I was hoping to be able to sit across the room looking at the TV screen.

I just set the screen to a different resolution, and can

almost make out the print from across the room. I could definitely play computer games this way. I just don't play that many computer games.

Maybe I could use this to watch baseball soon. If my connection speed is still good, I may have to sign up for the MLB package.

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## **Would Ya, Could Ya, Ain't Ya Gonna, If I Asked Ya, Would Ya Wanna**

Funny thing about living in a small town for the better part of 36 years, you have many memories that really do take you back. Last night, a customer who used to work at the store when it was known as Shaffer Value was in and I had to recite her full name (which is six in length... K.J.E.S.H.P) that she made it a point to teach me when we worked along with the Master Meat Lady in the back. I recall that it was during this time when I was introduced to a great amount of country music (it beat the musak that played through the store. One song in particular comes to mind: John Michael Montgomery's "Be My Baby Tonight." Is that the title or is it the tongue twisting refrain of:

*Would ya, could ya, ain't ya gonna, if I asked ya, would ya wanna be my baby tonight?*

I still can't remember how long it took me to get that lyric down. Forget the rest of the song. I would be quizzed every time I went to work. I think my fumbled lyrics were even more

memorable than the real thing.

Sorry I could not find an official video. Everything else was karaoke versions.

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## Now I need a new back

For the second time in 3 weeks my back decided to go out on me. The first time was just getting out of bed. The second time was while trying to clean up after the dog. Nothing very strenuous, I just happened to move the wrong way. The second time only allowed me to sit for 15 minutes or so at a time. I must find everywhere I sit that promotes bad posture and get rid of it. I'm thinking the first place is my chair at work. I spend a majority of my time in that chair and I think it may be part of my current back situation. Now all I have to do is find a good office chair.

Any suggestions?

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## There's Always OKLAHOMA!

For someone else ☐ Honestly, I don't have anything against the show. I still say that not for Rodgers & Hammerstein's first collaboration, the modern musical would be far different. But the wait is over. I received a message in my facebook inbox from the director of *Miracles* that told me that she had some news regarding casting! Not to worry... it's not bad. I immediately grabbed my phone and was ecstatic after receiving the news. I was the only one she and the producer

of the show had firmly had in place. Does this mean that I was the only guy to audition? Tom is the only male role in a cast of three. Oh, well who cares if I was?

After getting off the phone, I struck up an online conversation with one of a few people I had to tell first. I even had him thinking it was another JS (Jerry Seinfeld, Jerry Springer... forgot about him somehow). He was about to phone the police to arrest the director for slander until I came clean.

This role is going to be memorable for several reasons. Not only is it a serious drama (with some bits here and there of lightheartedness), but it is the smallest cast I have ever been part of. I am really excited to see how well I am able to pull it off. I have also been informed that the director is going to have her way with me (ok... so she definitely did not phrase it quite that way). The subject of the show is very close to her and it is going to be done her way. I totally agree! Plus, my limited experience in such shows can only benefit greatly by a director who knows what she wants. But I'm not worried: It will be work but it will be fun!

So... let the fun work begin! Does this mean that I need to add a new category?

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## **When You Know The Notes To Play, You CAN'T Play Most Anything**

This is not meant to be a religious stance. However, it is meant to be a stance on intelligence.

Ridiculous is what I call it. A young lady who attempted to take her case to the Supreme Court was not even allowed in the doors. Separation of Church and State, indeed. Has the "Pledge of Allegiance" been taken out of the school system yet, or just "Under God"? The case may be 4 years old but it is just as necessary as it was in 2006 when a high school wind ensemble wanted to perform an instrumental version of Biebl's *Ave Maria* as part of their graduation exercises. [Kathryn Nurre](#) and her ensemble chose the beautiful piece which had been performed **VOCALLY** at graduation exercises at Everett High School (Everett, WA) one year before!. However, school officials felt that the vocal-less arrangement would meet with criticism? Selections were to be "totally secular in nature."

Let's see... how many art classes study the works of the Renaissance? Better cut that out since the vast majority are religious in nature. Umm... we can't sing "When the Saints Go Marching In" or strike us down if we play it instrumentally. I wonder if Everett High School's Christmas Concert consists of "Jingle Bells" and "Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer." Sorry [Mare](#), your "Hallelujah Chorus"... **NO CAN DO!** "Silent Night" by candlelight... **AXED!** I wonder if the officials would be intelligent enough to recognize the original German version (OH, forgive. All selections must be in English). I imagine that their Drama Department will not be performing *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Godspell*, or *The Sound of Music* (shameful) anytime soon.

I applaud Miss Nurre for her bravery in going before the high court to hear her case. I also say a big fat "**BOO**" to our government for not even considering to hear the case. Before long, schools will go back to the three rs so as not to cause any "criticism." At least Justice Alito sided with the young woman.

Ok... rant over... thanks for listening.

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# Are we sure they aren't children.

\*\*\*\*\* Warning Political Post \*\*\*\*\*

The House vote on the health care bill took place Sunday. On a Sunday??? Why? Couldn't it wait until Monday? I'm not sure what I think of the bill itself. I don't have the time or inclination to read 2000+ pages of political mumbo jumbo. If a bill is 2000+ pages most of it is mumbo jumbo. I'm sure most of OUR representatives did not read it either. I don't care what your political leanings are, I really don't care what you think mine are. I do think the the people we voted to be in charge of our government really let us down on this bill.

Throughout the whole process, it was like children playing on a playground. "I have the ball, so we will play my way." "We won't play your game, you can play with those kids." "I'll play my game when I get all the people to play my game." "We won't let you play your game." "Your game stinks!!" "You don't even have a game." "Yes we do, but you won't listen to the rules."

They fuss, they fight and then in what seems like the dead of night (weekends are usually slow for news). They get together and play. Things were done in back rooms so nobody could see what was going on. Things were promised so that others would play nice. Threaten, cajole or bribe your playmates so they play your game. Sounds more like children to me everyday. When are the people in Washington going to grow up. And when will the voters learn not to send children to do an adults job.

I wonder who got out the scissors to cut somebodies hair...



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# My Issue (IsSHOE)

I HATE shopping for shoes. For as long as I can remember, I've gotten a pair of shoes and replaced them with the same type of pair when they wore out or when I needed to change sizes – no need to see what went well with my outfits or anything like that for me. It started with some black slip-on Keds that I kept replacing for a few years, then when I played sports I moved on to black Adidas with shoe-strings; followed by some cheapie black velcro shoes from Walmart (when we first got married and were really poor), and finally my black Brahma Bravo boots – each pair of those would last me about 3 winters, and they were great for the summer too. I guess I like black shoes.

So for about a year now, I've had a bit of a shoe issue – they've stopped making the Bravo style of the Brahma boots. The soles on my current pair of Bravos have been worn down so far on one side of each shoe that water seeps in if its particularly rainy, and my feet ache if I wear my shoes all day – time for new shoes. As I said, I realized this about a year ago now, and that's when I began to search. I thought it was as easy as going to Walmart and picking up a new pair of Bravos, but alas, I can't find them. I scanned the various offerings of work boots, but I just don't want anything with a steel toe, and I certainly don't want to spend more than \$30. And of course black ones would be nice, can't find those either. I put the shoe issue on the back burner all summer last year until winter became inevitable, and I found myself near a Payless Shoe Source in October, so I wandered in and had a look. Sure enough, they had a pair of black boots that fit my fancy **and** my feet – SOLD! I was extremely pleased that my months-long search had culminated in me finding comfortable

black boots in my target price range – under \$30, and they were waterproof to *boot*, oh brother...

But not more than a month after purchase, my new boots began to crack – apparently they were SO waterproof that the waterproof shell was just that – a shell; so hard to keep out the water that it couldn't be flexible enough to handle the movement of my feet without cracking. So now winter was really starting to bear down on us, and I was stuck an hour away from any Payless. I lived with the cracking boots all winter, still loving the way they looked and the way they kept my feet warm and dry, but I was also very disappointed. When an awful set of circumstances culminated to basically grind our household to a halt in December, it looked like I was stuck with my boots – didn't have the time nor even the money to get to the faraway land of Payless to exchange the cracking boots.

But then things got better, and we were finally able to afford the time and gas to get to Payless and return the boots. Even though it had been more than 3 months since purchase and the boots were cracked (though that really wasn't my fault – they shouldn't have cracked within months, err, one month of purchase!), Payless took them back and gave a full refund, no problem. It only took me an hour and half to pick out a replacement pair (I guess I never realized that I might be picky about shoes, but my husband's huffing and puffing at me on that date night made me re-evaluate... a little), but after walking around the strip mall for 5 minutes, I knew these were not going to be my new boots. But I had forgotten to bring a spare pair of shoes with me – uh, oh. My choices were: 1) waste more of date night going shoe shopping until I found the right shoes, then return these awful new boots to Payless, or 2) wear the uncomfortable boots for the rest of the night, then beg my mom (who was coming for a visit that weekend and lived in the vicinity of like, 5 Paylesses) to return the boots for me. I chose option #2 (thanks Mom!), and that's why

I've been wearing the years-old Bravo boots with the worn down soles ever since. Every time I get a spare moment; sometimes with the kids, sometimes without, I make it a point to stop in the shoe section of Walmart, Target, Meijer, wherever – to continue the hunt of finding myself a new pair of boots. I've taken home about 3 pair now, but I've been happy with none of them. Now that winter is officially over, I've attempted forgetting about finding boots that will get me through snow and tried downgrading to a good pair of walking shoes, but I've returned at least two pair of those as well – and there is another pair still in the box in my front hall closet, ready to be returned – they just dig into my ankle bone in a way that makes me *crave* high-tops; I can't help it!

The other day, I tried searching online for the Bravo style of Brahma boots, but they only make them in an ugly Wheat color and not even in the half-size I need. I was thinking I could order something on Walmart.com and return it to the store if (when) I didn't like it, but I couldn't even find anything in my price range that would work for me.

So back to my point – I HATE shoe shopping; I loathe it. Many women love it and have a pair of shoes to match every outfit they own. I've always valued myself as different from the average (extravagant) woman in that respect – I'm pretty basic in my wardrobe needs... my husband and I share many clothes actually, and it's not because he wears trendy woman's clothing – I opt for cheap, comfortable men's wear.

But how I would like a nice, inexpensive pair of good (hopefully black) walking shoes (preferably boots, but I'm willing to drop that criteria at this point in my frustrating shoe battle).

**Is this really too much to ask?**

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# Things that turn back the clock

Many years ago, my wife worked at a pet shop in our little town. A friend of ours owned it and needed help keeping the animals fed and cages clean. It was a little shop and tended to have fish, mice, rats and some more exotic pets. My wife found a cute little grey furball. It was a chinchilla. That first chinchilla was brought home and given the name Jimmy. He would sit on her shoulder, under her hair with just his nose poking out most of the time. A very clean and personable pet. Over the years many other chinchillas made it into our house. Some were welcomed because of their specific colors, some because they were 'rescue' chinchillas. Homes that could or would not take care of the animals, those animals were cared for here.

Fast forward to 2003. My lovely wife died, and my daughters and I are left with over a dozen chinchillas. Some most were older, but there were still a few youngsters. Over the last few years, I gave a couple away to friends. Others made it through there lives and died. The last few are all over eight years old and they are coming to the end of their lives too. Chinchillas can live to be over 20, I'm almost sure one of ours was close to that, but we never really knew how old she was. Most die after 10-12 years of life. Today, another little chinchilla passed on. Another connection to my wife is gone.

My wife and my youngest daughters could tell you the names of almost every chin. I'm taking nothing away from my oldest, but she had been on her own during the last few chinchilla arrivals. Me, I remembered just a few of the names. Those chinchillas have been gone for some time now. I didn't

remember the names of the remaining 4. I just know the color and location.

So a little beige chinchilla is not with me anymore. And memories of other chinchillas and how my wife loved the little animals flood my mind. Funny how things turn the clock backwards.