

A Movie Suggestion For An Upcoming Date Night

Prior to viewing *Sherlock Holmes* amongst all the needless ads, I did see a trailer for a movie that is definitely high on my list for viewing. Although NOTHING can take away the comedic genius which he brings to his portrayal of Michael Scott, Steve Carrel has made some great movies as well. Some of my favorites: *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Evan Almighty* (I actually enjoyed it more than its predecessor, *Bruce Almighty*), and the updated *Get Smart*. This spring, he will be paired with his female counterpart, Tina Fey in the new movie *Date Night*. Sure to be a hilarious movie coming April 9.

Dearly Departed We Are Gathered Here Today...

I hope that I am not stepping on too many toes by posting on a show that some readers have not seen so I will try not to give too much away. [WCCT](#) opened its 2010 season in high form with the hysterically touching comedy *Dearly Departed*. Every redneck stereotype (southern Baptist... correct?... ministers, beer bellied loafers, etc) you can imagine is put on huge display. It was almost a lost episode of *Mama's Family*. In fact, Deb's performance as the family matriarch made me flashback to Vicki Lawrence herself. An extended group of hicks gather to say their farewells to its beloved(?) head of the family.

As with any family centered piece, the dirty laundry is aired and there is a lot to share! It is so much fun to sit back and watch friends on stage create such lively characters. Fellow tangenteer, [justj](#) positively stole the show in not one but two outstanding roles.

So... if you haven't already, be sure to catch one of the remaining performances of the premiere show of the season.

Light At The End Of The Snow

Bank

Can it be? There does seem to be an end to the winter. After the last two days of up to 10" of snow, I got a cheery email ad. MLB pitchers and catchers are to report on February 17 (THAT IS ONE WEEK FROM TODAY FOLKS!). Full team squad report on the 23rd. Spring training game one for the Bombers is March 3rd against the Pittsburgh Pirates.

In unrelated sporting news... can you believe that there is a lack of snow at the site for the Olympic Games. Snow had to be transported to Canada for the start of the games on Friday. Seems inconceivable with the storms that have ravaged the East coast in New York, D.C. has had multiple storms measured in feet instead of inches. I'm sure most of us would gladly relinquish some of the white stuff to our neighbors to the north.

No sleeping in for me

Whenever I have had a subbing day this year it has almost always been a result of getting up early and hitting the web. Last night I was able to secure a job in 6th grade a little after 10 which didn't have a start time until almost 8:30, meaning I could sleep in, at least a little bit. Okay, knowing about the snow meant I should be up about 20 minutes earlier to get shoveling out of the way. Still, I could get up about an hour later than usual. Of course you know something was bound to happen, and happen it did at about 4AM. That's when I was jarred out of my sleep by what I thought then was the neighbors slamming the door. It took me about a half hour to get back to sleep. I was worried because it didn't *sound* like

a door slamming, but what else could it be. Well, eventually I did get up at about 6:45 and didn't worry about it all day. Unfortunately it wasn't quite early enough as there was more snow than I would have hoped waiting to be shoveled, making me a little bit late. At least I still arrived before the kids.

Yesterday I subbed for music at one of hometown district's middle schools- I actually got a call for it about five minutes before the alarm was set to go off. Very uneventful. We watched videos in all classes. At least I got to see [Blue Man Group](#), a group I had never heard before though I of course knew about them. Other class videos included [Stomp](#) and [The Wizard of Oz](#). Today I was excited because I was subbing in an elementary school, and what that usually means is getting to teach instead of just babysit. Well, not so much. The plans didn't include videos, but they did include a test, lots of reading and working on their own, and skit performances for social studies, in which they are studying Greek Mythology- a topic I really enjoyed myself when I was in 6th grade. Well, there was a spelling game too, and at least that was interactive. I also worked in a short math review not on the plans before they started working on their assignment, and at least one other subject, vocabulary, was more interactive as well. Additionally, I worked in some word puzzles which I like to do in elementary classes. Definitely a more productive day for me than yesterday, overall.

So back to what woke me up. On one of the forums I read someone who I know lives around here made a post humorously telling California to keep the earthquakes to themselves. Say what? I read his post then had to go to my newspaper website to see just what he was talking about. Sure enough, there was a 3.5 magnitude earthquake a short distance from us. An earthquake. In Illinois. At 3:59AM. That's right, not a

slamming door. Well, I guess if our tornadoes can be exported to other areas, I shouldn't be surprised when earthquakes are imported to our relatively-geologically-stable part of the country. Here's a link to the story (click the title), and a short excerpt:

[Small earthquake wakes up northern Illinois](#)

To some, it sounded like a train derailling, a snowplow taking out a car, a plane crash, a sonic boom.

To dogs, it was clearly something to panic about.

But the U.S. Geological Survey said what woke people well before dawn Wednesday was a mild, 3.8 magnitude earthquake whose epicenter was about three miles beneath a farm field a short distance south of Pingree Grove, near Route 20 and Switzer Road in western Kane County.

It started rumbling at 3:59 a.m. Wednesday and lasted just seven seconds.

My Favorite Music Comes From Sesame Street

I'm not really hip with pop culture these days. Sure, I read my share of celebrity gossip whenever it happens upon cnn.com, but I'm really out of it when it comes to the latest tv shows and music. I am such a nerd that I had to wikipedia 'Jersey Shore' because I got sick of reading all these headlines about

it and not knowing what the heck they were talking about. Sounds like kind of a dumb show, by the way, not for me.

Because I listen to country music, mainstream music is usually of no interest to me. But I couldn't help but take notice when a snappy tune came out of the tv this morning – it was Sesame Street, and there was a musical guest. I know that Sesame Street has celebrity guest-stars all the time, so I chose what seemed to be the title of the song and did a search on youtube.com. The song is "I'm Yours", and it's sung by Jason Mraz. Even all my reading of celebrity gossip didn't help me here – I've never heard of Jason Mraz, but I have to say that I like his sound. But that shouldn't really come as a surprise that I've never heard of him – I don't think he's a regular in my pop culture circle that includes such characters as Dora, Miss Spider, Little Bear, or Wow Wow Wubbzy. My 18-month-old son and I couldn't help but bounce and groove to this song; see if you feel the same. By the way, when Mr. Mraz performed this song on Sesame Street, the lyrics were changed to make the song be about playing outside, making it more kid-friendly. Cute.

All about the Yaawwn

Is yawning contagious? Why is yawning contagious? Well, that subject was brought up as a comment in my last post. So I wondered if it would be a good topic to write about. As it turns out, I'm not really sure it is.

There are almost as many answers to the above question as there are scientists studying the phenomenon. And to put it quite bluntly, the studies were boring and made me yawn. But yes, it seems that for most people yawns are contagious. You can have a yearning to yawn by seeing someone yawn, hearing someone yawn and even reading about yawning. So if you feel like yawning while reading this post, it is because the word yawn is used a lot.

Some fun/interesting things I found out while looking up data on yawning:

- 1) Dogs yawn, dogs will yawn when they see people yawn.
- 2) Chimpanzees yawn.
- 3) It seems that most mammals yawn occasionally, but not all of them will yawn when they see other animals yawn.
- 4) Some birds yawn.
- 5) Snakes yawn after eating to get their jaws back in the right spot.
- 6) Contagious yawning may be linked to the flocking instinct of birds.
- 7) Too much yawning could indicate health problems.
- 8) Most people will yawn if tired.
- 9) Some people yawn if they are too hot.
- 10) Some athletes will yawn just before they need to exert themselves.

Now I think I'm done talking about yawning. I've yawned 4 times in the writing of this post. How many times did you yawn while reading it?

Now, I'm going to see if I can make my dog yawn.

Uh Oh, Snow!

There is a kink I did not foresee in my housebreaking-the-new-puppy plan – snow. We are currently getting nailed by a snowstorm – about 4 inches on the ground and much more expected. The snow engulfs our poor little shivering puppy, and I've had to shovel first every time before I take him out. It's quite challenging to find the time to go out and shovel and take the dog out, all while taking care of 4 kids – changing diapers, feeding lunch, breaking up fights, helping them do homework and Valentines... But today school was canceled, and this time it's actually been more of a good thing than a bad thing. The new puppy and the Valentine's projects are helping to ward off cabin fever, plus the older girls are helping to walk the puppy. Adding some fun to the snow storm is that my husband and I started watching [Storm of the Century](#) last night; which is an excellent scary movie that we watch every year during heavy snows. I'm looking forward to watching the second part of the movie tonight, but only if I make it through the dinner rush. My husband gets home from work around 5, and the kids are always starving by then, but it's nearly impossible to start dinner before he gets home with my 18-month-old underfoot. Complicating today's dinner rush is the fact that my husband will have to finish the shoveling when he gets home, and I also have to send him on an errand – stupid me didn't stock up on certain essentials before the storm hit. Most of the region is experiencing the

same weather, so stay warm, stay dry, and most importantly – stay safe!!

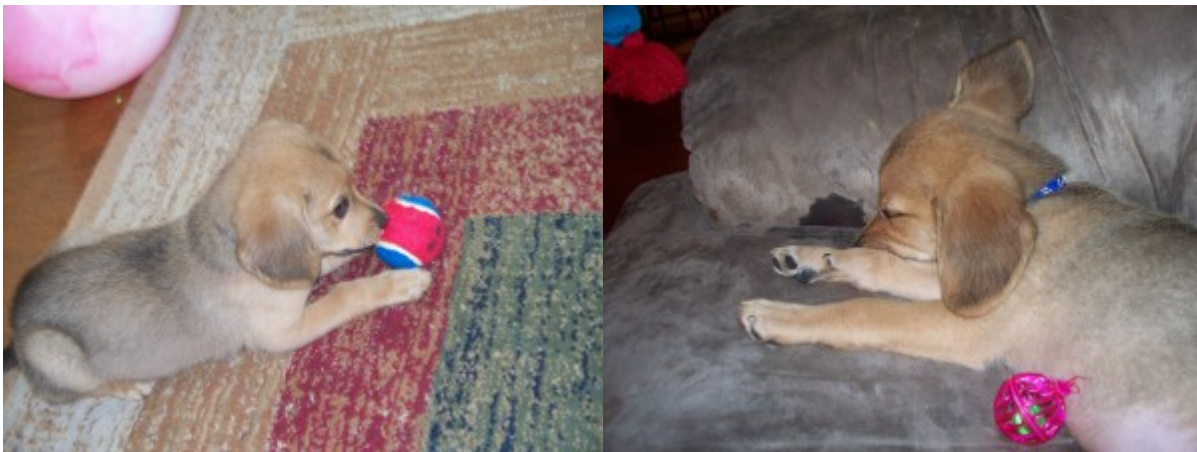
Introducing: ?

We don't know yet! We have a new addition to our family, but he doesn't have a name yet! It's hard for a family of 6 to all agree on the same name for a new puppy...

As you probably know, our beloved almost 12-year-old dog passed away a week before Christmas. If you know our family and how much we love animals, then it should come as no surprise to you that we are again a 2-dog household. It all started a few Saturdays ago when we decided to take the kids to the Humane Society, "just for fun". Yeah, right – I should have known better! How could I possibly think we'd be able to resist giving a cute homeless pet a loving home? We couldn't. We found a lab mix we all loved, and we went to lunch, talked it over, and decided to turn in an application. But another family turned in an application five minutes before us for the same dog! They said they would look over the apps and call us either Monday or Tuesday either way. Well, the entire week went by, and my husband called them every day because we had 3 anxious kids! Disney (who's 3) kept asking if we were going to take the 'vanilla dog' home; it was so cute! Finally they called on Friday to tell us that the dog had been adopted. We were disappointed but also kind of expecting it since we knew that another family wanted him. But that did it – now we officially wanted another dog. So Saturday on the way to the zoo, we stopped by another humane society and found another dog we really liked – she was a very unique looking dog, a black Lab / Basset Hound mix. She had the long, stocky body of a basset, complete with long ears,

but she was all black like a lab – adorable. We didn't have our checkbook with us, so we had to come back Sunday to put down a deposit. When we came back Sunday, the dog got so excited that she nipped my husband on the mouth – twice. Uh, oh. Can't do nipping on the face with 4 small kids, whether it was intentional or not, so we were back to square one. When we were there on Saturday, we had seen people come in with 2 teeny tiny puppies, so we decided to have a look. I was going to have to housebreak the Lab/Basset, so I figured if I was going to have to housebreak a dog, it might as well be a teeny tiny adorable puppy, right? Never mind that I'm potty training a 3-year-old, have a toddler to chase around, and two other kids to get to school. My days are so hectic, why not add to the chaos?

So here he is, how cute is this puppy?!?



He's a beagle / shepherd mix about 8 weeks old, and yes, he is as sweet as he looks! He just adores our dog Beesly, but she's not sure what to think yet – eventually they'll be friends I'm sure. Squawky the parrot was intrigued with him too, mostly because he has a little bell on his collar so we know where he is. The kids like the names Johnny and Buddy, but we're not taken with either of those. We liked the name Gizmo, especially because the kids have been into watching Gremlins lately, but the kids don't like the name. My husband and I also think the name "Hank Markdukas" is really cute – it's a reference to the movie I Love You Man. It's a funny

movie, not one of our favorites or anything, but there is a funny running joke in the movie about a Hank Markdukas. We also like the name Michael Scott after the main character on our favorite show, The Office, but of course the kids aren't thrilled about any of those names. This sounds like a good poll...

[poll id="15"]

The bottom line is, our cute little guy needs a name before he starts answering to "puppy". Yesterday I was feeling overwhelmed by the prospect of adding a puppy to my already hectic lifestyle, but it went well today, and he is incredibly adorable! I love to snuggle him; he is so soft and sweet. And the responsibility involved with him is different than the kids; there is much more instant gratification. Kids whine, cry, yell and fight, while puppies wiggle and snuggle. I love our new puppy! That reminds me of an Alan Jackson song – "I'm in love with you baby, and I don't even know your name"!

Sharing a smile

We are taught early in life that it is good to share. Most of us at that young age really don't want to share things that we consider ours. We will happily share things that don't belong to us, especially if the item belongs to an older sibling. ☺ Hopefully, as time goes by it gets easier to share things we have.

We can share our 'stuff' with others. Give money to the charity. Give items to various thrift shops. By food and sundries for a local soup kitchen or food pantry. Local agencies of many kinds ask for donations of money, food, clothing and even blood. Yes, we can share our stuff with

others.

We can share our time with others. Volunteering at the above locations is also a way of sharing. We can help our friends, neighbors and other members of our community by doing things for them, that they are unable to do by themselves. Our time is precious and it can be shared.

When we get closer to people (friends, family, loved ones) we often share our emotions. This can be difficult for some, but it can be very rewarding to both parties. Because of the nature of this sharing, it can, at times, cause pain and heartache. Emotional sharing opens many doorways to our souls.

But even when we have no 'stuff', time, or deep emotions to share, it can be easy and wonderful to share one last thing. With almost no effort on our part we can share a smile. Smiles, like yawns, can be infectious. Start a smile in a room and see how many others share your smile. Start laughing in a room and see how long it takes for that to make the rounds.

I've found that sharing smiles and laughter are some of the best things to share. It will make a lasting impression on those you meet, and generally that impression will be a good one.

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A Super Weekend With Family Guy and A Robot

I had two days packed with fun and a little work. Saturday night, I arrived late for what was dubbed Michaelpalooza at

the home of some of my new friends I made over the past year through the Village Players. While some of the revelers played some games, the rest of us were treated to two hilarious... if not totally family-friendly spoofs of *Star Wars*.

The [Robot Chicken](#) (an animated series definitely best left to overnight television on Cartoon Network) episode was more of a spoof of the entire six films.

[Family Guy](#) actually had a previous spoof dealing with the original film. We watched the episode based upon *The Empire Strikes Back*. Several questions were raised by the episode.

One being why Lando Calrissian wore Han Solo's uniform at the end of the movie. And if you watch closely, he actually does.

Also, a very obscure factoid about the movie *Teen Wolf* (one of my favorites growing up... please skip the horrendous sequel) was alluded to. One which obviously missed the censors but I have it on good authority actually exists. If you are curious, you will have to do your own research because I do like to run a family-friendly blog. I will lead you to the crowd in the stands of the final basketball game.

Today, Super Bowl Sunday, I had to work, go to play practice for our dinner theatre coming up NEXT WEEKEND folks, and then went to our annual game bash full of fun, awesome friends, lots of laughs, and a new addition that I will let [taylhis](#) share... but he is adorable. In case you did not know.. the Saints defeated the Colts 31-17. Thoughts on the game? The ads? Da Who? Will we ever get beyond the Boobygate scandal and have quit having grandpa and company perform... although the drummer looked like he was not even thought of in the Pinball Wizard's heyday?