

Reading Dog?

Have you seen the dog who can read on the news lately? The really cool-looking dog named Willow was on the Today show in October; here's a snippet:

So what's your opinion? Can he really read or is it much ado about nothing (ie, the owner is doing something else to signal the trick)?

[poll id="14"]

My Favorite Day Of The Week

is every other Saturday... my second day off each week. Today was jammed packed. It started about 10 AM when I turned on the radio waiting for a familiar voice to be on during the Blizzard Auction that benefitted the WCCT. I also happened to hear about one of the items that was up for bid that sounded absolutely thrilling: a guest directing gig with the City Band during one of their concerts this summer. I not only walked away with that but also a \$25 gift certificate to a local restaurant as well as a night's stay at the Holiday Inn. Unfortunately, I missed the voice I thought was to be on from 10-12 this morning.

This afternoon, I went to my niece's 4th and 5th grade basketball game. The game was thrilling in that it ended in overtime. Unfortunately, Elizabeth's team came up a few points short. What was even more (I'll say) interesting was the opposing team's coach. She not only was off the bench yelling and screaming at the 9-10 year olds much of the time, but at one point, she went on the court and attempted to demonstrate to one of her players how to play the game. For her efforts, the coach was given a technical foul. Setting a good example for the young Catholic Schools teams.

Later, I went to mass and then met Megan for a walk. At least the wind has died down considerably since Thursday. We walked from her house to the Little Theatre where I picked up my

items from the auction. We made great time but by the time we reached the theatre we were quite welcome for the break and warmth inside. After walking back to Megan's place, I went to McDonald's for a quick bite on my way home and some hot chocolate!

Here's hoping that the theatre makes a bundle from the proceeds and puts it to good use.

Part II

Okay, long commercial break over. We are on Saturday now I believe:

7AM: Lights turned on outside in the hallway, I wake up for the last time with a little headache but much less exhausted since going to bed. I was exhausted because for three out of the four days prior I was up before 6AM looking for subbing jobs. I found them, but the toll it took was severe. So another sub-8 hour night, but I figured I would survive. So everyone got up and I let some kids head to the bathroom to change out of their night clothes (they were too modest to change in front of others even if we were all guys- just wait until middle school boys, when you'll be changing in the locker room in front of even more people). Myself, I just wore my day clothes to bed- I had showered and put on some fresh clothes just before coming to the retreat so I would be able to do this. 20 minutes later, we were in line for breakfast. The end of the line. Oh, well. Eggs, sausage, french toast sticks, fruit, and OJ. Well, I *think* they were sausages- didn't taste much like breakfast sausage.

8AM: Eyes are really bugging me. The clothes weren't the only things I left on overnight. The contacts I have are extended wear, so I figured at least once I could wear them overnight. I had successfully worn them during naps before so I figured I could get away with overnight just once. My eyes disagreed. I put drops in when I woke up and several times since, but no go. Eventually I just gave up and went back to my room to take them out and put on my glasses. Unfortunately the damage had been done and my eyes would be bugging me for most of the day. So, time for session 2 now. Each session started with a video that was just pure entertainment. I came back at the end of this video to sit with my guys (the high school leader in my room was keeping watch while I changed into my glasses). Up front game again- this time it involved two from each team, a boy and a girl, one from my own cabin (you can figure out which one...). The boys had to wear shaving cream on their faces and the girls threw cheese puffs on them. Hilarious. At the end of the time the one with the most cheese puffs stuck to them would win. In the end I think one other team had more than us, but their boy made the mistake of moving before they could be counted, losing half a dozen puffs. We won. Come to think about it, I think we won Friday night too. Worship followed with another four songs like last night.

9AM: Worship continued, and then Dr. Brian came on the scene and taught from Jonah 3, when the story started over with a better response from Jonah and this time the Ninevites took the warning God gave them through Jonah seriously. According to the Bible, they all repented of their wicked ways and came to God, and He spared them. This has a fairly obvious (I hope) correlation to coming to Christ. We even ended the time with a prayer giving the kids an opportunity to repent themselves and accept Jesus. One of my guys raised his

hand. Unfortunately for me I had to let my high school leader- did I mention he was my high school leader at camp just two summers ago?- take the pleasure in talking to him about it during small group time since we decided to split the group for today's small group times so we would each take five, and the boy who just accepted Christ was one of his five. Since my cabin was being used for piano lessons, we had to use the room across from us. We could have had both groups in there, but Eric decided to take his group elsewhere. We talked about listening to God and accepting Christ for the next half hour. My church being what it is, by fourth grade it seems that 90% say they have already accepted Jesus at some point, so I decided to lead the discussion in who Jesus is to them to let them see if they truly understand what it means to accept Him.

10AM: At this time we were supposed to start cleaning up the cabin. Of course with piano lessons we had to wait so I let them exchange phone numbers with each other instead before we finally had to sneak in and grab our coats for game time downstairs. The game time was split in two this time with two teams playing each other in a game outside and in the gym. We were outside first. Has anyone ever played a game where a balloon is tied to your ankle and you have to try to pop everyone else's balloon before someone pops yours? This game was similar. A popsicle (still in its plastic!) was taped to the kids' arms and they had to try to rip them off of the other team. Once a child's popsicle was lost, he or she was out. Last one standing won. Well, at the end of the time the team with the most standing won, which was the other team. Oh well, can't win 'em all. No, the kids couldn't eat the popsicles during the game but they could at the end.

11AM: The teams switched. The second game was ice block

relay. Only, one of the ice blocks broke so it became scooter relay instead, at least for the boys. I think next year they need to create extra blocks, several extras. Yes, this was the indoor game. One camper sitting on the block of ice, another camper had to push the other to the other end of the gym where they would switch places and come back. With one block broken, the boys were on scooters (the square variety that you sit on, not the sort that is long with a handlebar) the entire time while the girls got to play the game with the ice blocks. At this time I felt like I was coming down with something. I sat down most of the time against the gym wall. At the end of this time we had won three games out of four, but since they had won the popsicle game it looked like they won overall. We went back to our cabins to take off our coats and head down for lunch. We weren't last this time. □

12 noon: I have to say I was very disappointed in this lunch. It was chicken nuggets and mac & cheese. Only, there was nothing to dip the nuggets in and the other dish was more macaroni than cheese. In fact, I couldn't taste any cheese at all. The economy is affecting everyone, and it certainly took a toll on the food here. One leader commented that he had eaten more junk over the last three meals than he had over the last six months. Hmm. Dessert was- not for me. I am one who doesn't like yogurt unless it's the frozen variety and this is what they served. Well, the lemonade was good. At the end of this meal I finally had to pull the pastor aside and inform him that I was running a fever and my eyes were **still** bugging me. Since I wasn't feeling nauseous he suggested I just stay and rest during the next session which followed lunch and see if I improved. After a short lunch, session 3 began. The game this time had something to do with singing familiar tunes, but I don't know exactly, nor who won. I was in the back of the room with my eyes shut trying to rest. The game leader I mentioned from Friday who stayed in our room because

it was the one his boy was in kind of took over for me.

1PM: Session 3 continued. Worship, then the message by Dr. Steve on Jonah chapter 4 which I didn't hear, and then small groups. We had our small group time in our cabin (piano lessons were over) while Eric took his group back where they were earlier. Again, I didn't lead but sat while my stand-in took over. In the end he had everyone take turns praying, which I was willing to do at least, but he chimed in immediately after the last boy. No big deal. We got ready for the final game.

2PM: Outside first again, the game this time was shooting popsicle sticks onto the church roof with really big slingshots. You read that right. They would have to pass a popsicle stick from camper to camper with their arms only and then the last one would run with the popsicle to the slingshot, set it in place, pull it back, and hope the popsicle made it to the upper roof for the greater point bonus. Then (s)he would run to the end of the line and start passing a popsicle all over again. Once all had the opportunity to shoot the popsicles, the game was over. Our team finished first if I recall correctly for both the boys and the girls (who were in separate lines), but I don't know who won for sure, only suspect from what place we finally came in for the entire day. The second game was inside the gym again, where we played human foosball. If you don't remember this game from the other times I've written about it, it's a game where the students are in four lines, hands held together, trying to kick really big balls into the other team's goal. The number of balls, and even the goals, changed over the course of the game. The other team toasted us, but that was only because of one leader they had at the end of the offensive line who kicked in a good 60+% of their goals. We

had a leader at the end of our offensive line too, but he was smaller (a high-school freshman vs a leader in his 20s) and didn't score nearly as much. About this time I was on the upswing, feeling better overall.

3PM: Time for the group picture. Donning our coats once again, we headed back outside for the final time. The children's pastor, Steve, stood on the roof with someone else whose name escapes me and took a few pictures with his, I believe, video camera. Meaning in the retreat video there may be more than just a couple of still pictures of this event. Afterward, they both grabbed all the popsicles from the slingshot game and tossed them onto the ground. A few of the more competitive kids grabbed the and... threw them back up! It was wild out there for a bit. After the popsicles were gone from the roof, they started throwing snowballs down at us. This was more acceptable to be thrown back as snow doesn't make as good a tasty treat as popsicles, so more joined in returning fire. Eventually this all ended and we headed back in to clean our cabin and bring everything down to the gym. After all, they would need the classrooms for church at 5:00. I made sure everything was picked up, and even had to look for the owner of a pair of socks. I found out when I got home that of course I left my own pair of socks from the night before (one article of clothing I *did* change). Hopefully whoever found them wasn't too disgusted as I had worn them for only a few hours.

4PM: All packs brought down and the room cleaned up, we started free time. This time wasn't really very free, but the kids were free to be in one of four places for the next hour and a half. In the gym they could play nuke 'em, another game returning from summer camp played on a volleyball court. They could watch a movie in another room- they showed Up!, a movie

I recently watched in Blu-ray. In a third room they could play board games or, eventually, watch some of Wall-E. In the last room they could do crafts or play other games. I floated around this entire time, keeping track as best I could of my cabin. Most of my kids spent their time in the gym, so I did as well.

5PM: Free time continued until 5:30, afterwhich we had dinner. Dinner was better than lunch and consisted primarily of spaghetti. Not much to say here really.

6PM: Dinner wrapped up and we moved into the worship/lesson area and watched videos until church ended and the parents started coming in. Once everyone was there, the final up front game commenced. A father-son team was called up from the leaders who were there the entire time with their sons and they played the frozen t-shirt game, where wet t-shirts were folded up and frozen. The dads had to try to get them apart and on their sons. Our team won again, giving us at least three of the four up front games. After this, we sang one worship song, Steve talked about the retreat to the parents, and jokingly as an afterthought the winner was announced. Since we came in third place, I suspect we won none of the big games. Remember, while I was able to see who won some of the games, I did not know who won Friday night nor who won the popsicle slingshot game.

7PM: Parents were permitted to take their kids home and the gym rapidly emptied of parents, kids and their packs. I got to go home and enjoy my fever which, while I was feeling better Saturday afternoon, still persisted through the weekend and made a return Tuesday, keeping me home from work.

Well, that's it. I hope you enjoyed the read. I just spent the last hour and a half writing this second part, so please excuse me for not going back and proofreading it. ☐

Dear (Deer) Friends

It's always fun to read about friendship that crosses the boundaries between animal species. I received some cute pictures of a cat and her deer friend via an email forward. What's interesting is that friendships between cats and deer don't seem to be as uncommon as one would think – I was having trouble getting the picture from the email to the blog, so I did a search for cat and deer pictures, and I came up with pictures of at least 5 different cats being friendly with deer! But thanks to Hubby for graciously taking the time (even during football playoffs) to help me get the original pictures from my email. These are cute!





No Five Mile Jaunts Today

Call it my resolution for the year if you want but it seems that I have been walking a bit lately. Last week being my vacation, I walked a lot. Monday on the zoo excursion I'm sure was good for my daily walk (like to get in a mile or two a day). This Monday was my longest one yet. The weather was still nice so I grabbed my ipod and headed north along 49 and turned down a country road, walked to the next road going west and eventually walked a good country block heading up River Street back into town (that was a good 4 miles). I then continued walking through town in a roundabout way to eventually end up at the post office. Then back home. I must have gone at least 5 miles.

Tuesday was another story entirely. This time, I headed south on 49 and got about a mile out of town when I decided that it was just crazy cold. I then turned around and stopped by my oldest brother's house to go in and warm up a bit before going home.

The long walks really are helped with my ipod mix. I have it on shuffle so that when an album that I really like comes on, I will switch it to play straight through. Before you know it, an hour and a half has passed. Particularly good when I

downloaded one of my favorites that I had on cassette (there it is again) back in the day. You know one that you play continuously, rewind, fast forward, and then get it caught and eaten and there you go, no more tape. Oh, the recording: the 20th Anniversary Recording of the London version of Jesus Christ Superstar. Paul Nicholas as Jesus, Claire Moore as Mary Magdalene, and Keith Burns as Judas Iscariot. My favorite piece has to be "Could We Start Again, Please?" Upon hearing the song, it quickly became a favorite... maybe that's why the cassette got eaten. Of course, another highlight is "Herod's Song." The entire recording is good for at least an hour and a half hike.

Hopefully, the temperature outside improves from the 19 degrees of today quickly so I can take another long walk instead of the walk to and from work.

Strange Thing Mystifying

We have recently become even more technologically advanced at work. We have just installed check readers. Instead of needing to completely fill out the check, all the customer has to do is sign their name. The check is then run through the reader for approval. NOW comes the drawback: each time the customer uses the check reader, they MUST show their ID. This seems like a hassle even to me. Having worked at wM for 7 years, the readers there only checked ID periodically.

Tonight, I had a visit from someone who remembered me from at least 18 years ago. I previously related my tale of waiting on Professeur Peters (my high school French teacher).

Tonight, I waited on her daughter. "I remember you. You were in my mom's French or Spanish class." Then she told me

that she remembered seeing me as Rooster. WOW! Even with a little less hair.

Later, I had a heartbreak. A customer whom I know quite well approached me and informed me that he had a little accident.

“OH, GREAT! What did you break now :)” Then I came to the accident. His little daughter had a little accident and was totally embarrassed. I felt so bad for her. I told him to run up to the restroom to clean her up while I took care of the puddle on the floor.

AH... such as life during a nine hour day.

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Best winter retreat ever! I had so much fun that nothing could possibly compare. I wish I could say that was this weekend but that wouldn't be honest of me. For sure, many can say that and completely mean it as it really was a good retreat. The reason will become clear, and you may even find it foreshadowed before I come out with it. From the beginning:

Friday

6PM: Arrived shortly before this time, late for the 5:45 call time. I thought I was ready, but of course remembered a few more things before I left. At least I did remember everything. In the past I have been left with no pillow, no deodorant, or similar mishaps. Was given a gift bag at the meeting containing essentials- sugar, water, t-shirt, hand-

warmers... The latter was most likely due to last year's bitter cold retreat- something that was blessedly not repeated this year, at least for this group (high school suffered just a couple of weekends ago). Oh, anyone for some gum? I got a box, but I don't chew it. Just send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope and I will ship it off. ☐ Meeting ended, we took our posts for check-in which began at 6:15. I was a greeter by the boy's area. For awhile I was a little nervous as I only had two arrivals for my "cabin" (room) while others had four or five, but I needn't have worried- in the end every camper (retreater?) of mine showed up- others weren't so lucky. I think about ten boys failed to show up- the fairer section fared about the same.

7PM: Check-in starts to die down. Did I mention all of my campers showed up? Actually, I did lose one. There are two mentally disabled 4th-graders at my church and their dads (who stayed with them) wanted to be in the same cabin. While changing cabin assignments was generally not allowed, we made an exception for them. In fact, neither of them wound up in their original cabin as ours were pretty full, but in one that had lost two boys who didn't make it. Anyway, throughout this time, after letting them drop off their things, we sent them down to watch [Jonah](#) until the arrivals trickled down. Jonah would be the theme of the retreat. At about 7:25, the last of us headed to the movie area where the intro was made and we were sent off to start the first big game of the weekend.

8PM: My assignment- auditor. I stood by an opposing team's drop-off bin, where the kids would drop off all their treasures. Oh? I never mentioned the teams? Well, there are four teams, following the theme from summer camp which was a medical theme this year. I was a Mr. Yuk over the summer but this time was a Red Cross. The cabins were actually given

names. Do you remember when [Sly](#) mouthed "You're the disease- I'm the cure" (paraphrased) in a movie 20ish years ago? Well, the boys were the diseases with cabin names like H1N1, TB, and Mad Cow Disease and the girls were the cures (Neosporin, Aspirin, etc.). My cabin was SARS. So back to the game, auditors made sure the kids were following the rules. This may be church, but you know some kids- suddenly forgetful of the rules when it could gain an advantage if you know what I mean. Here's what the game was- in pairs, the kids would link up (hold hands or arms) and search for little plastic ducks and reflectors strewn all over the church. When they found one, they had to get to their team bin. Throughout this, there were over a dozen leaders going after the kids with dodge-balls in hand trying to "infect" them. That may sound like a lot of leaders, but we're talking about 150 kids! If infected, they had to drop whatever they might have been holding and hightail it to the medic to be "cured." There were a few hundred of these things strewn about so the game lasted for awhile.

9PM: Pizza! Well, maybe I should have left that exclamation point off- we're talking Papa John's here. If you're not familiar with them, think mass pizza chains in the style of Pizza Hut or Domino's and you will know what I'm talking about. We chugged down pizza and pop and got ready for the first session, which started shortly after 9:45 with an upfront game followed by worship. What is an upfront game? Well, one camper (sometimes two) from each team was called up to play a silly or disgusting game- pure fun, though not always for the contestants... Tonight was licking names off of a tray. The catch? Part of what was used in the writing was sardines- eww. That's apparently what the contestants thought too as none of them accomplished much in the allotted time. Then worship began with singing.

10PM: The session continued. Four worship songs later, Dr. John came out to teach (medical theme remember). You know how busy doctors get, so Drs. Brian and Steve would round out the retreat the next day. Starting in Jonah, we traversed chapters one and two alongside Jonah, teaching the kids about consequences of trying to ignore God and how God always pursues His children. After the lesson we broke off into our cabins. We were running late, so we kept the large group of ten kids and two leaders together and discussed the lesson, including a reading from Psalm 139:

*7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
9 If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,"
12 even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you.*

11PM: Set up beds, get ready, and lights out. Another leader, the game leader of the week joined us- his son was in our cabin. He and I, the "old guys," naturally brought air mattresses to go with our sleeping bags... A little chaotic as expected, but by 20 minutes after lights-out time we finally got the boys laying in bed if not asleep yet. Someone came in with a ladder to unscrew the emergency light bulbs- you know, one of those lights that stays on 24/7 even if the room switches are turned off. This still left a flashing blue light from the router mounted in the ceiling unfortunately. I hope it didn't keep anyone awake. I got this bright idea that

I would just leave my contacts in all night since they are extended wear after all. Up to this point I had done naps safely, so I figured why not? I had drops to put in my eyes in the morning.

Midnight: Finally asleep, or at least sometime before the next hour.

Saturday

Midnight-7AM: Z-z-z-z-wake up-z-z-z-z-wake up-z-z-z-z-you get the picture-z-z-z-z

(to be continued)

Those Crazy Kids

Well, it's not a full moon tonight, but you could have fooled me. My kids are acting completely nuts today; I just had to get away from them for a few minutes for some "me" time to vent and blog this out. Ok, it's not really "me" time; the kids are right here, they just happen to not be needy at this moment – first time all morning. I actually just checked the moon's forecast, and we are only 2 days away from a full moon. Oh, my – does that mean I have 2 more days of this? My [blogging teacher friend](#) wrote about how she used to be able to predict her students' daily behavior by the way a herd of

Clydesdales were acting when she passed their farm on the way to school each morning. If the horses were running around, there was a good chance the kids were going to be crazy. I'm betting that if I had a herd of Clydesdales in my backyard, they would be running around. And that would be cool – I've always wanted a bunch of animals. But hopefully I'm wrong about something crazy being in the air and the chaos is just localized to only our house because I have to teach youth group tonight, and I don't know what I'll do with crazy teenage girls if I have to deal with crazy little kids all day!

Sammie, my Kindergartner is still sleeping, and it's almost lunch time. I can't complain about her behavior because for the past 3 days now (knocking on the wood floor), she's been good as gold. Yes, I am counting the days of her goodness because we just endured an incredibly bad phase of hers that lasted a few months – it was really bad. Why dwell on the negative, though? Today she was playing with her little brother without even being asked, and they were so cute together! They played tag, and she read books to him – I would have taken a picture, but I was busy meeting the demands of my 3-year-old, Disney. She was always the one I could count on to be good; she's always been a sweetheart. But lately, she's been in a really intense phase, and it's hard to handle. She has a very loud, shrill little voice, and she's always using it to yell "MOM", and you wouldn't believe how often she needs something – hungry, thirsty, help with something... we starting heavily potty training; I'm talking no more diapers during the day, so of course that makes her even more needy. By the way, the potty training is not going very well.

Well, I'd better wrap up; I'm sick of all the interruptions – I've found it's better when I don't really try to blog or work while the kids are around because it causes more frustration than productivity. But it's amazing how positive things look

when our Kindergartner is in a “good” phase! And her older sister has been completely awesome lately too, so that makes 3 of my 4 kids in good phases. And Disney’s bad phase can’t even be called “bad” when you compare it to one of Sammie’s bad phases. It’s funny how our family dynamics are constantly changing as the kids go in and out of phases – kind of like the moon!

Lab Rat

Mostly, it was worse than I thought it was going to be, but I survived. I spent the night at the hospital last night undergoing a sleep study. These are becoming increasingly common, and many people experience anxiety beforehand, so perhaps I can help by describing it to someone who doesn’t know what to expect. Then again, maybe you shouldn’t read this post if you’re looking to be reassured...

First, I got a prescription for a sleep study from my kids’ pediatrician, who is also the local sleep expert doctor – I had mentioned to him that I never feel rested. So I arrived for my sleep study last night around 8 pm; usually they have you come earlier, but they wanted to mimic my bedtime schedule, and I rarely go to bed before midnight. That’s funny – mimic my bedtime schedule, yet the 4 rowdy kids who usually keep me up past midnight were nowhere in sight, hmmm, not much mimicry there. So I waited in the lounge for a little bit for the nurse to do paperwork, which is more like a little living room that I luckily had to myself – didn’t really feel like being social. Soon it was time to “hook me up” (which sounds better than it is, believe me) and we went into this little room off the lounge. I would not be exaggerating to say it was reminiscent of a clinical torture

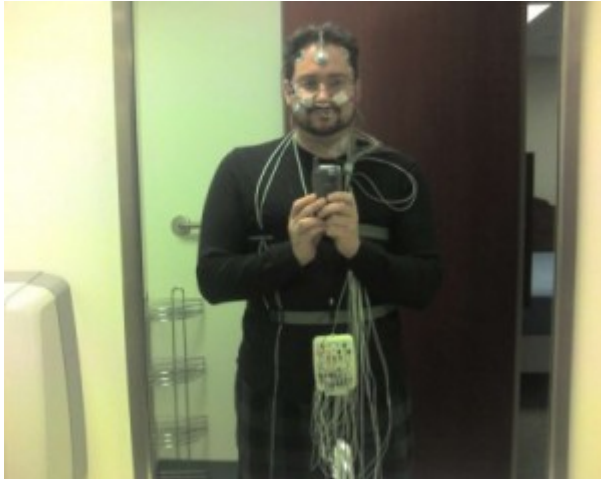
chamber. There was a simple chair bolted down in the middle of the small room, and various medical apparatuses and who-knows-what bolted to the walls, along with extra wires and electrical looking boxes and things – is this where they interrogated Saddam?

Not that I was nervous or anything because I really wasn't. I didn't like being away from my family, but I made the best of it by telling myself that I was going to enjoy the few hours away from the chaos; I had brought piles of old newspapers to catch up on and 3 hardcover books to read. And as far as the medical stuff goes, it didn't really seem like a big deal after the 9 mos. of poking and prodding I've endured as a pregnant woman – times 4.

So I get all wired up, and after I sat in the lounge alternating between reading and watching tv (I had no idea what was even ON tv, which shows how little I watch it now), I decided that it was time for bed, and this is where things take a turn for the worse. As if the millions of electrodes the nurse had glued to various parts of my body weren't enough, she added two belts and also shoved something up my nose. That's right – they **glue** electrodes to you, disregarding your hair and everything. My kids today had fun playing with my stiff "glue hair", but I quickly took a shower and washed it out before anyone got any ideas that "glue hair" is cool – that is one mess I don't need to clean up today or ever!

So I'm fully wired, and the nurse plugs me in, and then she leaves the room and comes over the intercom. She makes me do a series of silly actions – she said she wanted to "test the sensors", but I was starting to think that her having me roll my eyes around in my head and demonstrate fake snoring might have just been cheap entertainment for the hospital's 3rd shift. When we were finished "testing the sensors", the nurse turned off my light and I was expected to fall asleep, but I had lots of trouble. First of all, imagine trying to sleep

while looking like this:



Not only that, but the bed was just awful, hard as a rock – I have a crick in my back today. And don't forget there is a camera and microphone on you at all times; it's a bit daunting to relax in this situation. And when they said that I could "bring my own pillow if I wish", I thought that was implying I should bring my pillow if I have some sort of special attachment to it. What they really meant was "You might wish to bring your own pillow because we only have little slabs of rubber we cover with pillowcases." Maybe they figured that if they put a pillowcase on it, they could call it a pillow, but after spending 8 hours with it, I strongly disagree.

So I had trouble falling asleep, big surprise. Not only was I so wired I felt like I could help E.T. phone home, but the bed and pillow were awful, there was a camera and a microphone on me, and the room was dark and quiet (that NEVER happens at home!). I was alone with my thoughts, and that's never a good thing ☐ It didn't help that I could occasionally hear the wind howling outside, and it reminded me of when the lights were on and the nurse was "checking" my fake snores – the lights had been flickering slightly. What if the power goes out, and there is a sudden electrical surge? Would I get shocked? Would I burst into flame? Would I disappear? Might I come away with some sort of obscure superpower? Hey, that might be kind of cool... I guess I finally drifted off, because

the next thing I know, I'm waking up, even though it felt like I hadn't fallen asleep yet, and that's how I knew I still had hours left in my sleep study. Still uncomfortable, still cold, still not liking being both seen and heard while I'm asleep. And then I wake up again. Still uncomfortable, still cold... you get the picture. I must have woken up about 5 times during the night, tossing and turning each time, hoping for comfort until I passed out for good all tangled up in wires like a fly caught in a spider's web. Then I had a nightmare, and I wonder how that appeared on the charts? Finally, I hear a voice from above say "Lisa, the sleep study is over." Even though that was the best news I had heard in hours, it was a bit unsettling to be woken up by an intercom saying my name.

Overall, it wasn't that bad, even though I was disappointed because I had been under the impression that I would be able to fall asleep easily, and that I would be in a comfy bed and stay asleep until the morning. Instead, I returned to real life very poorly rested early this morning with 3 kids to look after all day. But at least today, unlike yesterday, I can have all the coffee I can brew, and tonight I get to sleep in my own bed! Well, providing the coffee doesn't keep me up all night anyway!

IT

Last Saturday night, because the temperature wasn't too bad, we went for an evening family walk and took the kids to Walgreens for milk. Even at just 6:00, it was already completely dark outside, and a dense fog was starting to settle in, so Hubby and I decided it was a perfect night to watch a scary movie. The only thing is that we watch A LOT of horror movies, and most of them just aren't scary anymore.

Call it desensitization to the horror, or maybe it's the fact that we have 4 kids and it's difficult to find something scarier than say, 3 of them being wide awake at midnight or someone taking off their dirty diaper and making a mess with it. But whatever the reason, it's hard to find a movie that will actually scare either of us.

While we were trying to choose a suitable scary movie, we came across Stephen King's IT. My husband was skeptical, but I was certain it would be terrifying, so we gave it a try. And I was right, well partially right anyway – the first time Pennywise the horror clown was shown on the screen, it was so creepily done that my husband grabbed ME and not the other way around – which was only actually because I couldn't even watch it; it was so scary! Unfortunatley, my husband was no longer scared once Pennywise began to talk, but I was creeped out by the entire movie... well, at least until the end, when the big showdown scene completely disappointed me and took away my fear – that's all I'll say, don't want to spoil it if you haven't seen IT.



I like to research movies that I watch; I look them up on imdb.com to see if I'm correct when I recognize actors from other movies. When I looked up IT, I came across information that pointed to the theatrical release of an IT remake in the near future – I'm there!!

I think I might want to read Stephen King's IT the novel first

before I see the remake maybe; I've been thinking about what to read after I finish the 2nd Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. It's going kind of slowly for me; I think I'm ready for a break from Hogwarts – some Stephen King should do the trick! Then again, maybe not, I've been having enough trouble sleeping as it is – matter of fact, I go in for a sleep study later today. That's all I need is to get my sleep problems under control and then give myself nightmares by reading scary books... But anyway, wish me luck – I'm a little nervous about the study (I don't know what I do in my sleep, and I don't know how I feel about **strangers** knowing what I do when I sleep – that's kind of personal! Plus I'm going to miss my family like crazy and worry about them. I hate sleeping in hospitals, but at least in the past, I've had a newborn baby to cuddle!).

[Click here](#) if you want to do more reading about the IT remake – but keep in mind that this article complains about the same spoiler at the end of IT that I hated, so if you don't want to know what happens, don't read it! And one more thing... I thought Tim Curry was just excellent in IT. He was unrecognizable, which was probably part of the charm!