

Budgeted Birthday Blast

I think I blogged about my daughter's upcoming 10th birthday party a few weeks ago, looking for activity ideas. There was no need to worry, because we had the party last weekend, and everyone had a blast!

We ended up extending the party to make it last 3 hours instead of 2, and two of the girls were even able to spend the night. It was actually really easy to entertain 8 nine and ten-year-old girls, as well as the birthday girl's two little sisters, ages 3 and 5. Seventeen-month-old little brother was a nuisance, but the poor little guy was really very outnumbered by all those girls!

As we waited for the girls to arrive, they played a video game on the tv where there are floating balloons they get to break using their bodies instead of controllers. Next, Dad led the girls in about 5 rounds of the [party game Mafia](#) – they loved it! Then, we made English muffin pizzas – I set out the English muffins, pizza sauce, cheese, pepperoni, and mushrooms, and the girls made their own pizzas and then I put them in the oven for 5 or 10 minutes. The entire activity cost about \$6, and the kids loved it! Then we had cake, but I had realized ahead of time that with 4 kids, we spend about \$80 on birthday cake per year! Wow, does that add up! So I had a talk with my oldest, and she really had no problem with me getting mini cupcakes instead of a personalized birthday cake and numbered candles. This decision saved us about \$15! I got two 2 liters of pop, and a few cheap bags of snacks for the sleepover, and the entire party cost us under \$20! Most importantly, my daughter and her friends had an awesome time and made some great memories! Happy birthday Taylor!!



(No, the party wasn't so boring everyone fell asleep! This what a group of kids playing the party card game Mafia look like!)

If Jamiahsh can do it...

...so can I. Besides, the other theme didn't show avatars in comments, so now that two of us have them it is nice to see them. Thanks Justj and Admin for the avatar idea! I hope you enjoy this theme. Note that you can click on the squares on the upper left for some quick navigation, such as to recent comments and posts without having to scroll down. Not my idea, but part of the theme. Nice.

My Stage Debut, Sort of...

Well, ok, so last Sunday wasn't really my stage *debut*; I acted in about 4 stage plays when I was a kid, and three quarters of those roles were in The Wizard of Oz ☐

But somewhere along the line, I developed a severe stage

fright, and I haven't come close to the front of a stage since I auditioned (and wasn't chosen) for the part of Thor in The Nerd in 1990. I've worked in many various capacities behind the scenes and on the members' boards for a few of our local community theater groups in recent years, and if ever someone was brave enough to inquire, I would always reject and adamantly refuse the offers of roles to be portrayed onstage in front of an audience – just way too nervous, and I've actually had many a nightmare about having to get onstage!

But a few weeks ago, my husband and I became involved in our church's semi-annual Kidstuff, which is a small collection of skits and musical numbers aimed at instilling a virtue in its audience, this time being 'compassion'. So my husband was rehearsing for Kidstuff, and I was tagging along to rehearsals as I usually do when he is in a play. I was asked by the director (who is also the school nurse in my two oldest daughters' school district) if I would "just stand there and hand out prizes" during one of the skits. Always being willing to help providing it doesn't get in the way of my family life, I obliged, and next thing I know I am a character complete with a name, Fran Hootenhiener! So I guess you could say it was my stage debut as an adult! The director was right though, I really just had to stand there during one of the skits and hand out cookies, but I even had an introduction by the extremely handsome game show host (my real-life husband) where I had to smile and even give a little wave to the audience while I showed off my cookie prizes. I was incredibly nervous beforehand, but I got through it without fainting or doing anything really embarrassing like throwing the cookies at someone or dropping my tray. I think it helped that 90% of the audience was kids and also that our little show had a more divine purpose than simple entertainment. It was quite a different experience to work with a cast and crew who were coming together to teach kids a virtue versus a community theater production where the goal is to entertain paying adults. Not that one is better; it's just a matter of

personal preference, I think, and it helped me to be less nervous.

And I think this experience helped me for what was to come last night... because of the weather, the two other small group leaders for the 7th grade girls at youth group were unable to make it, so I was in charge of ALL the 7th grade girls last night! It went better than I thought, even though I really don't like to be the one in charge of a group. But, such is life, and I'm just happy I didn't know about it until we arrived last night otherwise I would have been a nervous wreck all day. And the youth pastor's face when he told me I was the only teacher who could make it was just priceless, haha!

I'm not saying I will ever get on stage again, but for this one time, I actually had some fun!

On The Way

to our final rehearsal for tomorrow night's gala premiere, I stopped by the BP to fill up. I come back to the car and start her up. 000PS... no start. I try again... NO START. A good samaritan comes along and gives me a jump start. WHOO HOO.. we make it the final half block to the theatre. During intermission, I went back to the car to start it up again just to make sure. AAAAND you guessed it, no soap. One of the cast members knows the owner of the local auto store in town and asked if I would like him to check it out in the morning. OH. THANK YOU BERT! We decided that it was probably the battery that has not been changed since I bought it back in '02. Nice ☹ So my little car is sitting in the lot. Thank goodness, we got Chad to come pick Shelby and I up. I did not want to chance another start and die on the way home.

The show itself is definitely ready for an audience! All this “sentimental hogwash” can now get underway! WOW... 24 hours from now, night number one will be in the books! In less than 21 hours, the curtain will rise. I am ready for the thunderous applause (or something...) to begin. Break a leg all!

Football & Dreamcoats

Last weekend had some more involvement with kids than the usual weekend. In addition to the two services where I serve with 4th and 5th grades, there was an earlier event for single moms, a Christmas party. No, I am not a single mom, but I (along with another from my Monday small group) helped out by leading games in the gym for some of the boys who came with their moms. The age range was about 3rd grade through 7th grade, with a couple data outliers (I think that's the statistical term) in the form of one about six years old and another in 9th grade. What does football have to do with this? Well, Mike, the other one from my small group, brought along a football. We started with just one 7th grade boy, one I knew very well by the way since he was in my cabin at summer camp a couple years ago, while the younger ones were listening to a Christmas story in the other room. The three of us tossed around the ball for a bit before the rest came in, including more older ones (5th-9th grade) who joined us in a game of touch football played in half the gym- the volleyball ministry had the other half. While Mike led his team as QB, as a non-sports guy I let the 9th-grader take that position considering he plays at his high school. While we played, the younger ones played with various other balls, tricycles, and whatnot as Mike and I kept order. Eventually some left for awhile to do crafts or something in another room, but the

football game kept going. It was a pretty fun afternoon.

The lesson for the weekend was part two of Joseph. Of course, most knew the story, but with these intermediate grades the focus is on application. In this case, obedience and perseverance in our relationship with God even when things in our lives aren't going so well. On Saturday there are three leaders who rotate teaching from week to week so I never teach this service, but there are only two of us for Sunday, though somehow I still only teach every other month- huh. The other one does two Sundays a month while one of the staff rotates in the months I am not on. Well anyway this was my week so naturally I wore my bright yellow overalls I wore when I was in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat several years ago. I also sang from some of the songs from the show as we talked about Joseph before Pharaoh (where we left off last time), Joseph finally getting his reward after 13 years of obedience during hardship, and later Joseph before his brothers who were trying to get food during the seven years of famine. It was a fun lesson though I think I went a little long.

So that was my weekend in a nutshell. I'll have to think about if there is anything to write about my two days of subbing this week- one in early childhood, one in 7th grade science. Until then.

Feeling Short And Old

I've been experiencing some sort of awful fatigue lately, so I begrudgingly went to the doctor to get it checked out. My husband had noticed me stop breathing in my sleep last week, so we suspect sleep apnea, but I have to undergo a sleep study to find out for sure. Good luck scheduling THAT during this Christmas season!

But the doctor also had a few interesting tidbits of advice, even though I felt extremely silly at the office since I actually saw my kids' pediatrician – he is also the resident sleep specialist. It didn't help any when I got measured by a Sponge Bob ruler and found out that I must be shrinking – I've always considered myself to be on the tall side, but this time, I didn't measure up – according to Sponge Bob, anyway. So not only am I shrinking, but somewhere along the line I've become a year-round allergy sufferer who also has mild asthma. And I just thought I was out of shape...

And to add insult to injury, I also got two new prescription medicines to add to my cabinet – just like any other senior citizen would get at a doctor's visit ☐

I'm Still Here, Somewhere...

Just a quick note because I've been too busy, and I miss blogging! I had started two posts about last weekend, but haven't had the time to finish either one – hopefully I will soon! It's been really difficult to blog with a 17-month-old who only wants to climb on me and bang on my keyboard when I actually do have the time to sit down! So then my computer will reset, and that's the end of that...

More later – I'm hoping! STAY WARM!!!

Baby, It's Cold Outside

And nowhere was that more apparent than at work today. When I arrived, the indoor had it's usual mind of it's own during blustery days. So, I locked it much to the chagrin of customers who still tried to push it open without heeding the "Please Use Other Door" sign. People actually thought we were closed at 5PM. The marquee with our specials advertised out front also was problematic. I don't know how many people came in and told us that it was about to blow away. It was so wind that the swinging doors leading to the stock room would swing back and forth. I don't know of any ghost stories surrounding the store, but I have been in the catacombs and it is not a pretty sight! Maybe a projectionist from the days of the movie theatre met an unfortunate end. Ah, well we may be in for a long winter and the calendar still says we are still in Autumn.

. And here's a cute video to enjoy in the cold.

The Hulk as he was

I'm currently watching an old Bill Bixby Hulk Movie. Before the big screen 'block busters', we had Bill and Lou as part of the Banner/Hulk duo. The eyes turn green, the shirt rips and somehow he can keep the same pants buttoned.

No animation here, just one very big man in green makeup. I liked these shows when they first were first on the air. I liked the stories they wrote, and I liked the acting in the show. The show holds its own even after 20 years. That is a tribute to good writing, directing and acting.

After starting to watch this show, I am hoping to see some of Bill Bixby's other shows. My Favorite Martian, The Courtship of Eddie's Father and The Magician. I will have to look see if I can find DVD's of these other shows. I wonder if they will hold up to the test of time.

Driving Through The Snow And Ice

Who knew that the weatherman would be right for a change?! We indeed got our wintry mix. On the way to rehearsal, it was just beginning. Starting out as a bit of rain, the freezing rain, and snow. At intermission, I peeked out the window to

see a mess. Oh, boy what fun it will be to laugh and sing all the way home. Not so much singing nor laughing. After pulling in at home, I told Shelby that she could either stay here or call and have her parents pick her up in their 4WD.

But everything is so near audience-ready. Isn't it typical to have cast members not show for the next-to-last dress rehearsal? Seems to me that it is. That aside... this show is GOONA ROCK!!! YES, I meant to have "GOONA" I am soooo anxious. One cast member was counting the number of rehearsals/performances we have left. WWWWHHHAAAAT! Not sure what that was all about but... whatever.

So... hopefully, ol' man winter gives us a break just a bit. It is supposed to turn to all rain overnight. I'm all for a white Christmas, but after December 25th, it can go bye-bye.

HOORAY! I DID IT!! And it only took a couple years!

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