

Thoughts on Random Thoughts

Today marks one year of my blog. More on that in the next post... ☐

I was wondering how random my thoughts have really been in the past year. I've written about a lot of different topics that interest me, but I've seem to have posted most about the things in life that are most important to me.

Family and Friends.

Posts written in times of sadness revolved around family and friends no longer in my life. Posts written in better times revolved around family and friends I share my life with now. Theater posts revolve around plays and my dear friends that I've met through that theater. Even posts on space and science go back to family events I've kept in my mind through many a year.

Just how random?

Over three hundred posts and some posts fit into more than one category, but here is a rough break down.

160 Thoughts on Life (default category could contain anything)

100+ posts on Family

50 posts on Friends

48 on the theater

42 on movies or reviews

37 on Widows and Widowers

24 on Science and Technology

10 to 20 on the remaining categories.

If we add the posts for family, friends and widow/widowers together, that is over 1/2 my post total. Yep, kind of shows were my mind is most of the time. This place is a dumping ground to clear my mind and help get thoughts back in gear.

I've always know what is important to me, and it is good to see that my thought 'dumps' confirm this.

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Happy Birthday To My Blog!

Happy Birthday to my blog! Today is the one-year anniversary of the day I started my blog on tangents.org! And 381 blog posts later, here we are! So even though I haven't been able to blog every day, there were a few days when I got more than one post up, and so in a 366 day year (leap year in 2008), I was able to make 381 blog posts, and that averages more than one a day, surpassing my goal I had when I started this thing! So I'd like to thank everybody who trudges through my rambling garbage – those who have read all 381 My Food Chain Gang blog posts and those who pretend to have read them □

Having this blog has been a great way to vent my feelings (from pride about my kids to my frustrations with Walmart), share news stories I find interesting (from funny police happenings to interesting animal tidbits), write movie reviews, and most importantly, keep in touch with my family and friends who live far away – especially when our lives are too busy to allow us to chat on the phone when we want. THANKS AGAIN FOR VISITING my site!

Farm Frenzy

You might have noticed a decrease in the frequency of my blogging. I am still super-busy with my 4 kids, but now that the horrible months-long-lasting illness has run its course through our house, I have more energy and time than I've had in a long time... so why am I posting less? Because I've gone and gotten myself addicted to a video game, of all things!

It's called Farm Frenzy Pizza Party, and it's addicting to play! Basically, you get this little plot of land where you choose what animals to buy and manage. Each different kind of animal drops a type of product, and you can either use these products to make other products, or you can sell them. You can upgrade your warehouse to make it store more products, you can upgrade your factories to produce products more quickly, and you can upgrade your vehicles to make them faster. The game is surprisingly complicated, yet easy to learn. Ultimately, the more difficult levels consist of making pizzas, and each pizza is made up of five types of product. Complicating the game player's goals is the fact that some of the pizza components are made up of two different products themselves, so you have to choose which animals and factories to buy and in what order to make the products with the funds you have. There are also bears that drop down from the sky that eat your animals and even trample your factories! It's really fast-paced (you get rewarded for completing the levels in a timely fashion also), and like I said, it's very addicting.

I was looking for a hobby, but this is ridiculous. I could have chosen something a little more productive than sitting on my butt and playing a video game. But this is *fun*. And I haven't let myself indulge in a hobby that's non-productive in a long time... Usually in my spare time I organize our family photos or work on our kids' school memory books or things like that... What's that you ask? What about my blogging? Well,

ok, I see your point. So I have a few hobbies now; they'll have to compete for my time. And right now, Farm Frenzy is winning! Here is a screen shot:



More on Blogging...

Today I was inundated with spam comments today. When I got home there were many waiting for me to throw in the spam trash bucket.

I noticed a plugin that is supposed to head the spam off before it gets to me, but I'm wondering how well it will work.

I didn't see a way to check to see what was being blocked, so I hope it doesn't end up blocking friends from posting, so I

will keep an eye or two peeled for that.

I guess this means that my blog is getting attention from some quarters now. I'm not sure I like that kind of attention, but it does come with the territory. I can't really say I'm surprised by the spam or the contents of it, but it does surprise me that it has become more frequent. For the first few months of blogging, I got a small handful of spam replies.

I think I tripled that amount in the last 2 days. It all looks like the same site or type of site generating the spam too. Same type of message, same layout, same content.

Ok for you other bloggers, have you been recently plagued by more spam?

Where's My Happy Little Guy?

My son (after having only daughters for the past nine years, it seems weird to say the word son) must be teething. He will be 6 months old on Sunday already, and for the last 5 days, he's been crying constantly. Yesterday was the exception, but 4 of the 5 last days, he's been crying nonstop – it's quite taxing for both of us. Mostly, the exhaustion comes because I just feel badly for the little guy – he used to be the happiest baby and smiled constantly. But after trying everything to cheer him up, sometimes I selfishly think about how hard it is on me as well. I can't imagine the pain he's going through, but in the mean time, I can't get anything done around the house – and leisure time? Forget it. It's hard to get anything done while holding him, and holding him offers one of the only ways to keep him from crying – sometimes even holding him doesn't work. Sometimes there is no choice but to put him down somewhere, like when I'm cooking for instance,

and he's not happy anywhere right now... not in his playpen, his bouncer, his bouncy seat, his crib, the floor, nowhere, which means he is screaming, and it's a draining form of torture to hear a baby cry all day. The only reason I'm actually able to sit down and write this blog (YES! Leisure time after all!) right now is because he is passed out (after a crying spell) sitting on the couch next to me. He sometimes likes it there too, but that means I'm glued to the couch – can't leave a baby unattended on a couch of course. So I can sit here and type this blog, but I can't do things like tackle my accumulating clutter or begin the task of cutting Mt. Washmore down to size. Mt. Washmore is the never-ending, magically replenishing pile of laundry often found lurking in households with 2 or more kids – I have 4 kids, so our Mt. Washmore is taking on a life of its own. If we have any more kids, I'm afraid people who come to visit us will just arrive at the foot of a gi-normous pile of clothes where there once was a house and a family who lived inside.

I try to tell myself that things like backed-up laundry and clutter don't really matter in the long run. Heck, I'll probably even be bored and WISH I had lots more laundry to do once my kids are all grown and in school during the day. But just as I convince my brain that this is true, my feet stumble over something that's in the way and shouldn't be there – clutter or a basket of laundry to put away. Speak of the devil, the laundry buzzer just went off... if only my son will sleep through the transfer from the couch to his playpen so I can go fold it and put it away, thereby avoiding feeding Mt. Washmore.

HE DID! He's asleep in his playpen! But now the dogs are barking at the neighbor's cat again and WAAAAA, WAAAAA!!! Those dogs have woken the baby again! Sigh...

I guess today will see yet another expansion of Mt. Washmore after all.

Funny thing happened on the way to a blog...

Recently I've been trying to respond to one person's blog, and I've gotten errors. Then I try on another browser and can make 1 reply. Then on to a third to make another reply. Then I have to log completely off my computer to make another reply. Just weird. Of course while testing all this out it looks like I'm making very weird comments. Of course, sometimes I do make weird comments, so nobody really notices the difference. ☐

But, I wonder is anyone having trouble commenting on my blog. Am I losing the opinions, views, and comments of others? I can't be sure, unless they contact me in some other manner.

The other thing I notice this past week, I'm getting more spam type replies. Since I do some moderation of all the replies, most don't get through, but I see them. I don't like them, they add no value to my blog. That is important to me. I would like this blog to be a place for me to share, inform, rant and maybe entertain. Both my initial post and the responses to them help with this. Spam replies do none of this.

Then I noticed that some blog themes like certain browsers better than others. This is to be expected, since some browsers handle the coding differently. It is my hope that my current blog works well with all browsers. It certainly works with the ones I use, on the screen setting I use. Input on what you see would help out.

Finally I started using a few polls. There is one poll on this site that I'm guessing our wonderful Admin put on when he was testing the poll plugin install. Here it is for your pleasure, and my education.

[poll id = 1]

Who's counting anyway?

I've been having a bit of fun writing up an Dungeons and Dragons adventure journal. It is something I wanted to share, but I didn't want them to get lost or take over the main part of my blog. So I put them into different pages. Because I wanted easy access to my posts, I decided to change my blog theme too. This new theme allowed me to post the page links in a side bar and allow easy access. so far so good.

But the one thing i did notice is that the new pages were not included in links to new posts... Hmm, no easy way to indicate a new story line was added. I thought about writing an intro post for each new chapter or page. That seemed to be a bit too much. One or two lines are all that are needed anyway. Since I have a post that starts the adventure, I'm thinking that I will add a comment for each new page. The comments are listed as recent events, so people who are interested can see the new additions easily.

Lost a few on my post count, but who's counting anyway?

Yes, a new Theme

You may have noticed (or not) that this site now has a new Theme. I found the old one just a bit restrictive on what I wanted to do now.

Since I started adding additional pages, I wanted an easy way to get to all of them. And I noticed the two column design was getting very lengthy. I don't like scrolling down the page to find what I am looking for.

So here is the new theme. As a side benefit, you should be able to respond on each page. I'm always looking for feedback so here is your chance.

Tapped a powder keg...

I made an entry on another site yesterday and noticed a spike in my readers. There really was nothing new to this, the other site seems to be a curious bunch and when I post, my blog readership does spike for a day or two

I did something a little out of the ordinary for me, I begged for readers outside of my blog. Spike city, and I also got additional responses!!!

One of the reasons I started this blog, was a chance to communicate with more people. If nobody responds, I'm not communicating, just writing. So I welcome all newcomers.

For anyone new, most of the time I write about things that interest me. My interests vary widely and can be influenced by responses.... I've been into computer communication since the time of 300 baud acoustic modems. I started sharing Dungeons

and Dragons hints and stuff like that in the late 70's early 80's. Then I got into it for work related functions and finally with this blog back to fun again.

Pick an interest, and I may write about it.

- 1) new/old movies tv shows (Things I've seen, or things I won't and why)
- 2) Books (I like books, do you have any suggestions? I don't read romance, just a quirk of mine)
- 3) Science News, mostly space related, but that is just a starting point
- 4) Odd News the odder the better in my book
- 5) cooking, I like to find new recipes. All sorts
- 6) Family – I have one and I like them
- 7) Friends – They are the family you pick
- 8) Hobbies and other pastimes
- 9) The trials, tears and other feelings about being a Widower and only parent
- 10) Life – thinking about it and living it

Notice I didn't put up anything about religion or politics. I was always taught that it is almost impossible to have polite conversation in those areas, unless everyone agrees with my Father. Since he is no longer around to moderate those conversations, and I'm not in the mood to moderate them, I guess they won't happen here.

Enjoy, and be welcome.

Funny thing about blogging

The reason I blog is given at the top of my blog page. I use this spot to generally clear my head when I start thinking too

much. Sometimes I actually write about the thoughts in my head (now for instance), other times I just write about things I think are interesting. I'm here because I want to be here. If I had no readers at all that would be enough for me (I've done journals the same way for the past few years, just to get things out). This is replacing any journals I've had. I don't ever really write anything that I would consider inner secrets. Secrets are only kept if no one knows about them. People have been able to read my handwriting before, so a written journal is no place to keep secrets.

Now for the other reasons I write this blog, and why it replaced my journal. I know that I have friends and family that read things here, and it gives me a small way to keep in touch. Some of the friends and occasionally family will reply and let me know what they think of my blogging. Others will email me on their thoughts. Both let me know that there is some interest in what I have to write.

What I find interesting, is that I look at the stats to my blog (check the right hand column, minor stats are there) and I see a larger number of people will read my blog on occasion. Most of them never respond. So I really have no way of knowing if this blog is of any interest too them. I can tell that there are a few repeat viewers, but I don't know who they are yet. As far as I can tell, some people are really getting to know me, while I sit in the dark about them. Oh well, some people are born to lurk...

Just was thinking about that as my visitor count went from the normal 12-15 visitors/day to a count of just over 20 in less than 5 minutes... So to you 8+ new visitors, I bid you welcome. Hope you found something useful.

-- Just saying Hi to all the lurkers again--