

Lions, and Tigers, and Bears...

Oh YEAH!

Well, the Bears killed the pitiful Detroit Lions 48 to 24... But I might be more excited even that my dear friend John may get to see his Detroit Tigers get into the playoffs. The Tigers, also playing Chicago (the White Sox), won their game propelling them into a 1-game playoff vs. the Minnesota Twins this Tuesday. Lisa and I will have to watch that and root for John's Tigers!

But, even more exciting than the Bears and Tigers winning and even more amazing than Detroit playing both baseball and football against Chicago at the same time – **BEEBER STARTED WALKING!**

Now he has been holding-on-to-stuff and walking for months. More recently he had been pushing things around the house – like mini-walkers. But on Sunday, he started WALKING. This means unassisted and when he falls down, he gets back on his feet. WOW! Another child reaches another milestone. **Life is truly a miracle!**

More good news... Superfriend extraordinaire (and Best Man at my wedding) [Derek](#) has just let me know that he WILL be attending out haunted house outing in IL on October 23. YEAH! This means our other friends must join us – it can be a true TANGENTS event.

Jamy, John, Mary, etc – ***that means you!*** (Hey, *WHERE* has CAROL been? Carol, if you're reading this – WE MISS YOU!)

**** [LISA](#) I LOVE YOU ****

A Patch Of Blue In A Sea Of Black And White

We took a fun little excursion to Chicago this past weekend and had a few adventures! More about those later (if I get to them – my time to blog has dwindled A LOT lately!). What I want to write about now is the Chicago Cubs game. Let me begin by escorting the elephant from the room – the Cubs got creamed by the White Sox yesterday. There, I said it. And I'm just stating fact, unfortunately. We were lucky enough to have tickets (happy birthday to me from Hubby – THANK YOU!!!!) for Sunday's game – the final game of a 3 game series between the cross-town MLB rivals the Cubs and the White Sox. This game was to be the "rubber match" – with both teams tied at 1 win apiece for this series, Sunday's outcome would decide the series winner. But the Cubs lost. Miserably. It was almost like they didn't show up to play baseball – which is something I and probably at least a few other Cubs fans lovingly yelled from the stands. We got to watch Carlos Zambrano, the Cubs famously hot-headed starting pitcher, take the mound – and consequently lose his control and get booed off the field. And let me say it wasn't just Sox fans who were booing Zambrano. But I think it was awesome that he was the starting pitcher the day we got to go watch the game live, and he was really fun to watch. It was frustrating to see the empty bullpen across right field though – it seemed empty forever. My husband and I really thought Lou Pinnella should have made the call to the bullpen a little bit sooner and at least get someone throwing balls down there – Zambrano does not recover his game often once he loses it. We were both watching for Lou's call, and finally Zambrano made his trademark nasty move – the guy gets so angry that he beans someone. He throws a 90ish mph baseball AT the batter! So then he stalks off the field, gives the fans a one-finger salute (I don't think it was THAT finger), and goes

into the locker room to pout by himself. He didn't throw down any water coolers on the way this time as he's also been known to do, but I can't say that I wouldn't have liked to see that. As lucky as we were to get to see Big Z pitch, he didn't do very well and we were happy to see him go.

But alas, Zambrano was not the only problem yesterday since the Cubs' bats haven't produced much of anything for weeks, and our game day was no exception. Thus we witnessed a shut-out on the Cubs.

But that's enough of that. It 's amazing how much fun we had despite the worst possible scenario for the game! I LOVE live baseball, and MLB almost doesn't compare to the smaller AAA and AA leagues. Those are fun too, but comparing those atmospheres is really like comparing apples and oranges. It was kind of toasty in the sun, and my knees got burnt to a crisp; I'm dealing with that today. For those of you who want to know the outrageous robbery they're getting away with in MLB stadiums across the country, at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago, it costs \$23 to park, \$6.75 for a 20 oz. beer, \$4 for a bottle of pop or water (let me guess – they took out all the public drinking fountains, I sure didn't see any), and \$4.75 for a hot dog. If you can keep yourself hydrated during the game, you can save yourself \$6 on 2 bottles of water by buying one before and one after the game from the street vendors – they sell them for \$1, which isn't bad at all in that heat! Originally I had planned to eat all day at the stadium, but I just wasn't hungry in the heat. There's nothing like sitting there at a baseball game and cracking peanuts, but I actually passed on those too. I certainly didn't want to leave my seat much, and by the time the peanut vendor arrived, we no longer felt like sitting there calmly cracking peanuts while the Cubs played like you-know-what and gave the game away. That reminds me – we had GREAT seats, upper-level, 3rd base side, right about even with the pitcher. We had a bird's-eye view of Zambrano's animal-like pacing and stomping rituals on the

mound. I guess that's enough about the game – interesting how we were ALMOST late...

Sox park (its real name is a tongue and finger-typing twister) is situated on I-90, one of Chicago's expressways. I was anxious to try Jill the GPS's skills in a city environment since she had so failed us in Pittsburgh, but more so in the outskirts, we weren't really in downtown Pittsburgh. Jill did fine in the big city of Chicago, but when we got off the expressway, it was chaos – and it wasn't like Jill was programmed to guide us through the Sox's bizarre parking system; red coupons, green coupons, etc. We THOUGHT we had left in plenty of time for the game and might even see some batting practice, but we hit some traffic on the way down (did I mention this was also a weekend for the Taste of Chicago?!? Oops – bad planning on our part; we couldn't believe it. The Taste draws *millions!*). Anyway, when we arrived on the south side, we were confused about where to go for cash (\$23!) parking. There were people directing traffic (don't know if they were cops or city workers or Sox park workers, but I might find out so I can file a complaint!), so we asked one of the ladies how to get to cash parking. She said, "I'm going to let you make a U-Turn (we were heading east, toward the stadium), and you make the u-turn and go to 33rd street. So we made the U-turn and headed west when we began to get a not-so-comfortable feeling. Remember, we had seen the stadium, and we were now heading away from it, out of the city. And usually numbered streets in cities are parallel to each other. So if we were looking for 33rd, most likely we should see 31st, 32nd, or 34th streets first – but we weren't. So we turned around, and an hour later, when we finally figured out where to be, we had passed the "helpful" traffic person again and confirmed our suspicions: she had tried to take us out of the city **on purpose**. In fact, when we passed Ms. Directions again, there was a Sox parking pay lot *one block* in front of her. I like to think the best of people, but here it's obvious that earlier, she had us make the U-turn rather than

turn around so we wouldn't be able to see that she was taking us the wrong way. Rude isn't even the word for that. As most locals know, Sox park is not known for being nestled in safe neighborhoods – Wrigley Field, home of the Cubs, is known as the “Friendly Confines” – NOT Sox Park. We were fine, the area didn't get too bad, my husband just got really upset that we might be late for the game. Indeed, when we did finally find our lot, there was a big line and we sat in it for a long time. I can't help but wonder if maybe Ms. Helpful had noticed the color of our shirts – Cubbie blue- which isn't exactly welcome on the south side of Chicago. And those Cubbie blue shirts we wore (which ironically said “Cubs win!”, sheesh) were probably responsible for other rude behaviors directed our way. For instance, my husband got bumped a little harder than regular crowd jostling, and some of his popcorn spilled. Sox fans nearby jeered, and there were also the people who would walk by us up the stairs on the way to their seats (we were seated on an aisle) and feel inclined to say “Cubs suck”. Yesterday they may have had a point.

The people directly around us were friendly enough, a mix of Chicago fans, both north and south, Cubs and Sox. Some people wore a Sox hat and a Cubs shirt, while there were families of people dressed for both teams, an interesting mix. As I looked around the stadium, I saw mostly white shirts (the black shirts were hard to see) in the sea of people, although the sea was dotted with many patches of Cubbie blue, much like the blue patch the two of us created. As rude as a select few Sox fans were though, I suppose they can't be all bad... on the way in to the stadium, it was extremely windy and we both got our Cubs hats blown right off our heads – maybe it was a sign of things to come... But anyway, it was Sox fans who helped up retrieve the runaway hats.

Overall, a great day for some baseball; definitely something I hope to do again. Except next time, I think we'll park far away and take the train to the stadium and forget trying to

park in the city. We hit traffic on the way out too, and an hour after the game had ended, I turned around and I could still see Sox park which was STILL within walking distance! TOO MUCH TRAFFIC!

CUBS Vs Sox



I haven't had a chance to blog much, but a few posts ago in my "To Hellinois... .. And Back Again" blog series, I mentioned that I might be partaking in a "very exciting, awesomely fun event" to which I promised, "more on that later".

Now that the event is definite, I am bursting with excitement, so I will share – hubby got us tickets to see the Chicago Cubs play the White Sox LIVE! I've been wanting to go to a Cubs game for awhile (since our last visit to Wrigley in 2004), but last summer was out because I had a baby and unscheduled surgery from which I had to recover. So, June 28 at ~~Comisky Park~~ US Cellular Field, we will venture into Chicagoland once again to cheer on the Chicago Cubs while on the turf of the Chicago White Sox – AWESOME! My mom was nice enough to agree to watch all 4 kids for the day (and the eldest 3 for the rest of the week, BOOLYAH!), and the tickets for the BIG GAME arrived in the mail the other day.

They accidentally got thrown away in the garbage with the junk mail, but LUCKILY hubby was heads up and asked about the

whereabouts of the tickets. That's when I realized that I probably had thrown them away – by accident of course! Good thing he asked when he did – the tickets were found not too near the bottom of the garbage and salvaged, thank goodness!

But anyway, I am looking forward to this event like you wouldn't believe. Not only is it **LIVE** baseball, but it's MLB, not AAA or AA. And it's the Cubs I get to go watch, and they're playing the SOX – their arch-rival (especially as far as I'm concerned – I HATE those White Sox!!!). So I would say yeah, even though it's not even 2 months after our last Chicago visit, this visit will be well worth it! So watch for us – we'll be decked out in Cubs gear to be sure to properly invade the South Side Sox turf. The game is at 12:05pm local time on June 28 – the last of a 3-game series between the two teams, so it promises to be that much more exciting! It's scheduled to be shown on WGN, so if you get that channel, check it out, you just might see Taylhis and Co.!

GO CUBS!!!!



Oh Captain, My Captain

Tonight, I was treated to a surprise on the television after I got home from work: only the second televised Yankee game of the new season and it was the first game broadcast on the New

York station we get via DishTV. Quite a difference from yesterday's 15-5 debacle. New starter A.J. Burnett had a no-no going through six, but in the bottom of the 7th, the Rays scored a pair to make the score even. By the ninth, the Bombers had made the score 7-2 capped off by Captain Jeter's three-run dinger. I now see that the Yanks and [Tigers](#) are even in their respective divisions at 4-4; however, the Detroit-Chicago White Stocking game was postponed due to rain. And the [Cubbies](#) continue their winning ways at 5-2... GO CUBBIES!

For the past week or so, I have been rather surprised that neither ESPN station nor the New York affiliate were going to carry the opener at the new cathedral. I searched and searched the guide at Thursday afternoon at 1PM. I guess I should have checked the Ohio Sports channel. If I had realized that the Yanks were facing the Tribe from Cleveland, I would have checked it before tonight. So, following my shift Thursday afternoon... I just hope no one wants to watch soap operas.

No More Goat Heads, Please

Ok, we get it – the Chicago Cubs have had a goat curse on them since 1945. It began when a tavern owner put a curse on the Cubs because they wouldn't let him bring his pet goat into the stadium for a World Series game, and the Cubs have not played in a World Series since. So why, here in 2009, does someone feel the need to leave a severed goat head outside Wrigley Field on the day of the Cubs home opener? Not only that, but the pranksters were at it last year as well. We get it – the Cubs have a goat curse on them. Ha,ha, laugh, laugh, nudge, nudge. Those Sox fans aren't very creative, are they? At

least the head most likely was not specifically “crafted” for the prank – apparently there are a number of ethnic butcher shops in the city that carry goat’s and sheep’s heads – yum.

GO CUBS!

Incredible Baseball!

I am a baseball fan. The baseball season started not even a week ago, and I’ve already seen, well, I won’t say that I’ve seen enough good baseball for the season – #1 because I don’t want to jinx the rest of the season, and #2 how could there ever be enough good baseball for a fan? What I’m trying to say is, this season so far (all six days of it) has been incredibly satisfying – especially for a Cubs fan such as myself. The Chicago Cubs, my team of choice, has been involved in two rubber games – for those who aren’t familiar, a rubber game is a game that will decide who wins a series. Of the two series the Cubs have played so far this season, both have come down to the rubber game. The Cubs won their first rubber game against the Houston Astros, thus winning the series, and tonight they are vying against the Milwaukee Brewers for the rubber game of their second series of the season.

The Cubs / Brewers series has been nothing short of incredible. These teams are rivals almost as notorious as the Cubs / White Sox, but then again, nothing can compare to cross-town rivalry across divisions. This weekend, we’ll settle for some up-the-lake rivalry. I have to admit that on Friday night, I was disappointed. I stayed out in the living room, sacrificing myself for our game night taking place in the dining room, to watch the end of the Cubs/Brewers baseball

game. The game was 2 – nothing Brewers until the 4th inning when the Cubs were able to score, making it 2-1. The Cubs were able to score again in the 6th, when Koyie Hill hit a 2-run homer to allow the Cubs a lead. But they just couldn't hang on to it, and the Brewers scored and won in the bottom of the 9th. But it was their home opener, so we should give the guys *something* for their efforts, right? So they got a win, and Saturday night, we were back in business.... we listened to the game on the radio on the way home from the Toledo Zoo. The game was a leapfrog match; 3-2 Milwaukee by the time we tuned in. But somewhere along the Ohio turnpike, the Cubbies tied it up. Then we got home and turned on the tv before we even unloaded our dollar store purchases and turned on the living room light. We did get the sleeping kids out of the car, fyi. I might be a fan of baseball, but I'm not criminally insane enough to abandon the wee-ones to slumber in the car – hehe. We turned on the tv in the living room just in time to watch a little bit of leapfrogging, baseball-style. Alfonso Soriano hit a 2-run homer to bring the Cubs into the lead and would eventually be the fate of the game, leading us to a rubber match on Easter Sunday.

As I posted earlier, we had a wonderful early Easter Sunday, and after church and brunch, we decided to have a lazy day. Well, kind of, I had to tackle Mount Washmore, which I did, but then I was able to enjoy the baseball game once it came on at (very late for a Sunday) 8pm. And this game is the entire reason why I'm writing this post – what an *incredible* game! First off, Alfonso Soriano began the game with a homer on the first pitch – AGAIN! That guy also hit a homer on the very first pitch of the season this year – not to mention the fact that his homer is what put the Cubs in the lead during last night's game – that guy is on FIRE!!! So anyway, the Cubs got themselves 4 runs ahead of the Brewers tonight, and then the Brewers got a grand slam to tie up the game – but wait – Reed Johnson grew springs in his shoes, and he jumps up and grabs that ball from homerun-dom, saving the Cubs and their

lead! Across the remaining innings, they increase their lead and win the rubber game for the second time this season of the two series they've played – WHEW! It's baseball time again!!!

And I should mention, the Cubs winning this second series of the season is probably due to my hat. I'm very superstitious about my Cubs baseball hat. I was so busy with my 4 kids that I forgot to wear my hat until Saturday (when the Cubs needed some help, I might add), so I wore it all day on Saturday, and they ended up beating the Brewers, which means that my hat has the power this year to do great things. Even though we had a lazy Sunday and didn't go anywhere today, I wore the hat around the house and what happens – CUBS WIN!!!!

Ahh... A Relaxing Baseball Game And A... LOSS?!?

I had a really stressful day yesterday. The kids went completely crazy at night – was it a full moon? I didn't check. Even if that was the case, other little things kept going wrong also. Little things – things that really shouldn't matter. Except that when those little things are added up, they equal *one bad day*. So I thought I could beat my stress by looking forward to watching some BASEBALL on TV. Yes, that's right, I said BASEBALL on TV! And it's only early March – we haven't even changed the clocks yet!

I just happened to look on tvguide.com yesterday to see if I could look forward to a new episode of Lost, and I noticed that my favorite baseball team, the Chicago Cubs, were set to play their cross-town rivals, the Chicago White Sox and it was going to actually be on tv in our little corner of NW Ohio!

Even though it's only spring training, that brightened my mood considerably since it's been MONTHS since I've gotten to watch baseball. With the way my day was going, I was sure something would go wrong – the tvguide had made a mistake and we didn't get it, Vegas (where the game was played) would disappear into a sinkhole, something like that. But 10:00 finally rolled around, and the game was on! AND, the teams were putting in their starters rather than their scrub players, which meant real, actual baseball to watch! So I felt better; I relaxed and sat down to watch the game, and of course, that's when my two middle children (the trouble-makers of the brood these days) decided to start fighting. So it wasn't peaceful, but I did get to watch the game. And it was a good game – the Cubs were down, but then they tied it up, but of course the Sox came back to win. A disappointing outcome for such an otherwise great game. But the good news is, it was only spring training so who cares who won!

After the game I left WGN on the tv, and I was treated to an episode of the old tv show Alf. Remember Alf? It was a sitcom from the 80's about a family who discovers an Alien Life Form (ALF), and takes him in to live with them. Alf is a furry wise-cracking puppet with an affinity for cats (to eat!), and the family must keep him secret so he doesn't get taken away. Alf was a huge fad in the 80's; there were toys, lunchboxes, a cartoon spinoff, you name it. After the Alf episode, on came the Steve Wilkos show (he's the former bodyguard from the Jerry Springer show who now has his own trashy talk show – I wrote about this in a previous post, probably because of my disbelief that they would actually give this guy air time). And that was my cue to hit the sack for my lovely 4½ hours sleep. So far, today has been a little better, although our trouble-making 4-year-old is at school. Tonight I'm looking forward to a brand spankin' new Office episode – YIPPEE! But first I have to get through a few boring meetings. Sure hope I don't doze; I am awfully tired!

Moving The Choo-Choo

If you've grown up in Chicagoland as I have, then you'll know what I'm talking about when I describe a few staples of a typical suburban 1980's Chicago childhood. #1 – You've attended a taping of the Bozo show. As I've stated before, the girl I went to the show with was put on the waiting list for tickets when she was a fetus. We went to the show taping when we were 9 – that's how long it took for her name to come up, thus illustrating how popular the experience was. #2 – If you had perfect attendance in school, you won tickets to a White Sox baseball game. Even I, a true-blue Chicago Cubs fan, ventured over to the south side as a youth to cheer on the men in black as a reward for not missing any days in a school year. Don't tell anyone though; it's not something I'm proud of. #3 – You got your grilled cheese served to you by a miniature train at the Choo-Choo restaurant in Des Plaines.

Now that it's 2008, I doubt they give away major league baseball tickets for perfect attendance in school anymore. I know for a fact that the Bozo show is no longer around, but I also know that the Choo-Choo restaurant is alive and well – for now anyway. The Choo-Choo is a small diner that serves typical american fare – hot dogs, grilled cheese, burgers, and the like. If you sit at the counter, your food is delivered by a miniature train that circles the dining room and disappears into the kitchen. It seems they are thinking of moving the Choo-Choo to build a new police department. Not putting it out of business, thank goodness, but they are considering moving it. I hope this does not happen because I'm not one to favor change, and I can't help but feel that if the restaurant is moved, it will suffer loss of business which will eventually lead to its demise. I don't understand

why the proposal involves moving the entire building; from what I remember it is a very small crowded space, and the magic is in the train serving your food, not in the building itself. Since 1951, this little diner has been there, and many generations have enjoyed it. I think it would be a shame to move it as it would lose at least a little bit of its nostalgia for some people if it were in a different location. Leave it there in its tiny building. Let people stand in lines that often run out the door in order to get a counter seat where the train runs as they've done for decades. People are more likely to return with their children and later on, their grandchildren if it's left exactly the way they remember it.

My husband and I had very different upbringings; his was a life of "privilege", getting every material item he could ever want, although his parents were never home. Mine was the opposite, a loving family always together although we had to stretch the already tight budget just to be able to afford such luxuries as an occasional happy meal from McDonalds. But we are both products of Chicagoland, therefore we share the memories of the Sox tickets perfect attendance prize (not that my husband ever won any; this is no surprise if you know anything about his school years), being at the Bozo show tapings, and our visits to the Choo-Choo restaurant. My kids have been to the restaurant also, and I hope it's still there for them to visit with my grandchildren someday.

Windy City Classic

Back in the days when it didn't count, there was only one yearly face-off between the Chicago cross-town rivals, the Cubs and the White Sox. It was called a number of things, but

when I was younger, I remember it being referred to as the Windy City Classic. No matter which side you cheer for, these games are important to every sports fan in Chicago. I even remember cutting school one year to attend...

But now that there is something known as inter-league play, there are 6 of these games a year, and they do count. Today was the opening game of one such series, and I am suffering through it. One of the rare Cubs games I've actually gotten to watch on tv this year, it has to be broadcast by Sox announcers, even though the game is being played at Wrigley Field and the Cubs are the home team. I cannot stand the Sox announcers. Not only do they stink as announcers (I would be rich if I got paid for every time they've said "south-paw" – some diversity in your subject matter, guys, please?), but they are on *their* side. So every time the White Sox make a play, even though the crowd is booing, the announcers get excited. And I won't even waste much time complaining about the shouts of "Put it on the Board!" I'm subjected to every time the Sox score runs.

There's a lot at stake for this series – both teams are in first place in their respective divisions, even though it must be noted that the Cubs have a much better record – but I'm not really minding the errands I have to run that will take me away from today's game. Watching the Cubs lose to the Sox is one thing if that happens, but hearing these horrible announcers rub in every homerun or lucky play the Sox make is a new brand of torture of which I'm glad to be relieved!

Why the Cubs will NEVER win a World Series!



The Cubs don't just lose. They lose with style. They find new ways to make people say to themselves "I can't believe the Cubs found a way to choke again!" But why do they keep losing? Is it a CURSE? Yes it is... But it has nothing to do with goats and everything to do with dollars.

You see, a franchise that has build a cult-like following on the platform of being "Lovable Losers" needs to maintain their status to keep their following. And the following is where the money is...

Take the Chicago White Sox for example. They won a World Series not too long ago. But now, that is history and they are no longer selling out every game and in the national spotlight. They have no story. They are just another team that wins some and loses some.

But, to be a money machine you MUST have a story. You must either be a big winner (like the Yankees) or a big loser (like the Cubs). If you're just floating around in the middle, you are not a story. You are no longer the eternal underdogs everyone roots for on the side. You are... Just another baseball team.

If the Cubs were to win a World Series, *Lovable Loser* would no longer fit. And unless they could consistantly win, neither would the title of *Elite Team*. So, I wouldn't expect to see the Cubs winning a World Series any time soon. They will always be a devistating injury, botched play, or Steve Bartman away.

Because baseball is a business and a good story is good for

business.