

# Cuteness To Get You Through The Weekend



Above is a picture of our second oldest, 5-year-old Sammie and her almost 1-year-old brother Christopher. He is the only boy in our family, and also the only sibling with which Sammie doesn't fight. It seems like the natives (kids) have been restless lately. Our oldest, Taylor, it back to her snotty tween "I'm-better-than-everyone-else-so-why-do-they-get-more-than-me" attitude, so she is constantly yelling at and fighting with her sisters. Disney is 2 and has been really sensitive, demanding, and impatient lately. Needless to say, our house has been very loud as of late. But in between the arguments, the kids still find time to be cute. Here is a picture of Disney actually sharing the activity table with her baby brother (whose looks seemingly aged months after he got his new haircut):



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## Late night/early morning

Deep in thought....

My mind goes back to a day in December some 21+ years ago. A few short days before Christmas when a chubby little blond entered my life. Yes at one time she was a bit chubby. Rolls of skin defined her short legs. And the blue eyes smiled from the first. All this and more in a tiny little package.

Her hair today is not as blond. She really can't be called chubby anymore. But the eyes can still smile.

I remember the day she found her first frog. We live in the woods, so it isn't very hard. When she learned to read, she found out as much as she could about the little animals. To this day she is drawn to them.

There were days playing in the mud, while wearing her sister's clothes. Days playing softball while dad coached from the sidelines.

Days being a child, days being a young lady. Days of very little care and days of hardship.

There was Star Wars both movies and books. There was friends, sisters, pets and family. We had shared a time or two on stage. She sang, I listened. There were the clothes from the boys section, there were beautiful dresses.

All of this and more. 21 years don't fit in a few short paragraphs. My beautiful blue eyed girl has spent years growing up. And I am proud of her....

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## My Favorite Camping Memory

If you've been reading my blog as of late, you know about my family's impromptu camping trip – my husband and I, in a fit of outlandish spontaneity (read: **his** idea), decided to take our 4 children – ages 9, 5, 2, and almost 1 year – on a surprise, last-minute, week-long camping trip. Despite our family being very inexperienced and mostly camping-inept, it's been going pretty well! My husband was shipped off to camp for entire summers when he was a kid, and it's fun to see this side of him – the skills that he learned in the campgrounds of his youth since we've never been camping together... well, not like this anyway, with 4 kids and 2 dogs to look after. As for me, the camping experiences of my youth consist of a few over-nighters for Girl Scouts, and one week-long venture at Girl Scout camp that I did not like one bit – it was cold, we had to get up early, I had to be away from my beloved family dog, which made me incredibly homesick. To top off my week of misery, the counselors at the camp wanted us to do a *mandatory* (believe me, I did ask about the mandatory part!) art project that involved catching frogs, dipping them in paint, and letting them hop across a piece of paper. Call it art, if you will, but there was no way I was going to be anywhere near that art project due to my intense fear of frogs and toads

which I am still conquering as we speak (guess what my 5-year-old's favorite camping activity has been this week?). Luckily for the kid-version of me, it rained at Girl Scout camp, meaning I did not have to participate in the frog-filled art project. But it took 3 days for that project to get canceled, and I was panicked about it the entire time. Plus, when we got up in the morning, it was very cold outside, and first things first – we had our swimming lessons first thing in the morning. Anyone who was too cold to participate in the morning lessons lost their privilege to partake in free swim after lunch when the sun was scorching. But as miserable as I thought I was at camp, I did have a favorite camping thing that we did – something that just isn't the same without a campfire: we made pie-iron pizzas.

A pie-iron is a camping cooking utensil that consists of two small, shallow metal square pans with long handles. You can build sandwiches and desserts and all kind of culinary creations between the squares, then you latch them together and hold them over the campfire to cook the filling. My long-term memory continues to serve me well – even as an adult, pie-iron pizzas are delicious! After a trying day yesterday with my girls being tired and throwing tantrums all day, making pie-iron pizzas was a great way to close the day – they honestly cheered everyone up, including me! Not only are they yummy, but to make them is actually a fun project that is easy for kids and can easily burn a good 30 minutes of off kid boredom time! The kids might need help cooking their pie-iron pizzas over the campfire for safety reasons, but any age kid can enjoy preparing her pizza for cooking. There is something about kids helping to prepare their own food that makes them eat better than ever, too – works every time for my kids.

So yeah – the \$10.99 pie-iron turned out to be a great investment. Not only was it a fun family experience (I built the sandwiches with the girls while Dad helped cook them over the fire) which also accomplished the task of feeding the

family, but the activity accomplished the near-impossible task of cheering up a tired family! I am excited about the [many experiments](#) I plan on conducting with the pie-iron – you can make mini-casseroles, desserts, pita pockets, stir fry... so many possibilities!

As I cheesily began to sing the other night, “Pizza... Roasting on an open fire...”

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## Halfway there...

My dear daughters again gave me a 1-2 punch. This was when my oldest got married and my second youngest graduated from High School. My Second youngest is getting married in 2 weeks and my youngest graduated high school today. So, as a family we are halfway there. It has been an interesting 3 years. I was actually reminded today that it is a 1-2-3 punch since both this year and in 2006 I had daughters graduating from the community college. Since they got early graduation gifts for college (they both ‘needed’ laptops), they didn’t really want to do much for the college graduations. I’m grateful for that, but I should recognize that they both got their degrees.

Well the graduation portion of this is finished except for a party or two. It is interesting how the students stagger their parties from weekend to weekend.

The graduation was the easy event of the year. My youngest was able to give a short speech as one of 4 students with perfect 4.0 grade points. That is out of less than 100 young adults. (Yes, this is a small rural school.) It was interesting to hear what the students found to be important in their 4 years of high school. It is also interesting as an adult to realize that what they think is important now may not remain that way

in the coming years. They get to experience a greater freedom and less free time as they grow into the adult world.

So here are my best wishes to all the graduates of 2009.

One final thought, the wedding dress is finished. That is a full 2 weeks before the wedding day.

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## **Interesting phone conversation...**

and results.

My 2nd daughter lives in Florida and is trying to make it to Ohio for her sister's wedding. The cost of round trip tickets have gone up recently. She called today to see if she could get a little assistance from me for the tickets. Well, we started talking about the ticket prices she found, and layovers here or there. Found out that the major cost of the tickets was always the return flight to Florida.

So I realize it may cost a bit more, but I offered to drive her back down to Fla. This way I get to spend more time with my daughter and I get to see my son-in-law. He can't make it to the wedding since he just started a new job and does not have any time off accumulated yet. 2 birds, 1 stone. I like that.

Now there are a few hickups in the plan. I was planning on going with some friends to a Cubs/Tigers game. No can do. I'll be on my way to Florida. Sorry Taylhis and Admin... I will be spending a bit of cash to get the truck ready to go to Florida. I'm thinking I will need at least the a pair of

tires. The front tires are in need of replacement. Not bad for driving short distances, but I'm not sure I would trust them for 8 to 12 hours of non-stop driving. Then of course there are the general problems with taking care of the animals while we are gone, but I've worked that out before.

I'm really looking forward to getting some time with the Florida family. Can't wait. I don't even have to schedule any extra vacation, it is already taken care of for the wedding.

More plans and things to do, but that is the fun of life... Right?

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## Time and then some

Today, I didn't forget to help at the theater. Yesterday I did. Time slipped away from me. I would like to say prior commitments prevented me, but I was back in time to help out. I just forgot. Time passed me by.

Now I look at the clock and see it well past time to get some sleep. But I was working on some video editing and sleep won't come.

Life is all about change. And my life is changing. Time ticks down the events of my life and the life of my friends and family. My family is growing again. For those who don't know, I 'adopt' each of my daughters' husbands. They are my sons. The good part about this is that they are grown sons, and I don't have to 'raise' them. As long as they treat my daughters with respect, I will treat them as one of my family. Some may say this is an honor, it could also be a curse. Talk to my daughters sometime. I expect a lot from them, and have rarely been disappointed. I've always felt that they have made their

ways in life because of what was expected of them. I always wanted them to give their best effort in the things they do. Never perfection (that is almost unattainable, until you inherit it. ☐ family joke), but to give their best. I now expect that from my sons (and the 'future' son). That way I can expect the 'best' for their growing families.

Time, it slips by and things change. Sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. Life is what you can make it, or so I've been told. Time slips by, and things stay they same.

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## Busy family

Can this family have much more excitement?

The current list (as it stands now ☐ )

- 1) 4th Daughter heads out for Show Choir Competition in April.
- 2) 4th Daughter's High School graduation in May.
- 3) 3rd Daughter's Wedding in June – Play I was in is going to regional competition ☐ I can't make it.
- 4) Family Vacation???
- 5) 4th Daughter Starts College in August
- 7) 1st Daughter's first child due in September

OK what else is can happen? I'm not sure. With the way this year is going, I'm sure there will be something. My life tends to get more complicated, not less.

Could 'The Lion in Winter' Go to State competition? I would love that. It was a good part and I would like to play it again...

Weddings, Graduations, College, Birth. I can remember when that was me. It wasn't that long ago was it.

Of course, I'm sure there will be more medical testing now that I'm 50. That will take some time won't it. And the fun part is, I don't know when or what those will be right now. Depends on how the tests go doesn't it?

What is life without adventure, it looks like I have my days filled with it.

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## 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 where 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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## The Mayor And The Macarena – Part Deux

About a year ago, I had a blog post called “The Mayor And The Macarena”. It was about my family’s first roller skating outing (it was a birthday party for the Girl Scouts organization), and my post was so titled because our county’s only roller skating rink is owned and operated by the town mayor. Not quite being fully assimilated to small town living, I guess, I got a big kick out of watching the mayor play DJ; especially when he spun old has-been but essential tunes for us to dance to on our roller skates like “The Macarena”, “YMCA”, “The Chicken Dance”, and “The Hokey Pokey”. So it’s that time of year again – Happy Birthday Girl Scouts! – and we attended the birthday party at the roller rink again on Sunday. That reminds me, did you know that the infamous chicken dance now has lyrics?

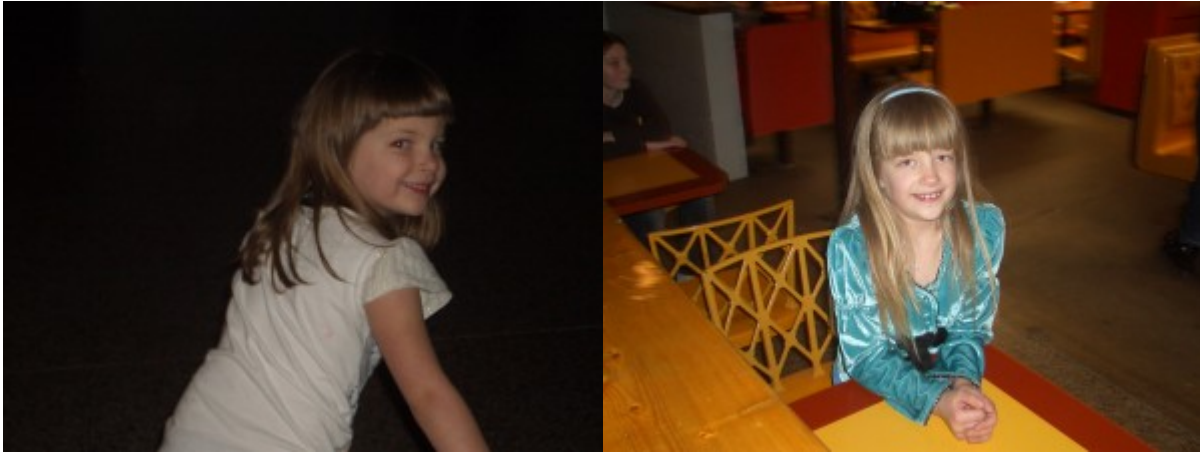
“I don’t wanna be a chick,  
I don’t wanna be a duck,  
I just wanna shake my butt”  
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

Well, that was news to me because as far as I knew, the chicken dance was just that – a dance with motions and no lyrics, but I bet you can guess which word the kids absolutely LOVED putting the emphasis upon... ah, kids!

Coincidentally, our Girl Scout’s younger sister was also invited to a birthday party at the roller rink on Sunday. Which meant 5 straight hours of roller skating! After 5 hours, the girls had showed so much improvement! We even got skates for our 2-year-old, but those skates were practically bigger than she was, and they were so heavy, she didn’t have a chance:



But like I said, after a few hours on the skating floor, the older two really got the hang of it, despite a few spills and some breaks, err, rest periods, not broken bones, thank goodness!



The girls' baby brother even had a great time singing and bopping along with the music...



A great way to cap off an extremely busy weekend... we had so much fun, I think we'll make a few more trips over there even *before* the Scout's party comes around again next year!

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## The Last Show

It was a happy and sad time today. Our show ended and we ended the day tearing down the set. Life outside the theater can begin again. Things can be accomplished, chores done and life again resumes. There are movies to see, books to read, daughters to tend to. From daughters and their new families, marriages, graduations, starting college life goes on. My life

in the theater ceases until after the fall. There will be shows, they will do it without me.

There is talk of taking our show to the OCTA regional competition this June, unfortunately, I will not be able to make it. My daughter is planing her wedding for the same weekend. Family comes first. I don't think I would miss a wedding.

This fall, my oldest is expecting her first child. This will also take up a bit of time or more.

My youngest is finishing her final year of high school, and plans to attend college next fall. This will also take up much of my time.

Life does not stand still, life move on.

More thoughts on our show in another post. It was an event that many enjoyed but it was still too few. I'm not sure how to get the word out to more, but they missed one of the best shows I've been involved with.