

Trip to Chicago???

I received an email from my college roommate. It has been 28 years since we graduated from college, and we still try to stay in touch. He was a religion and history major in school with an avid interest in music, theater and comic books. I was a Math/Computer major with an interest in girls and role playing games. How the two of us ever got along is a mystery to me. I was on stage once and vowed never to do it again.

Today, I'm a computer nerd (yes, I get paid for that), father and theater geek. He is a minister in Chicago and hasn't been on stage since College. I've been in many shows since 1997, and I'm involved in another as I write this. The email from my roommate today was a surprise for me. He tried out for a local Chicago production of Cinderella. He got the role of the King. He always had a wonderful singing voice and good acting skills. I may just have to make the trip to Chicago to watch it.

Anyone up for a roadtrip?

The name of the game

What was that game? The one I liked? I remember what it was about, sort of. No that wasn't the game, but it was like that one. I think this is it, but I don't remember that rule.

Ok, has that happened to you? No? I guess you don't play any of the large variety of trivia/knowledge games available.

I've noticed that there are so many of these types of games, it is very possible to confuse which one you played last month, or even last week.

I bring this up because my friends and I play a large number of games. A good percentage of those games are the trivia/knowledge games. There are some that are very fun, and other not as much. Some even have a few of the same questions as other games, but the rules make a difference. I think what makes the game fun is when giving the wrong answer is as much fun as getting the right answer.

But then again the fun of games is that we get to enjoy time with others. Ways to relax, have fun and enjoy the company of others is very important for our mental well being. This week I have two opportunities to share time with family and friends. I'm looking forward to it.

jamaihsh, I found some guacamole pringles....

You've got the what?

I now have permission to write this blog. The news has been spreading and most of the people that needed to know, know. So with this post we will all be more knowledgeable.

Last weekend, my oldest left a message on my cell phone for me to call her. Her news was that she had three bars. Being bit dense, I thought 5 bars was good for cell phones. She was talking about different bars. Apparently my oldest is expecting her first child. So I have a grandchild coming into the world. Great news for this grandfather. I'm rather looking forward to being able to spoil a grandchild within easy visiting distance.

Those who know me, know that my two oldest daughters both have step-children. As far as I'm concerned these are my grandkids too. Unfortunately, I do not get to visit with them as often

as I would like. Two of these children are many miles away, and I don't have the time or cash to be able to take off at the drop of a hat to visit. I surely wish I was able to, but right now I can't. My other granddaughter doesn't get to visit very often, situation is complex, as often happens. So now I will have a grandchild only 1 hour away. Great for the child, but I'm not sure how the parents will react. Hee! Hee!

Now for the fun part. My future grand child already has a nickname. When darling daughter was calling people to let them know about the future happenings, she called her grandparents. They were involved in this or that, and wondered if my daughter could call back. My daughter, with her usual humor, responded: "Sure, I've got 9 months." Her grandmother heard: "Sure, I've got the mumps." It apparently took a bit of explaining to get across the wording of "9 Months". Grandma kept hearing mumps. I really would have liked to be a fly on the wall for that conversation. Anyway, my future grandchild's current nickname is Mumps.

It should be a fun time in NW Ohio for the next few months, or even years.

Checkup Time!

INSERT DISK HERE:



My son Christopher passed his 6 month baby checkup at the pediatrician with flying colors. If only adult physical tests were this easy – pass a block from hand to hand, pick up a raisin (which was promptly taken away because he's too little – where's the reward in that?), a turn of the head when your name is called... He has mastered all of it and is right where he should be developmentally. Except for one thing – sitting up. No I didn't forget the 'p' – he *has* mastered *spitting* up... haha. But he can't *sit* up unassisted yet, and he doesn't even seem to be close to doing so. The problem is that he refuses to bend at the waist. If I can get him into a sitting position, (and that's a big IF!) he arches his back immediately and tries to stand. I tried to explain this to the nurse so she wouldn't think he is physically slow, but he lost points anyway. Never mind that he can use his legs to jump vigorously in his bouncer that hangs from the doorway, or that he can single-handedly pull and move a heavy dining room chair with his iron grip – he still loses points for not being able to sit unassisted. Oh well, if that's how they score it, that's how they score it. It's not like it bothers me at all; I actually find it amusing. I think he might be crawling and walking before he sits...

Other news from the doctor appointment is that he weighs 16 lbs. 13oz. which is in the 30 percentile for weight. An easy explanation of the percentile comparison is this: If you take 100 babies my son's age, 30 of them would be at his weight or

lower and 70 of them would weigh more than he does. He is $27\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, which puts him in the 75th percentile for height. His head circumference is 45.2 cm which is exactly average. I think he is probably our most average-sized baby; our oldest was always small for her age and the two in the middle were huge – Disney was once in the 100th percentile for height! Just another example of how different kids are, even ones in the same family. My 4 children physically remind me of each other, yet it's so fun to watch their differences emerge as they learn and grow! Here are Disney and Christopher, my two youngest:



Late night thoughts

I usually spend Saturday evenings at my oldest daughter's house. This is 1 hour away from where I live, so it is a bit of a drive to get home. We go late into the evening playing all sort of games, the normal game is some sort of 'role playing' game. The games are always fun for me, but that is not the focus of this post.

Nope, the focus is my thoughts on the drive home, and the 45 minutes to an hour I need to spend to 'unfocus' from my drive home. Driving late at night, I push my body awake. Kind of

like a coffee kick without the coffee. I can just force myself to be alert, unless I'm really very tired. This comes in very handy on long drives, or other activities that need my full attention. It is a 'gift' I've always had. As with all gifts, there is a downside. It does take some time to unwind.

Anyway after all this, I was thinking on the drive home about where I am in life. I am an only parent, but my daughters are growing up. Two are married and out of the house, one is engaged to be married soon, the youngest is now a senior in High School, just months from turning 18. They don't need their dad as much as they did 5 short years ago. I've been a widower for 5 years, so in most peoples eyes I would be considered single. I won't go into the ins and outs of all the differences with this label, but for me, I prefer the widower label to the single label. I never made the choice to be alone, it was kind of forced on me. That in and of itself is enough for me.

I now know of some people trying to 'set me up'. Dating, while it has crossed my mind, isn't my main concern. I'm not out there looking. If someone falls in my lap, so to speak, I guess I wouldn't mind. But looking for someone to be with is not my primary goal right now. I have good friends, wonderful daughters, somewhat strange, but likable family, and hobbies that keep my mind occupied. I've been busy trying to find out who I am. For so many years I was part of a well oiled team. That team got split up, and now I'm a solo act. I'm just starting to find out what is important to me. There really hasn't been any time to spend dating. I'm not even sure I want to go through the hassle of getting to know someone again. Never enjoyed that when younger, I'm fairly certain I won't now. My wife and I kind of just clicked together. Not from the first meeting, but within a few dates, it was like we knew each other forever. Spent 20 years both knowing her and getting to know her better, not a bad way to spend 20 years. Now, I'm not even sure what I would be looking for, but then

again, I wasn't sure 25+ years ago either.

I was also thinking about my weekly gaming sessions at my daughter's house. Does this infringe on the time I should be spending with the two younger daughter still (at least somewhat) in the 'nest'? Do they need more of my time, or is this a good use of my time. I tend to enjoy the gaming, and it does relax me. Good point in dealing with the day to day troubles/situations my two at home can give me. I'm thinking I should just talk to the other 2 involved. Yep, that is the answer there.

Also thinking about how much time I should spend with the theater. Yes, I'm currently preparing for a show, I'm on the production board, I tend to volunteer for other projects. Am I spending too much time there?

Do I spend too much time blogging? Yes, sometimes I do. (like now) Could I use time better? Sure. Are other interests suffering from this? You betcha. But this is the place I clear my head, so I have more room to fit all the other stuff going on. Doesn't need to be a daily habit, but the clearing is beneficial.

Yes, all this and more went through my brain on an hour drive. Now I've relaxed and I'm able to get much needed rest. Read through at the playhouse later this afternoon.

Do you wonder?

A day like today was made for wondering. Warm (for January) and very sunny. A day made for quiet reflection. To sit and see the sun shining through the trees with a fire in the fireplace was most enjoyable. With the warm temperature of

the day, the fire has now been allowed to fade. The sun is doing an wonderful job providing extra heat to the house. It is comfortable.

So in these times of quiet reflection, I often wonder about the past and future. More of the future now, than the past, but the past does have a place in my heart.

So today I'm wondering what my future holds. What the futures of my daughters' holds. It is enough to wonder. I don't need any answers yet, the wondering and pondering of this is enough.

My hope is that my daughters are happy in life. I had a very happy life for twenty years. I would hope for at least the same for my daughters.

I don't need to wonder about the past anymore. The past is just that, the past. It is over, the wondering is over. The past is a place to store memories of the hopes of days gone by. A place to keep memories, both good and bad.

Do you wonder about your future? The future of those you love? Today, tomorrow, next month? Do you make plans, or just live day by day? What happens when the plans fail? Do you wonder?

My plans in life are simple. I want to be content. I was happy and sad. Happy is very good. Sad is not so good. Content is restful. Today I am content.

New Year, comfortable habit

New Year's eve and I toasted in the new Year. I've made that toast with the same beverage for the Since New Years Eve

1983/1984. My future brother-in-law brought some Piesporter with him. My future wife did not care for wines at all really liked this wine. From that date on, we shared a bottle of some type of Piesporter. It has been a holiday tradition for a long time.

After her death, I kept buying that type of wine for both New Year's Eve and our Anniversary. I have not shared the bottle with anyone until last night. In the past few years, if I was out for the evening, I would save my toast until I got home. I didn't feel like sharing this wine. This year I spent the evening with some good friends. I did share my bottle with those who wanted it.

If they enjoyed the wine, that was wonderful. If they didn't care for it, it doesn't matter. I also shared a bottle of the same wine with family and friends on the anniversary of her death. This is the first year, I've shared the wine. It may not mean a lot to those who shared with me, but in mind it had a lot of meaning.

To those who shared, thank you for accepting a gift from my heart, and helping me remember the good times I did have for many years.

Happy New Year.

All this and something more

Did you every have a day you thought would have turned out differently? Did you ever expect one thing, and have something else happen? To answer those questions, yes, I did. Yesterday was one of those days.

It was decided earlier that my daughters and I would go to the Zoo to see the Christmas Light display before it closed for the season. As a family we've always enjoyed visiting the light display. As a family we were members since 1984. The Lights before Christmas started in 1986 and has been our family tradition since that date. We took our small children in strollers, pushed grandfathers (due to health or injury) on wheelchairs. We took relatives from warmer climates on very cold evenings. We even went on cold rainy nights. It was a winter escape. As a family we enjoyed the evenings together.

Since 2003, we have not been able to attend as a complete family. My wife was too ill to take the cold weather in her final month, and I stayed with her. She hasn't been there since that year of course. The years following one daughter or another has not been there as we toured the lights. This year my daughter in Florida was not in Ohio to attend. I am very sorry she missed it again.

So three of my daughters, my son-in-law, some friends when to the lights, on the 5th anniversary of my dear wife's death. I thought a melancholy day was in order. I forgot how much I enjoy the company of my family and friends. I also forgot the magic of seeing hundreds of colorful lights. A day of memories and togetherness. Not really a sad memory last night at all.

After the evening of lights, we went to my eldest daughter's house and shared a glass of wine and bit of dinner. A toast to her memory and more conversation. A wonderful night. I needed that. It was another healing effect on my life. Family is wonderful.

Last Post of 2008!

Because I barely have time to fit in the writing of this current blog post, I can safely say that with 4 kids running around (Christmas break = parental nightmare) this will be my last blog post of 2008! What better way to go out then but to experiment with the new polling feature of tangents.org and make a New Year's themed poll? Enjoy, and have a very happy and safe New Year's celebration! Here's wishing you the best of luck in 2009! Check all that apply:

[poll id="3"]

So what did you get for Christmas?

Sometimes it isn't the gift, it is the thought behind it. Sometimes it is the gift. Sometimes it is both. Over the years I've had plenty of wonderful gifts. Sometimes they are things I specifically ask for. For the gift giver, it is very easy to get me exactly the gift I wanted. Sometimes the gift I want is very extravagant, and should be out of the range of anyone getting me gifts. Sometimes this is where have four daughters really pays some benefits to me. While I only get 1 gift from them, it is something I really want, and would never buy for myself.

Take two years ago, all for girls went in on an "official" Indiana Jones Fedora. I would have made to with any nice looking brown fedora, but they got me a very well made replica. I realize I should have put in in a case just to look at but I wear it almost every day. Fedoras are not made for

heavy winds. They will fly off heads. That is why some hats have strings on them. ☐

This year they did it again. Something I wanted, and probably would never have spent the money on. Years ago, first on Showtime and then on PBS, there was a wonderful show called [Shelley Duvall's Faerie Tale Theatre](#). It was a wonderful show, and as soon as I had a VCR, I started taping the shows. When I could no longer get them we had the girl's grandmother tape them. Fast forward to now, and the tapes we had of these shows wore out, were misplaced or just got re-used. I never did own the complete series. The girls knew I liked the shows, so they went together and bought the DVDs of this series. So now I have hours of faerie tale enjoyment ahead of me. If asked nicely, I would even be willing to share.

From the very first faerie tale "The Frog Prince" with Robin Williams and Terri Garr, to the very last show "The Dancing Princesses" with Leslie Ann Warren, these shows had big name stars from the 80's. The shows were made so that parents could watch them with their children. I'm not sure about any other family watching these, but after some of the shows, we would dig out the original faerie tale to read to our children. A wonderful family time and now memory.

So what did I get for Christmas this year? About the same as every year. I was given much love, wonderful memories all wrapped up with paper and bows. This was hidden in a gift given from the heart. Or in this case four very loving hearts.