

Still Here... Somewhere

Realizing I haven't blogged in awhile, I've been trying to think of something to write about. I have plenty of material; I just don't feel like writing for some reason. Plenty of material, not plenty of time is part of the reason. I've even started a few drafts, but at least one ended up being a laundry list of complaint about my dogs' behavior and other things that have been stressing me lately, and I don't feel like publishing it. After all, Walmart complaints are fun, tongue-in-cheek ways to vent about how I feel ripped off after shopping at Walmart, but when I write huge rants of real life complaints I annoy *myself*, so I can't imagine my readers' feelings. Plus all the complaining doesn't ease the stress, nor does it help me fulfil the main purpose of my blog – which is giving my family a virtual diary of our lives while the kids are growing up. Sure, it shares the information, but I want their reading experience of our family blog when I'm gone to be a good one, not something like, "Hey – I DO remember when mom was stressed all the time!!"

So I wanted to drop a quick line to let it be known that I'm still here, still a part of blog world, still interested in posting blogs. My kids are not any less cute these days, nor my life any less busy or exciting... just much more stressful, which kind of puts a damper on my creative writing spirit I think. I'm hoping maybe that will change here soon... if not this summer, something tells me I might feel better in October or November with less of the negative pregnancy symptoms and more of the 'new baby joys' to focus upon. Can't wait!

A Person Is A Person No Matter How Small

Another fun-filled weekend! Friday, I invited a trio of lovelies to take in Elizabeth's elementary school's production of *Seussical, Jr.* It was a cute show and what A LOT of work!

THIRTY-FOUR songs and a group of 58 youngsters on stage the entire time. I have no idea how much more is involved in the full-scale edition of the musical but I remember how daunting a task of a 21 song show was especially for the director. For those of you who do not know, the musical combines the tales of Horton the Elephant who Heard a Who and Hatched the Egg.

Along with Horton, we were entertained by the Cat in the Hat, JoJo (the son of the Mayor of Whoville and his wife), Gertrude McFuzz, Mayzie LaBird, and other characters from the pages of Theodore Geisel. I have found myself humming the signature piece from the show "Oh, the Thinks You Can Think" for the last few days. Unfortunately, the youngest of my three companions did not make it through the entire 90 minute production.

Saturday night, I was the leader at mass which went really well as celebrated the Second Week upon the journey to celebrating the Birth of Our Savior.

Following mass, I headed out to another fun-filled game night with an 80s flare. I decided to wear my Indiana Jones t-shirt. One of the other party-goers was REALLY creative and came as the White Cosby in slacks and colorful sweater. He even brought a box of Jello Instant Chocolate Pudding (after his search for Jello Pudding Pops turned out to be fruitless).

While playing Life, we had *The Goonies* playing with no sound which somehow made it go quicker. After Life, the 9 of us formed teams for a round of Trivial Pursuit 80s style while *Christmas Vacation* went on without sound. About 1:30AM without a clear champion, the game broke up and I bid *adieu* since I had to be up in 5 1/2 hours for work.

A fun weekend filled with great friends!

Change happens, get used to it.

Change is inevitable in life. If we want it or not, change will occur. It is our job in this life to adapt to that change. Those who have trouble adapting to change, seem to have more problems.

I've written multiple times on life's changes. I've written about changes in my life. Daughters moving out, getting married, finishing or starting school. Those are changes.

I've written about the changing seasons and how that affects life in general.

I've even written about changing flat tires

I've come to realize, just recently in fact, that as much as I've written about things changing, at times I was actually fighting to keep things the same. I wanted that sense of stability. That comfort of a routine. Things were changing, but I was getting set in my ways.

Changes are constant. Maybe it is time to flow with them, and not fight them as much. But I can be stubborn. I think that like some mules, it may take a few kicks in the side to get me out of my comfortable routine.

Here in the rainy woods

It is a cool, wet, dreary day. I have a fire going and the house is warm and comfortable. As I sit and watch the clouds gray thoughts find their way into my mind. I have thoughts of little gray mice and large gray elephants. Gray skies and gray tree trunks. It is spring time, but the green has yet to bloom forth, so I am here with gray.

I have a picture of a sunset. I've talked about it before. It is of a sunset in these very woods. I'm not sure if that was a spring time sunset or not, but there are no leaves on the trees, so I will 'assume' it is spring. Since I was the one who took the picture, I know the day was cool, but not too cold. So either spring or fall works. That picture is full of reds, oranges and yellows. That is not today. Today is a gray day.

Gray can describe a mood, or just a color. Today is all about the color. In the early day of computer screens and graphics our displays were in gray scales. There was the same type of

thing in early TV, movies and films. Black and white mixed give us various shades of gray. In a colorful world those shades of gray are often missed and ignored. But in the black and white world of old graphics and the new world of e-book readers their are gray scales. Those scales brought realism in a time of black and white movies and TV. They are not the color of life, but they are the shadings of life.

Gray had me thinking a bit today.

When things calm down, ...

...what do you do? Someday I would like to know the answer to that question. Me, I'm simply avoiding all the stuff I need to do. I'm sure that puts my ability to get to that answer a day or two behind, but it is what I want to do now.

Maybe that is the answer. Things don't have to be calm to find that time to do what you would do when they were calm. Doing them when life is hectic is the exact time to do them. Yes, finish those things that are a priority. Pay the bills, feed the family, get the things that must be done out of the way. And then for a minute, an hour, a day, or weeks even, do what you would do when things are calm. Relax, enjoy and recharge yourself.

For years, I've held back on taking time away from a perceived 'must do' list and didn't do some things I would have wanted to. That put me to a point where I was not doing things that I should have done. So some time in the near future, I will schedule some time for me.

I may use this to do some things around here that I should have done years ago. I may do things that would just be

relaxing. But it will be what I want to do. I'll let you know when I force things to calm down. Then I will know what I would do...

Things I've noticed...

I've been living on this earth for a bit over 50 years now, and I've noticed a thing or two. Some of this has to do with normal aging, but some is just things I've noticed over the years.

1) I've always liked spicy food, but I've come to the realization that it doesn't like me. I won't go into all the symptoms, but I'm glad modern medicine has kept up with my eating habits. Tums and Roloids just don't cut it anymore. Thank goodness for Zantac... Maybe the medicine world will keep up with me as I get older year after year.

2) For some strange reason I just can't sit in the lotus position as long. My knees and ankles rebel at the thought. I'm still limber enough to flex, but my body doesn't like the same position, any position for very long. At least I'm getting my exercise by moving around. No, I can't touch my toes now, but I couldn't in high school, long legs, short arms (really).

3) The old eyes just don't focus as well. Oh well, I guess that's why they make glasses. What is funny is that I used to be able to focus on distant object while wearing my reading glasses. That takes some doing now, but gives me a headache if I do it to long.

4) People respond better if you are nice to them. People respond quicker if you are loud and obnoxious. People give you

strange looks if you sound like Stitch or Bullwinkle. ☐

5) Friends are worth their weight in gold. If you could convert them to gold, would you choose heavier friends?

6) Being alone is not the worse thing in the world. When you know what true companionship is, and you are now alone is in the top 10 of the worse things.

7) Tomorrow doesn't always come, so make use of your time today. See the first part of number 5, it makes it easier to use your time today with friends.

8) I'm glad they never developed a way to get smell over TV. Some of the shows are real stinkers.

9) Sunsets should be time to reflect on the day. Sunrises should be a time to plan the day. Rest in between them, you may need it.

10) Sleep is overrated until you don't get enough of it.

Thoughts on a new day

Today had a rough start. I knew that in advance, so I did little things to prepare for it. One was taking an entire day of vacation, instead of just a partial day. Another was to go with the flow of the day.

I went to the funeral of a young man I barely knew. I do know his parents. I know his father very well. We've worked together for that past 16+ years.

Funerals something I generally try to avoid. I've been that way all my life, but for the past 5+ years I've really

developed an immense dislike for them. I will go to them when people I know need support I might be able to give. It was still a rough morning.

As to going with the flow... Well after the funeral I thought it would be nice to spend some time with friends. A little time not thinking about the final aspect of life. It was a good choice. Lunch with good friends made the difference in the day.

Just thought I would share.

Just when you thought...

Tonight was an evening of celebration. I had a wonderful time with a bunch of friends celebrating a very special occasion. I'm sure someone else's blog will give a complete rundown of the events, so I won't here. But I did enjoy myself. This post is not about that joy and celebration, but more a feeling of loss, when later events happened.

For the past few years, I've always had a few bittersweet feelings at wedding and anniversary celebrations. These were events that would remind me of what I lost. This was the very first such event in the past five years that I did not have the deep feeling of loss. Two of my daughters were married and those events nearly knocked me flat emotionally.

It has been over 5 years since I last held my wife in my arms. 5 years when the wedding vows were fulfilled. You never really think about that clause "until death do us part". At least not until it happens. Today at the celebration, I did not think about the loss I had, only the joy being shared. A good evening.

But then it happened. I was waiting for my youngest daughter to finish up a game, so I did some shopping at the 24 hour place. I ran into a man who I knew and, I haven't seen him in over 5 years. He did not know of my wife's death. The question "How is your wife?" blew me out of the water. I wasn't expecting to have to tell that to anyone in this area. I live in a small community, I really thought everyone knew.

The comfortable day took a drastic turn with one short question. Emotions filled my every thought. I hesitated on the answer. It was like a punch in the gut. We then shared a few memories and parted. Slowly, the flood of feelings calmed. This is the way of life and death. The memories of our past can warm us as well as send chills down our spines. Those we loved live on through us, and in the stories we tell. In that I found some peace

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.

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.