

# 500th Post

WOW!

I've made 500 blog posts here on My Food Chain Gang! That is A LOT of rambling and a ton of tangents! Thank you for reading; especially those of you who have read all 500 posts, if there is anyone who could stand me for that long!

I think after that many posts, I'm entitled to a generic one, noting nothing other than my 500th blog post, don't you?

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## There's Always Tomorrow

I see by the ol' [tangents](#) homepage, that there are two blogs which have yet to see any posts. I am certain that these two very talented and resourceful individuals can come up with brilliant things to pique our curiosity. One of them has vowed to make her first posting AFTER April 1st. It is now nearing April 7th.

As for my day, I spent a few hours typing the script for a new version of [Seven Brides for Seven Brothers](#). The only things I know about the original movie musical is that it featured the original Catwoman (Julie Newmar) as one of the brides and there is a lot of dancing involved. Obviously, it deals with a group of seven brothers in search of seven brides. This version transports the action to twenty-first century Alaska and the age of laptop computers among other phenomena of the day. There is music and very little dancing (none that I could not handle, anyway) involved.

Then, I WAS looking forward to opening day. The outcome was

not pleasurable at least for the Bronx Bombers and their multi-million dollar lead off pitcher, C.C. Sabathia. Four and two-thirds innings. Six runs, eight hits, five walks, two wild pitches in one inning, and no strikeouts. The Yanks' second big money hopeful, Mark Teixeira did not fare well either going 0-4 at the plate. Teixeira was also eyeballed during the off-season by the Baltimore Orioles and the Orioles faithful showed their disapproval as they booed the Maryland native unmercifully at each at bat. The pressure for any new Yankee must be immense. It was a good thing that opening day was not at the new stadium because I am sure that the reaction would not have been pretty by fans in the Bronx. Ah, well one game down. Can only go up from here. At least the Cubbies were victorious. Sorry j, I see the Tigers were unsuccessful on opening day as well.

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## OK... Have We Been Had?

Ok... I'm not sure, but when I attempted to access my tangents site the normal way, I came across a message that stated that the domain name [tangents.org](http://tangents.org) is for sale. After some trial and error, I was able to make my way here to post on the weirdness of the day.

It started this morning when I watched the April Fools Day episode of [The Price is Right](#) featuring a very special surprise guest and gags galore.

While walking to work at 11:55AM, I noticed that the clock at the bank read 12:55PM... funny.

While at work, the manager called and asked me if I would come in an hour early tomorrow as the truck was going to be early. Why would I come in an hour early on Wednesday I said.? She

actually took me seriously and thought that it really was Tuesday instead of Wednesday. HAHA!

Later, an apparent wrong number called and asked to speak with Monica. I replied that I am Monica and we carried on a two minute conversation until I could not come up with any more believable conversation. Thank goodness the caller was good hearted and played along.

That was all until I got home and found out that our domain was for sale. I guess we will see what happens tomorrow. I can post, but can my readers find my posts?

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## New Jersey Is Lovely This Time Of Year, I Hear

Right now, I'm in the car with my husband, our 4 kids, and our volunteer "Manny" (a man who's a nanny – thanks Jamiahsh!); we're on the way to the New Jersey / New York City area! How did I manage to make a blog post, you ask? Well, I've actually typed this out days ahead of time and then used the brilliant tangents.org feature "schedule a post", choosing the exact date and time for which my post will automatically publish itself! I love technology AND tangents.org!

So I think we're probably between zoos right now; the itinerary had us stopping at both the Cleveland and Akron Zoos in Ohio on the way to New Jersey. Two zoos only 20 minutes apart? How could I resist? And why can't *my* utopia of a hometown be located within a 20-minute vicinity of two zoos?!?

I hope we made it to both zoos without being too pressed for time, and I also hope the kids are being good on the long car

ride. I hope our business meeting goes well tomorrow and that we have a lot of fun before making it home safely. Until I return...

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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!

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# The Night Listener Returns

Regular readers of my blog know that I thought [The Night Listener](#) was a terrible movie. It stars Robin Williams as a radio show host who... you know what, I don't even remember. For a plot synopsis, click on the link above. I was actually surprised that an A-list actor like Robin Williams would do such an awful movie as The Night Listener, but he did. After sitting through a movie like The Night Listener, my husband and I are weary of Robin Williams. However, 3 of our friends and fellow tangents.org authors all agreed that August Rush is a good movie, so we checked it out. And you'll notice that the title of this post is called, "The Night Listener Returns", so uh-oh. But that was more of a joke, and now I've explained it, so let's get on with my review of August Rush.

Not nearly as bad as the Night Listener; I wouldn't even call [August Rush](#) a bad movie. At the very least, it was really refreshing to see a movie whose target audience was over the age of 18 that was absent any filth whatsoever. August Rush is a cute story, but I think the movie could have been done a heck of a lot better in some ways. The tale follows the life of a young orphan, an almost magical boy, named Evan Taylor as he "follows the music" to find his real parents. There were a few circumstances and events in the movie that weren't believable in any shape or form, and even if you suspended your disbelief, the cheesiness of other aspects of the movie was annoying. The storyline is intriguing, and the acting is not bad, but there are a few things that would have to change about August Rush in order for me to consider it a great film. To name just a couple of those things, I couldn't get over the fact that this entire love story is based upon a one-night stand. Tactfully done – as I said, there isn't any filth in this PG rated movie, but still, knowing it's true love after just a one-night stand? Come on! And, I guess you'll have to see the movie to appreciate this, but would an

abandoned theater really still have its electricity working? Doubtful. Like I said, just a few examples of what I perceived to be holes in the plot, but there are other things about the movie that could have easily been changed, improving the film's quality. Doing so would add much enjoyment and just plain common sense to this movie. And Robin Williams was not the shining star in August Rush either; that was left for Freddie Highmore who played Evan – he was also wonderful playing twins in the great movie [The Spiderwick Chronicles](#) – another highly recommended flick. Williams seemed almost annoying in his role as a musical outlaw with his multiple piercings and goatee. I flip-flopped between deciding if his character “Wizard” was a good guy or a bad guy. Maybe that was the point, I’m not even sure.

The actor who played Buford Benjamin Blue (Bubba) in Forrest Gump played a preacher in August Rush, so I was wondering if the line, “Run August run!” was a reference to the extremely famous line, “Run Forrest run!” from the Oscar-winning film based upon the Winston Groom novel, one of my favorite movies (one that I highly recommend). Or maybe it was the filmmakers’ way of laughing at us for even thinking of an awesome movie like [Forrest Gump](#) during August Rush. Ok, it wasn’t that bad... I did appreciate the sentiment. But my lack of suspension of disbelief just got in the way of me getting swept into the magic of the movie, I guess.

Sorry for those who disagree with me, but I’m still glad you recommended the movie; it was definitely worth a screening – thanks!

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# Happy New Year!

Happy New Year! Holy cow, 2009 already! I hope you had a good New Year's. Ours was wonderul. We hosted a bash, which is always great so that we don't have to pack up the kids and all their luggage just to haul them out somewhere to stay until the wee hours of the morning. We played charades and other games and ate lots of yummy treats. Our kids – #2 and #4 in birth order – fell asleep way early. The older one stayed asleep all night, but wouldn't you know it – the baby woke right as we crawled into bed at 4 in the morning. I was able to sleep for a few hours, but that's more than I can say for my husband who woke with the baby. But then he got a short nap while I ambled downstairs to do some much needed cleanup from the party. After that, we were ready to drag ourselves over to a friend's house for a New Year's Day chili feast – I'm told the beans bring good luck in the new year. More food, more fun, and we didn't plan on staying long but ended up getting home about 7 in the evening. I did miss the hockey game at Wrigley Field, but the Red Wings beat the Blackhawks anyway. I'm not a big hockey fan; I just thought it would be cool to see Wrigley all decked out for hockey. I wonder what they would have done if they had gotten some of that freak 60 degree weather again – how to maintain an ice rink in those conditions? Oh well, that's a tangent, good thing this site is called tangents.org

So the chili and rest of the food at our friends house was great, but I wish I could have enjoyed it more – seems I partied a little too hard the night before and felt a little tired and queasy come chili feast time. But it's my own fault – I should know that I'm getting older and can't handle the late nights (or early mornings for that matter) like I used to. But oh well – my friend did give me some delicious chili to take home, so hopefully it will be more enjoyable now that I was able to rest last night. Now I'll just have to get used

to writing 2009 instead of 2008 all over the place...

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# The Scary Clown Sucessfully Sold Burgers

On another tangents.org blog, justj has been talking about cheeseburgers, namely White Castles and Burger Buddies (aka Burger Bundles), an '80's Burger King product. I found an old Burger Bundles commercial on youtube and posted the link on his blog in the comments section of the [cheeseburger post](#). While I was looking around on youtube, I found this old vintage McDonald's commercial where Ronald looks like something out of a horror movie. Regardless of what his early incarnation looked like, the clown worked for them in helping to create one of the most successful companies of all time.

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# Changeling

Wow. What a great film... and I don't think I've been able to say that since I saw *The Orphanage* months ago. We ventured over to the Toledo suburbs yesterday for date night to see [Changeling](#) at the nice theater since we still had a free pass leftover from a movie where they had technical issues. It was a long drive (saw 3 overturned semis in the ditches of the Ohio turnpike just in the almost 40 miles we use it, what's up with that? Has it really been that windy the past few days?), but well worth the long drive since our local theaters didn't have anything good playing. There's also great food in the Toledo area, and we went out to dinner at Ruby Tuesday's... that is good food for us – you should try moving to Bufu; it really makes you appreciate places like Ruby Tuesday's, Olive Garden, etc. in a whole new light when you don't get to have them very often. We wanted to try a place that has Mediterranean food which was recommended by justj, a fellow tangents.org blogger, but we figured we'd wait until a time when he could join us.

*Changeling* is a “period thriller”; the period being 1928-1935. The movie is based on the true story of Christine Collins, a single working mom whose 9-year-old son goes missing. What follows is the tale of one woman's plight as she seeks justice in an unjust world where women don't even really have a voice. I'm going to have to stop giving the plot synopsis there, however, because it was so great for me to watch the film only knowing about it what I've shared with you – I recommend you don't research the story until after you see the movie. I didn't know the course the events would take, even though it's really easy to find out since it's based on a true story – it probably stays closer to the actual

events than do most movies based upon true stories. After you watch the movie, you can look up the real story and see how close they were, and if you're like me, you'll wonder why they changed and left out the things they did in the movie.

The acting is great, the cinematography is breathtaking, and the direction ([Clint Eastwood](#)) is incredible. The movie really gives you a vision of what everyday life might have been like in 1928. [Angelina Jolie](#) is a really good actress – I can't stand all of the publicity stunts she pulls over in her personal life, but as an actress, she's proven herself with this film alone. [Amy Ryan](#) (you might recognize her as Holly from The Office – need her back in the Office though!) is also amazing in this movie, and I'll say the same for [John Malkovich](#) and [Jeffrey Donovan](#), who played the villian you loved to hate. The movie is lengthy at 2 hours and 20 minutes, but the time flies by as the plot unravels. I was never bored, never lost, and thoroughly entertained the entire time. Changeling has a story to tell, and its story is riveting, as is the movie. I highly recommend this movie!!!

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## Windy City White House

"Windy City White House" is more of a reference to our visit to the Windy City rather than a blog post about the recent election – it's over and done with, and although I won't talk much about the outcome, I am happy to not have to hear about it on the news anymore. While in Illinois, my mother-in-law kept talking about what huge news it is that Obama was elected and how his pick for Chief-of-Staff, Rahm Emanuel is a fellow Chicagoan – making it a 'Windy City White House'.

But back to our family – it's my blog, after all. We

scheduled an early Christmas with our family in Illinois this past weekend (the early Christmas theme is something that seems popular with tangents.org bloggers), and overall, it was great. There are a few reasons we decided to do things this way – 1) We're sick of the hustle and bustle of opening our presents from Santa and then rushing off to Illinois on Christmas Day – add to that having the flu during this trip twice and UGH. Best to travel *before* flu season. 2) My daughter was off school Friday for parent/teacher conferences 3) We wanted to beat the rush and other travelers. Overall, it was a really great decision, although the trip was last minute, and so we did forget a few of the presents which we'll now have to send. We left Ohio on Friday morning and after a bit of traffic-sitting (of course), we got to my grandparents house about 40 minutes past schedule. But no matter, they're fully aware of the traffic problems plaguing their area. We were treated to a delicious lunch of my grandma's sloppy joes (love 'em), and the girls got to open presents. My grandpa gets tired really quickly, and so we didn't stay too long there, and then it was on to our hotel. My husband uses hotwire.com and got us a suite at the Sheraton for \$49 – a nice price for the area. When we pulled up to our hotel, we were pleased to see it was the same hotel where we spent our wedding night – that was a nice surprise. My mom and my sister brought her two boys over for some swimming, and we all had a blast even though their indoor pool was chilly. Luckily, I had thought to turn up our room's thermostat so when we got back to the room we didn't freeze, although it was quite crowded trying to get 10 hungry people changed out of bathing suits and trying to order pizza at the same time. It was a suite, but it was probably the smallest suite I have ever seen, and we had 6 little kids and 4 adults in there. My mother and sister wisely decided that they couldn't wait for the time it would take to get pizza, and they got something to eat on the way home. That was a good idea because my mom had to get up early the next day and didn't want to be out too late. They know their area well enough to realize that pizza

delivery on a Friday night would take over an hour – and they were right. My poor kids were starving and I had to raid my diaper bag. I found a little bag of oyster crackers and two small bags of peanuts, so I divied everything up 3 ways (Survivor-style) and it quieted them a little until the pizza came. Overall, the kids were kind of spastic all day, especially my oldest for some reason... My husband blames the tension of the Chicagoland area, but then again, he hates it as much as I do. We love seeing family, just wish we could visit them somewhere else!

Saturday morning we were up bright and early to meet my mother-in-law for breakfast at Uptown Cafe in Arlington Heights – the place has the best eggs benedict in the nation. And I know this because way back when, before we had all these kids, my husband and I used to travel constantly, and one of the things we would look for was good hollandaise sauce. We never found any that came close to Uptown Cafe's. And the owners remember us – we used to go there a lot when we lived in the area; I was pregnant with my first daughter. They are surprised every time they see us because we usually have a new baby or two. After breakfast, we went back to my mother-in-law's house, and I felt badly for dropping in on my husband's sister and her family without any notice. This is one of the details that was overlooked in the last minute planning. But it was ok; I didn't have my gifts for their 3 kids, so I'll have to send them. But our kids had lots of fun playing together, and it's important to me that my kids know their extended family, especially since a lot of hatchets have been buried over the years on this side of the family.

Next, it was time to see our good friend, the author of the sublife blog on [tangents.org](http://tangents.org). It was great to see him, especially on his own turf, but he's right in his blog – there really wasn't much time for chatting. The kids wouldn't have allowed us to just sit and talk peacefully, and we wanted to take them somewhere fun, so we went to an overflowing Chuck E.

Cheese. After waiting in line to park, I realized that I hadn't seen our camera since I took a picture of the kids on the luggage rack at the hotel that morning. Sound familiar? Yes, I have terrible luck with digital cameras. And worse, this one was not mine – I had borrowed it from Jamiahsh for the trip, so I was sick about losing it. Luckily for me, it turned up when we got home though – YAY! I was especially upset because I knew that I had put it in my diaper bag – I really thought someone had taken it. Pessimistic of me, you'd think, except that we did have our tokens stolen from our table at Chuck E. Cheese with my husband less than 5 feet away. Takes all kinds to steal game tokens from little kids, doesn't it... at least they didn't also steal my digital camera. We got lunch at a Vienna Beef hot dog place in Arlington Heights called Jimmy's – highly recommended you get real Chicago-style beef sandwiches and 'dogs if you're in the area – YUM!

The ride home was uneventful – the kids slept most of the way, thank goodness. We did manage to stop and get me my crave case of White Castles, and so our car reeked of steamed onions – thank goodness we weren't pulled over or we may have gotten a ticket for disturbing the peace. Maybe I wouldn't have stopped if I'd known what White Castles would do to a 2-year-old's diaper. I tried to deliver some to my friend Carol who graciously pet sits for us, but for some reason, she neglected to pick them up. My husband says that not everyone likes White Castles. We picked up the slyders (as White Castles are known) in Dolton, Illinois; not the best area, but it just off the expressway so we made it unscathed. Ironically, something made me talk about Dolton just before the stop; I was telling my husband how it's gotten to be a really bad area and that I knew a family that had left there in the '80's because it was getting so bad, so imagine it now. Then we saw a sign that said "Dolton Bowl" right across the street from the White Castle, and we laughed at the irony. But overall, a nice trip, especially considering the area where we had to take

it. One positive thing I will say about the area is that they have excellent food.

Three quarters of my kids on the luggage cart:

