

Busy Weekend

I will blog about that soon, but I will just say for now I was in Southern Illinois the entire weekend, or driving there or back. Monday I had my usual busy day. I tried to blog yesterday but the allergy pills I took for my headache just zonked me out. I must say, for a new position with higher pay I certainly don't feel those newfound funds. I guess another \$500 car bill last month and \$300 for an eye doctor visit and contacts will do that. That in addition to the medical insurance I finally purchased and the property tax bill I am trying to save for. None of this will keep me away this weekend, or keep me from spending money, mind you! I have plenty for that.

So what has been going on? Well, my boss has been taking some time off because her brother was critically injured in a motorcycle accident (or some sort of motorized scooter I'm told, as if that makes a difference. Last I heard he was in a coma and they were going to take him off the pain medication to see if that would shock his system enough to wake him up. Yikes. In addition, her father was admitted to another hospital shortly after, though I forget why. So I am covering for her as best I can as far as technical things go. I was on the phone for awhile this morning trying to get a couple of our people in Florida up and running- this while training someone on the handheld computer who is back with us after leaving some months ago before his training was complete. Oh, and I just learned today another employee of our company was involved in a motorcycle accident, and her father had a medical problem (a heart attack in his case) happen at the same time as well. ☐

Now I have learned my brother is extremely upset about some damage to the classic Mustang sitting in our garage. Apparently someone, probably me I suppose, put a ladder in the wrong place and some boxes just happened to fall on the ladder, causing it to fall on the car. My brother was ranting on the phone yesterday and today with my mother. One of the unfair things he brought into play were our Christian values, as if we were purposely trying to cover it up. Really? Christian values? How about not making an idol of worldly possessions to a point where you yell at your mother for over a half-hour in three calls (which she had the grace to not just hang up on) and threaten to "disown us" if we don't fix it? My nephew, who is the actual owner of the car mind you, has made an assessment of his own that it can't be fixed for less than many thousands of dollars due to the tiny dent (I couldn't even find it) being in a bad spot. He said he won't make us pay for it, but I asked him to find out some time how much it really would be. Lovely, we need our roof reshingled and new windows, but now we might have to pay to have a tiny dent fixed.

So... In more positive news, I have made an appointment to audition at our local professional theatre. My day to go is June 12. I need to get a new headshot done somewhere (hopefully they don't cost too much) and I need to write a new résumé. More importantly, I need to come up with a monologue. I expect I will sing a selection from my usual song from the Secret Garden, [Race you to the Top of the Morning](#), but I'm not sure about the monologue. Someone has recommended I do something from Oliver! since I played Fagin a few years ago. A site, [musicaltheatreaudition.com](#), says I should **not** use an accent unless specifically asked to and I couldn't imagine playing Fagin without one, so I don't know. I do know that since the song is dramatic the monologue should be comedic. Many other tips involve knowing what one is

actually trying out for, but I am trying out for an entire season, and one show is even listed as “unknown musical.” The song and the monologue have to total no more than three minutes, so I have my work cut out for me- but at least I have a couple of weeks. Any recommendations anyone?

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..."

Can You Feel The Love This Morning?

Last night's excursion to Too-lee-doo was full of thrills, chills and did I mention I saw The Lion King? Getting there and enjoying the breathtaking splendor of live theatre was great, getting back was another story entirely. I will concentrate on the show and leave the adventure getting home for another time.

As I noted in a previous blog, the stage production of Lion King includes several songs which were not in the movie. Some of these include: Morning Report, Endless Night, and Shadowland. My favorite new song has always been Endless Night. It is sung by Simba in Act II. It is a beautiful soliloquy in which the lion struggles to decide whether or not to return to the Pride Lands and fight for the throne which is rightfully his or stay and remain hidden in his new life of Hakuna Matata.

Aside from the new songs, everything about seeing the masterpiece on stage is brilliant. The puppetry used to personify several characters (towering giraffes, leopards, antelope, and countless other animals) must have taken hours to design and be implemented. The choreography is stunning. Perhaps even more spectacular is the use of African-style chant to enhance the atmosphere. My companions and I were

curious as to the English translation for the lyrics. Also of interest was the number of African natives who made up members of the cast. Surely some degree of pride must be felt among them as they sing words native to their homeland.

I would HIGHLY recommend taking the entire family to see this excellent production. One or two of the scenes may be a bit intense for the very young; however, if they have ever seen the movie , it is no more intense than what is seen in it. There were several children in the audience (perhaps no younger than 5) with looks of utter awe and wonder. It is a great way to introduce the whole family to the spectacular world of live theatre..