

May 2011

Dave's World

Wednesday, May 18th

No need for alarm... that sound that you heard yesterday was not a small meteor colliding with the Earth, but rather hundreds of joints simultaneously popping, as the entire left side of my decidedly middle aged body crashed to the ground like a large plastic grocery sack full of peanut brittle onto a city street. This is how I learned that I am no match for a soccer field full of 7-year-olds.

Thursday, May 19th

After talking for three straight weeks, I believe that 4-year-old Sam may be approaching a World Record. At first, I thought about asking him to take a deep breath and enjoy some silence for a moment, but now I have visions of endorsement deals dancing in my head. For example, he could be a walking revenue generating billboard for "Cars 2."

Friday, May 20th

Under Publicized Hazard of Dieting... The Mouth Sprain... That's right, the dreaded mouth sprain occurs when you try to satisfy ravenous desires for food with several sticks of sugar free gum. The resent-filled chomping results in an annoying mouth sprain, which continually reminds you that you did not eat actual food. They really should consider consumer warning labels on gum for such incidents.

Saturday, May 21st

On the bright side, this whole Rapture business means that I will no longer need to worry about the rigors of potty training.

Monday, May 23rd

What did I learn this weekend? If you jiggle the mysterious cable that appeared without notice a week ago across your backyard, you have the power to knock out a variety of television, Internet, and phone services throughout your neighborhood. On the upside, as a result of the jiggle, you will receive an extremely prompt response from the cable company.

Tuesday, May 24th

Yesterday, I joined the legion of bumbling Americans who have at one point inadvertently referred to Dairy Queen Brazier as "Dairy Queen Brassiere." Now, that would be one chilly undergarment.

Wednesday, May 25th

On a recent trip to Sam's Club, I nailed a spontaneous and enthusiastic rendition of the entire Oscar Mayer bologna jingle. Given the age of the commercial, my children were understandably confused, but I was very disappointed that the other adults in the meat aisle did not join in.

May - June 2011

Thursday, May 26th

For my first day home with the boys for Summer Break, I should have either purchased a referee jersey, received accreditation as an arbitrator, or selected a larger bottle of Tylenol.

Friday, May 27th

When did serving breakfast at our house begin to resemble disarming an explosive.

Step One: ensure that 7-year-old Jacob receives Cheerios, unless he requests another cereal.

Step Two: make sure that 2-year-old Ben's cereal is in the "train" bowl.

Step Three: deliver 4-year-old Sam's food first.

Oh, no! I accidentally placed Jacob's meal on the table, before Sam's! Boom!

Saturday, May 28th

The Paulsen Family News of the Day... No, not that we are moving to Willmar, Minnesota, later this Summer. The other news. After five years of faithful service, it is my regret to inform you that our beloved Sunbeam stand mixer met a tragic end at the hands of a pre-schooler, spatula, and a batch of sugar cookie dough.

Tuesday, May 31st

Scientific Impossibilities...

- 1) Matter traveling faster than the speed of light
- 2) A terrestrial organism surviving within an environment completely filled with arsenic
- 3) Keeping a house clean enough to sell, while it is inhabited by three young boys

Wednesday, June 1st

After suffering through the annual family tradition of watching the "Wedding Video," a tradition in which I am mercilessly mocked (sort of like a roast without the dinner or fancy clothes), I received one final jab. 4-year-old Sam observed, "Daddy, you had bad hair. You should have worn a hat." Ouch!

Thursday, June 2nd

...and the "Bad Idea Award" goes to Jasper the Beagle, who was discovered licking an ant trap. It is time to either increase his Purina serving size or place him on a brain transplant waiting list, since his current thinker appears to be broken.

June 2011

Dave's World

“Top Ten Misconceptions about Our Move to Willmar, Minnesota”

- 10) I was traded for a “Minnesotan to be Named Later.”
- 9) “Minnesota” is Wahpeton for “Land of 10,000 Cookies.”
- 8) You cannot beat Loon Meat!
- 7) I am looking to make a few extra bucks by selling our family's “Pew Seat License” at church. Not that there would be anything wrong with this. While Martin Luther opposed the sale of indulgences, he wholeheartedly endorsed the creation of pew seat licenses.
- 6) Who does not want two mortgages?
- 5) Based upon an elliptical orbit that has been established around Battle Creek, Michigan, the Paulsen clan will be relocating to Charleston, South Carolina, in 2021. Book it!
- 4) Aye, aye, walleye!
- 3) I needed a good excuse to purchase a new pair of long johns.
- 2) Every now and then, everyone needs a new source for Facebook material.
- 1) Three Words: Witness Protection Program.

Friday, June 3rd

Filling in as 3rd Base Coach for 4-year-old Sam's Coed T-Ball team, I directed a little girl to run to 3rd Base. Upon her arrival, she began punching me on the leg with all of the force she could muster. This little story serves as a reminder to baseball participants. I do not care if it is just T-Ball, always, ALWAYS, wear your cup. This message has been brought to you by the Protected Privates Foundation.

Saturday, June 4th

I'll admit that I was a little disappointed that the realtor's photographer only wanted to take pictures of the house. I had gotten all glammed up for the event.

Monday, June 6th

A bathrobe, tetherball, and four cans of sardines. It must be the start of Vacation Bible School.

June 2011

Friday, June 10th

Today seems so reminiscent of Yul Brynner's final performance in "The King and I," as I hang up my Vacation Bible School thespian hat with a telling of "Hannah versus Peninnah," as told through the magic of Hershey's Kisses.

Saturday, June 11th

On the bright side for Coach Pitch Baseball Opening Day, I was pitching a no-hitter through three innings. The bad news is that it was against my own team.

Monday, June 13th

The Open House. The act of hiding all of your earthly possessions, so that your house contains furniture, but does not appear to be lived in. After a hurried exit, you will wander the streets begging any passerby to purchase your home, while strangers tour your residence and mock the amount of crap piled in your storage room.

Tuesday, June 14th

Out of the blue at lunch, 4-year-old Samuel began to sing, "There's a little black spot on the sun today. It's the same old thing as yesterday." Initially, I thought that this was pretty funny, then I realized it might indicate he is ready to leave his family and embark on a solo career.

Wednesday, June 15th

One more bad outing and I may be sent to Coach Pitch AAA.

Thursday, June 16th

A set of ear plugs. A spray bottle. A rolled up newspaper to extend my reach into the back seat. My preparations for a 14-hour road trip (alone) with the boys are eerily similar to being locked in a car with a family of feral cats.

Monday, June 20th

After drinking nine cups of coffee, during the 17 hour road trip, I fully anticipated that a rift would open in the space-time continuum. Instead something equally amazing took place, for the first time in fifteen years, I was able to answer NPR's Weekend Edition Sunday puzzle... in about 12 seconds! For anyone who would like to enter to play on the air with Puzzlemaster Will Shortz, the answer is "Helmut Kohl."

Tuesday, June 21st

My home office efficiency would probably improve, if it did not also double as a yoga studio and toy depot.

June 2011

Dave's World

Wednesday, June 22nd

After determining that 7-year-old Jacob is just too loud for an extended period within a confined space, I am wondering if there is some legal way to secure him to the roof of the car. In a loving way, of course.

Dear Mr. Coffee Frappe Cafe,
Thank you for entering my life.
Eternally Grateful,
Dave Paulsen

Friday, June 24th

Journal of a House Hunter...

Neighbor with property maintenance issues: Worrisome.

Smell of mildew in the basement: Troublesome.

House that was obviously designed with "Family Jacuzzi Night" in mind: Confusing.

Very, very, confusing.

Saturday, June 25th

To borrow from the timeless words scrawled on a Mack truck in rural Nebraska...

Aint No Feelin' Like Cow Mobeelin'

Monday, June 27th

The house at the corner of 5th and Kandiyohi is the leading candidate for Paulsen family's new home. I was thinking that "Kandiyohi Manor on Fifth" has a nice ring to it.

Stock Tip... After a house hunting trip to Minnesota, expect McDonald's quarterly profits to exceed expectations by 20%, as a result of additional visits by the Paulsen family. On a related note, the size of my belly has also increased by 20%.

Tuesday, June 28th

After a trip to my folk's house, I brought home a '80s baseball board game. The game box contained a grapefruit knife, which is used to free stuck dice from a small plastic "shaker" tube. I suddenly felt a pang of guilt, as I thought of my parents wondering whatever happened to said grapefruit knife. A sin of the past stored in a dusty box. All of life's wrongdoings should be so easily tucked away and forgotten.

Wednesday, June 29th

A 10,000 square foot patch of lawn. A 5 square inch area containing dog dirt. Add one barefoot father. The Laws of Nature guarantee that one of the bare feet will land within the 0.004% area blessed by your furry friend.

June - July 2011

Thursday, June 30th

I am not sure when I became an approved floatation device for kids in the pool.

What dope left the hatch on their Ford Freestyle wide open, while they swam in the Y pool? Oh wait, that would be me.

I suspect that I was the only adult at pool "Toddle Time" who was not pregnant. Ah, the reproduction solitude of the Stay-at-Home Dad.

I believe that I have attained a "Summer Tummy." In fact, I appear to have two of them, stacked one on top of the other.

Friday, July 1st

Today, someone has scheduled a third look at our house that is for sale. Unfortunately, I will eventually need to inform them that upon purchase of our house, the freshly baked cookies that they receive upon entry will be discontinued. Then again, if it sells the house, I'm sure that I could arrange to be their indentured baker for a month or two.

Given the fact that the temperature in Wichita and Baghdad are both 105 degrees, I am a little concerned that my boys will start thinking about an "Arab Spring" uprising.

Saturday, July 2nd

It turns out the Recession has flipped some of the rules of real estate on their head. Fresh baked cookies no longer create a welcoming aroma. They apparently give off a scent of desperation. This is based on our home's recent bid, which totaled a "bag of chips and a warm smile." No thank you. Perhaps in a few months, but right now, no thank you. I'll simply enjoy a delicious cookie in my Kansas summer estate.

Sunday, July 3rd

Jacob found the Holy Grail of License Plate Bingo... Hawaii (it is now used as a vanity plate, but it was once the real deal... and spotted in the Concordia, Kansas, McDonald's parking lot).

Monday, July 4th

Sunday Driving the Paulsen Way... Exceeding the speed limit by 15 to 20 mph, in order to barely arrive on time to church.

Tuesday, July 5th

SPF 50 and I still got a little too much sun. With a number that high, the sunlight should have reflected off of me and given those around me a tan.

July 2011

Dave's World

Wednesday, July 6th

Charlene had that "Why did you eat all of that?" look on her face. I quickly admitted to devouring 90% of the rhubarb crisp, before she said a word. Unfortunately, I learned that I was being approached about the bag of chips that the Paulsen boys attacked like a hoard of locusts during snack time. The moral of the story: hold confessions as long as possible to ensure admission to the right crime.

Thursday, July 7th

The volume of my boys have accomplished something that many forms of advanced technology have failed to do... rendered the telephone useless.

Friday, July 8th

I realized that the "Left Behind" series would be a fine title for my nightly eating of all child leftovers at the kitchen table. Naturally, my mouth would play the role of the rapture.

Saturday, July 9th

If physicals were written as "Home Inspections"...

Torso - "Dave's belly is approaching unsatisfactory. Recommended reduction in food and increased exercise, in order to ensure continued operation of the unit."

Mouth - "Dave's teeth have received repairs, but are not unusual for age. Recommended flossing to reduce maintenance costs."

Skin - "Dave's skin is satisfactory, but inconsistent blemishes are noted."

Monday, July 11th

From the "Jig is almost up" file, I fear that it is only a matter of time until my family realizes that it does not really take 45 minutes to put 2-year-old Ben down for a nap. 45 minutes is actually the average duration of my nap in the rocking chair.

Tuesday, July 12th

Nothing distracts you from life's worries, like trying to survive 3 innings of coach pitch baseball in 105 degree heat.

Wednesday, July 13th

I am not sure what moment on the baseball fields was most heart stopping: 7-year-old Jacob's line drive that almost nailed me in the chest or 4-year-old Samuel mistaking the porta-potty urinal cake for soap. Blessed be Purell!

Just when you were thinking that I was uncivilized, let me remind you that I dip my chicken nuggets in A.1. Steak Sauce.

Thursday, July 14th

Thank goodness only one coach pitch game remains, because I fear that I am losing the clubhouse. It could also be the case that the heat is making my team of 7-year-old boys loopy.

July 2011

Friday, July 15th

I think only a genetic flaw could explain my persistent urge to tell the home inspector, "Don't look behind that wall. That is where I keep the bodies."

While making a deposit at the bank, I thoughtlessly placed the pen on the counter in my mouth. Quick! Someone, please bring me a bottle of Listerine and a side of common sense!

Monday, July 18th

After everyone had finished their meals, I left the table to go change young Ben's diaper. Charlene turned to me and said, "We will wait for you." I would certainly hope so. What a challenge it would be to start life over again with a 2-year-old from the McDonald's in Iola, Kansas. At least we would have some apple dippers and an iced coffee to get us going on the right foot.

Tuesday, July 19th

Experiencing a glimmer of self-responsibility, 7-year-old Jacob said unprompted, "I forgot to bring my water (to tennis practice)." I not sure if this is more shocking than my self-control in not responding with a smart aleck comment. Or perhaps, even more shocking, the world has pivoted on its axis and we are experiencing some sort of glorified new reality.

Wednesday, July 20th

Sobering, but iridescent thought of the day... Oh what beautiful colors my car would have made, if it had exploded on the way to the household hazardous waste dropoff.

Thursday, July 21st

Game finished. Season over. I sit with my son, in the empty dugout, watching our shadows grow toward the baseline and the wind raise up dust in the infield. Batters left on deck. New teams arriving. Play never ends, it just sleeps through the long Fall and Winter, waiting to resume once again in the Spring. May we build upon our accomplishments and learn from our mistakes. This is baseball. This is life.

Friday, July 22nd

I am not sure at what point during the nuptials, I agreed to be the sole cleaner of dog stains on the carpet.

Turns out that our homemade ice cream truck failed, because kids are afraid to approach unfamiliar vehicles that appear to be collecting happy young boys.

July 2011

Dave's World

Saturday, July 23rd

We were not “nickle and dimed” on our home inspection. We were “dollar billed!”

Sunday, July 24th

God,

Thank you for our dear Wichitian brothers and sisters in Christ.

Bless them and guide them for all the days of their lives.

Please, continue to inspire them in their cookie baking.

Amen.

7-year-old Jacob helped bake the bread for his first communion. We did not however tackle making homemade grape juice.

Monday, July 25th

As we enter the final lap called “Packing Day,” I cannot help but ask Tolstoy's timeless question, “How many baseball caps does a man need?”

For my final post from Kansas, I would like to borrow the words of Minnesotan Garrison Keiller, “Be well, do good work, and keep in touch.” See you up North!

Thursday, July 28th

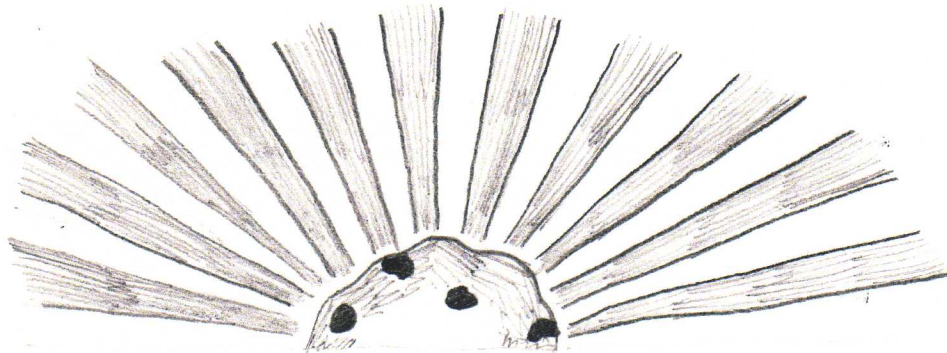
Since my kids are not exactly suited for hotel living, any minute now, I anticipate that the adjoining rooms will submit a request by hanging a “Do Not Disturb” sign on our door.

Friday, July 29th

You know that you may have been away from the world of work a little too long, when you realize that you have worn flip-flops to the closing on your new home.

I am thinking of writing a Country song about the wait for the moving truck entitled, “My stuff is on a truck in Missouri, but my feet are way up North.”

You know that your family has been “flagged” as a potential problem, when you receive an entire restaurant dining room to yourselves, during the height of the dinner rush.



August 2011

Tuesday, August 2nd

A little Super Glue and bobble head moving casualties Mike Schmidt and Mike Lieberthal appear to be back to bobbling as good new.

Wednesday, August 3rd

During the move, I spilled a jar of Old Bay seasoning on the floor of my car. Now my ride smells like a crab shack scented air freshener. Hopefully, feral cats do not schedule a coordinated attack.

Thursday, August 4th

After receiving my new library card, I was very thankful that no national database of chronically overdue library patrons exists.

Friday, August 5th

And now for my "Science Friday" Commentary of the Day...

You have gotta love the astronomers who came up with the name "the Big Splat" for the hypothesized collision of two of the Earth's moons.

Television flickers horrific images with thousands of small dogs whining for their morning breakfast... an enormous pack of dogs descend on a landfill for all-you-can-eat garbage... every dog in America simultaneously howling... a man gingerly stepping through a field of snoring dogs, while they nap in the afternoon sun... Your House. Their Planet. "Rise of the Planet of the Beagles."

Tuesday, August 9th

Now that my boys have mastered the exclamation point in their daily conversations, it is time for them to learn of the silent beauty and peaceful reflection provided by the humble comma.

Wednesday, August 10th

As 2nd Grader Jacob sang "Don't Stand So Close To Me" in Target, I realized that there is nothing like having a 7-year-old sing about an inappropriate teacher-student relationship to kick off the school year. Also, with school starting, remember to drive carefully; she is after all at the wet bus stop waiting, while your car is warm and dry.

Thursday, August 11th

Thanks to the power of WD-40, the sound of squeaky hinges in the morning has been replaced by the involuntary slamming of doors.

August 2011

Dave's World

Friday, August 12th

In an instance of cosmic coincidence, we heard the song "Car Wash" come on the radio, as we drove into the car wash. Just to be on the safe side, however, if I hear the song "It's the End of the World as We Know It" come on the radio, I will immediately provide you with a Status Update, so you can move to your basement.

Small clarification. At 5AM, as I hobbled out in my bathrobe with the recycling bin, I had not already begun drinking, it was simply a sign of my aversion to footwear, plus the acorns scattered across the driveway.

Today is the season finale for the local swimming pool. From what I understand, they need to shut it down, before the ice floes move in next week.

Monday, August 15th

Tales of a Not-So-Woodsy-Woodsman... Well, I bagged my first deer. Unfortunately, it was with a Ford and not a Remington.

Tuesday, August 16th

As we head to the auto body shop, 7-year-old Jacob closes 4-year-old Sam's car door, before he is ready. Sam gets very upset and vomits on his 2-year-old brother Ben. Ben is so shocked that he pours his drinkable yogurt down his own back. Recognizing that this is not adequately dramatic, Jasper the Beagle urinates on the carpet for our return. Good to know that the Circle of Life is operating properly.

Wednesday, August 17th

It appears that during the night, someone installed fresh batteries in my children.

Thursday, August 18th

After a scouting mission to the Kandiyohi County Fair, I have a message for Millie Buer of Willmar, Minnesota. Enjoy your third consecutive cookie jar championship, because next year, another big cookie-baking-fish will enter this small cookie-jar-competition-pond.

Friday, August 19th

Lessons from a Cereal Box.

- 1) When in doubt, chocolatize it!
- 2) Everything tastes better wrapped in sugar.
- 3) Freeze dried strawberries rock!
- 4) Fiber. Schmier. Go with chocolate, sugar, or freeze dried strawberries.

Saturday, August 20th

I don't need Bob Vila's input to know that the early morning "rustling" behind the dining room wall is not a good thing.

August 2011

Monday, August 22nd

The manufacturer of our new gas grill forgot to include some crucial steps for assembly. The steps should have been as follows:

#1 – Enjoy an ice cold beer.

#2 – Drink another beer for every piece, which is not referenced within this instruction manual.

Tuesday, August 23rd

Tennis Update. After utilizing a tennis racket to confront a team of three bat intruders, I am happy to report: Game. Set. Match. Paulsen. Next up: my doubles partner, the Orkin Army will join me on the court.

Wednesday, August 24th

The source for the reoccurring puddles on the kitchen floor have been narrowed to either Jasper the Beagle or a waterline leading to the fridge. Does the home warranty cover a leaking dog, as well?

Thursday, August 25th

Remember that life is all about context. For example, I happen to be the “Sexiest 39-Year-Old Cookie-Baking Baseball-Loving Stay-at-Home-Dad on-this-block-in-Willmar, Minnesota!”

Friday, August 26th

Throughout my birthday, I was feeling pretty young, until my 7-year-old son and I started watching a baseball highlight show. At the end of the program, they went into a long discussion about “Disco Demolition Night” and I had to explain how records were sort of like CDs. For all he cared, I could have been grandpa detailing the past glories of a butter churn. Thankfully, my son did not ask me to explain disco.

Saturday, August 27th

As we served up my “birthday pie,” 4-year-old Sam was asked if he would like a piece. Sam declined and upon further questioning explained that he did not want any, because he “helped make it.” Given the concerns raised by young Sam's response, perhaps I should have asked for a personal food taster for my birthday.

Monday, August 29th

Breaking News: the Paulsen Family managed a trip to the big city for the State Fair and did not lose any our children in the process. I also avoided having any bands of ruffians knock the piece of straw out of my mouth or pull up my overalls and give me a wedgie.

August - Sept. 2011

Dave's World

Tuesday, August 30th

Wishing you all a happy and safe Cameron Diaz's birthday!

As far as sweets go, it should be as you like it, anything, anywhere, anytime, without any restrictions. That's right, I'm a "Dessert Libertarian."

Wednesday, August 31st

Yesterday, the Paulsen boys invented a game, which involves throwing acorns at each other. Sadly, this means that the next step in their evolution from boys to men will involve rock projectiles.

Thursday, September 1st

As I cleaned up from dinner, I could hear yelling in the living room. The conflict sounded like a brotherly dispute between 4-year-old Sam and 2-year-old Ben, so I decided to ignore the ruckus. Within seconds, the shouts subsided and all sounded well. After finishing in the kitchen, I went to the living room to find that they had both fallen asleep... a rare example of the "double sleeper hold."

Friday, September 2nd

Kids seem to grow up so fast these days. Yesterday was already time for "The Talk" with 7-year-old Jacob. That is right, "Son, no matter how tempting the situation. No matter what your friends say. Never, ever, ever, swing at a 3-0 pitch."

Tuesday, September 6th

Child wakes up mother. Mother wakes up dog. Dog wakes up father. Repeat 10 minutes earlier every night. Eventually, the dog and father are eating breakfast at 1:15 AM and are classified by zoologists as nocturnal.

Demonstrating another sign of the lingering recession, 2-year-old Ben reached into the church offering plate in a desperate attempt to stabilize his college savings fund.

Flip flops and 41 degrees. I may need to transition directly to moon boots.

You know the lake water is a tad chilly on Labor Day, when 4-year-old Sam and I are the only ones who have gone for a swim and Sam did so by accidentally falling off the dock.

As a clarification for those of you who saw me climb that hill at Mile 10 of Saturday's "jog," I was not walking. It was technically a shuffle.

Wednesday, September 7th

As a result of our two house payments, we decided to keep 4-year-old Sam and 2-year-old Ben home from preschool this Fall. "Kids, repeat after me. Big 'A' is for Austerity."

Thursday, September 8th

As 7-year-old Jacob detailed all of the horrible tragedies that could result from his two younger brothers using a bunk bed, I realized that this boy may have a future in Risk Management.

Friday, September 9th

While visiting the Carrot Cake Lady's table at the Farmer's Market, she turned to me and asked, "Are you the gentleman whose wife is pregnant?" Although it is a well known fact that cream cheese frosting boosts fertility, I was unaware that shopping for fresh baked goods could result in mistaken identity and shock.

Saturday, September 10th

Unassembled Bunk Bed + Tiny Allen Wrench = Permanent Loss of Feeling in the Thumbs

Buzzkill, indeed... Realizing that you shipped your Amazon.com order to your old home, 600 miles away.

Monday, September 12th

Two unanticipated consequences from my 18-mile training jog...

- 1) My legs have threatened to file secession paperwork, unless I stop this silliness...
- 2) The Kandiyohi Board of County Commissioners approved a motion prohibiting me from removing my shirt in public places.

Tuesday, September 13th

My Bible appears to be missing Mark 11:26. I blame Nixon. [Hey, wait a second, I get it. I must first forgive Nixon, in order to receive forgiveness myself. Tricky, tricky translation indeed.]

It was bound to happen eventually, in this case about 45 days, Charlene sounded very Minnesotan in her pronunciation of the word "boat."

Wednesday, September 14th

Unfortunately, the shoe elves must think that it is below them to clean a few dirty dishes, while I sleep. Next time I see those little fairytale punks, we are going to have a long talk about underemployment and the recession.

September 2011

Dave's World

Thursday, September 15th

Dear Dockers,

As if purchasing a larger pair of pants is not humiliating enough, you manage to worsen the experience by throwing elastic into the mix. I know you're saying, "Here is a little room to grow. You'll need it." Sure, I'll use that little extra latitude, but when I purchase a size, I want to commit myself to the cause and not receive your pity.

Sincerely,

I-Can-Still-Pack-It-All-In Thank-You-Very-Much

Friday, September 16th

In what was theorized as an effort to relieve himself, while maintaining control of the T.V. channel, 7-year-old Jacob broke all social norms by carrying the remote into the bathroom. Time to shop for a combo DVR / Clorox Disinfecting Wipe dispenser.

Saturday, September 17th

My training jog turned into momentary horror, as I tripped and dove face first toward the asphalt. As my nose was about a foot from the road, with my arms inexplicably behind me in ski jump form, four or five stumbling strides up righted me. My only explanation is that the same weight gain, which made me resemble a pear, has also provided me with the uncanny balancing abilities of a Weeble.

Thursday, September 22nd

Unfortunately, the airport body scan did not neutralize the previous evening's Bavarian platter (i.e. bratwurst, knackwurst, pork loin, potato dumpling, sauerkraut, and dunkel beer). The TSA staff did however look impressed that I was still able to stand.

Friday, September 23rd

I am not sure what is wrong with Brad Pitt. Jennifer Aniston continues to refer to me as an "adorable little cuddle bug."

Monday, September 26th

Recently, scientists were startled by the discovery of subatomic particles, which appear to travel faster than the speed of light. This news came as no surprise to the Paulsen clan, since in our house, ice cream is known to disappear faster than the speed of light.

Tuesday, September 27th

Given 4-year-old Sam's ability to talk nonstop and his reluctance to use the potty, it is likely that someday he will be giving a filibuster from the Senate floor.

Wednesday, September 28th

Looking to save money over the holiday season? 2-year-old Ben recommends size 4 carpet tacks as a fun and affordable toy. This money saving tip has been brought to you by a partnership between the Consumer Product Safety Commission and The Home Depot, "More Saving. More Doing."

Thursday, September 29th

The boys seem to be happy that I am losing my voice, as a result of a change of season cold. Little do they know that I will soon provide direction via baseball umpire signals.

Safe sign = don't worry, your brother or the dog is to blame.

Point foul = wrong answer, try again.

The frequent non-responsive granting of a walk sign = you get a free pass, because I'm tired.

You're out = go directly to timeout.

Friday, September 30th

I am so thankful that auto insurance rates do not factor in close calls.

PS – Dear White Minivan,

You can finally stop looking at me. I know I was at fault and feel plenty bad. Let's just agree to drive off and never meet at this fateful intersection again.

Sincerely,

Dope in the Red Freestyle

Saturday, October 1st

As the employees of the Ford service department looked on in equal parts shock, disgust, and amusement, all I could feel was a sense of pride in the speed and tenacity that my 2-year-old son gathered and ate his free popcorn that had spilled on the floor.

Sunday, October 2nd

2-year-old Ben's bedtime prayer, "God, thank you for this 'nother bed. Amen. God, thank you for this 'nother covers. Amen. God, thank you for this 'nother Daddy. Amen." I am not sure who I replaced, but I am glad that he considers me as a blessing.

Monday, October 3rd

I could swear that I was not wearing a t-shirt when I went to bed, but I woke up wearing one. My only thought is that my subconscious had me put one on in the middle of the night, in an act of self preservation to prepare for Winter. Either that or a team of Navy Seals conducted a secret nighttime mission to "cover me" for the "good of the Homeland."

Tuesday, October 4th

Give me a P! P! Give me a S! S! Give me an E-U-D-O-E-P-H-E-D-R-I-N-E! E-U-D-O-E-P-H-E-D-R-I-N-E! What's that spell? Temporary Cold Relief! Temporary Cold Relief! Yeah, Temporary Cold Relief!

October 2011

Dave's World

Wednesday, October 5th

How do you know when it's love? She lets your sick butt sleep in, while she gets up to let the dog out. That's love. Now, if she would just take out the stinky kitchen trash, too. That would be spoiled. This is not spoiled; this is love.

Thursday, October 6th

As I watched 7-year-old Jacob playfully hold onto and ride on the garage door up as it opened, the following sequence of thoughts flashed through my head...

- 1) I hope Charlene does not see this or Jacob and I will both be in a lot of trouble.
- 2) Boy, that looks like fun. I wish that I had thought of that.
- 3) I bet that new garage doors are pretty expensive.
- 4) I guess I should stop him, before he gets hurt.

Friday, October 7th

It is never a good thing, when the DMV customer service rep suggests a photo retake.

“Top 10 Reasons Minnesota Requires a Driver's Exam for New Residents”

- 10) They want to ensure you have mastered your new accent.
- 9) Quiz you whether or not “uffda” is a swear word.
- 8) To be a pain in the rear.
- 7) Select the snow drift that contains your car.
- 6) Test whether “giving the finger” is compatible with the “Minnesota Nice” Code of Conduct.
- 5) Clarify that Minnesota is NOT part of Canada.
- 4) Determine if you would like a driver's license, instead of the more common dog sled license.
- 3) Formally apologize for that whole “Governor Jesse 'The Body' Ventura” thing. Oh, and that “Senator Al Franken” thing.
- 2) See whether you can find Lake Wobegon on the map.
- 1) It's all about cash for the State, baby. It's all about the cash.

October 2011

Friday, October 7th

I don't care what my Minnesota Driver's License Exam results indicate, when they see my car approaching, school buses and bicyclists should not be concerned.

Saturday, October 8th

You know doggy, you would probably feel better at night, if you did not break into your food bin during the day. Strangely enough, this is the same advice that my doctor gives me.

Power bars. Check.

Plane ticket. Check.

Friend's couch reserved for an overnight stay. Check.

Shoes ready for their final run. Check.

One body that refuses to completely breakdown. Check.

Mindset determined to finish. Check.

Watch out Chicago Marathon. I'm on my way and I will succeed!

My pre-marathon will.

To Jacob, my baseball collection, including the answering machine message from the daughter of the K.C. Royals former G.M. Priceless!

To Sam, my Facebook wall, including the 9/13/10 post. Classic!

To Ben, my extensive cookie cookbook collection. Guaranteed to provide a new cookie recipe every week for the rest of his life. Tasty!

Monday, October 10th

Veni, Vidi, Vici – Chicago Marathon Style.

“I went. I ran. I finished!”

Race time of 5 hours, 11 minutes, and 15 seconds.

Plus, although they are angry, both of my knees are still speaking to me.

O.K., I will admit that my hobbled sprint at the end of Chicago Marathon was to avoid the embarrassment of finishing behind

- (1) a woman wearing fairy wings,
- (2) the person chatting on a cell phone, and
- (3) the fellow running in a grass skirt.

Another major difference between my performance in the 2011 Chicago Marathon and the original marathon run in 490 B.C. The historical record indicates that Pheidippides never had a spectator offer him a corn dog (yes, an actual corn dog) at Mile 21.

October 2011

Dave's World

Tuesday, October 11th

All morning, 4-year-old Sam had been carrying around a foot long stick calling it his "microphone" and pretending to announce with it. Upon our arrival at the doctor's to register our insurance, I did not see any harm in allowing the new microphone to travel with us into the business office. Little did I know that a microphone can be instantly transformed into a weapon with just the slightest sibling provocation.

Wednesday, October 12th

Oh yes, later today, more pumpkins will appear on our doorstep, because I will not let the neighborhood pumpkin stealing terrorists win!

Thursday, October 13th

Something has gone "very wrong," when you need to purchase a combination lock for your dog's food bin. It will officially be "extremely wrong," when Jasper the Beagle cracks the 0-0-0 combination.

Friday, October 14th

Major cleanups of the 21st Century... Hurricane Katrina... the Gulf Oil Spill... attempting to clean 2-year-old Benjamin's face, before his mother comes home from work.

I have a confession to make. Ever since Willmar, Minnesota, banned dancing, I occasionally burn off my middle aged angst by getting footloose in an abandoned warehouse.

Ah, post-season baseball. A time for fathers and sons to enjoy the national pastime, while awkwardly avoiding mention of the omnipresent Viagra advertising.

Saturday, October 15th

As my 7-year-old observed, they should just call it the "Bigger Ten."

Monday, October 17th

Tip from unregistered dietician Dave. After exhausting every option to subdue three squirrely children during church, you have burned enough calories to enjoy seconds at the communion table.

Tuesday, October 18th

After knocking out his brother's loose baby tooth in a football game, 4-year-old Sam is open to accepting offers for full ride scholarships from accredited college football programs.

Note: if you are a "booster," please go away. Far, far away.

Wednesday, October 19th

Judging by the innocent look on his face, Jasper the Beagle had planned on making a delicious batch of marinara sauce, after attacking the bag of tomatoes perched on the kitchen counter.

October 2011

Thursday, October 20th

The Autumn Golden Rule? Let your leaves blow into your neighbor's yard, as you would have their leaves blow into yours.

Friday, October 21st

I hope that Gadhafi did not ruin it for everyone who likes to wear silly hats.

Saturday, October 22nd

We have received confirmation that my 7-year-old son inherited his mother's common sense, when he politely turned down my offer to camp out in the backyard clubhouse in below freezing weather. My pain free back is now indebted to this roll of the gene pool dice.

It turns out that Harold Camping was misinterpreting the biblical passages, which were actually pointing toward a type of pop culture doomsday: the airing of Gene Simmon's wedding.

Sunday, October 23rd

My family has informed me that my color commentary services, during the World Series, are no longer needed.

Shhhhhhhh. I am a little afraid that I will be probed by government scientists if I admit this, but I have the X factor!

Monday, October 24th

I am a reluctant, but effective leaf raking machine.

Tuesday, October 25th

Behold the Gingersnap! Perhaps, the perfect Fall cookie and, oh, it sure does make the house smell yummy.

Dave's Winter in Minnesota To-Do List... Purchase a snow blower, get fitted for a toque, buy an extra set of long johns, find some extra blankets (lots of extra blankets), and enroll Jasper the Beagle in sled dog classes.

The kids considered the first trip to the municipal brush pile an adventure. The second trip was embraced with a degree of obligation. By the third trip, I was facing an open revolt in the back of the car. Needless to say that trips four and five were solo journeys.

October 2011

Dave's World

Wednesday, October 26th

Armed with my new super big and super powerful snow blower, I say, "Bring it on!" Now, I will look into my crystal ball and provide you with a glimpse into the future. My Thursday, January 26, 2012, post will read,

"To Whom It May Concern:

Sorry about my cocky 'Bring on the Snow Comment' from back in October.

Please, take it back. Take all of the snow back.

Sincerely,

Tired of Blowing Snow Dave"

Thursday, October 27th

As the car's seat belt warning light continued to harass me over the 80 pound bag of water softener salt, located in my passenger seat, a money saving tip came to mind. If the car thinks that the 80 pounds of salt is a person, perhaps I could claim it as an additional dependent on our taxes. Making money and removing hard water stains. Thank you, Morton Salt Co.

Shocking Halloween News: I was not the first member of the Paulsen house to be caught stealing candy from the "to be distributed at the door" stockpile. Even Better Aftermath: Now all of my future pre-Halloween candy eating transgressions will be blamed on the growing-like-a-weed-7-year-old-convicted-culprit. (Insert sinister laugh here... Bahahaha!)

Another sign of true love... going back into the grocery store to locate the extremely annoying whistle that my 2-year-old had unknowingly dropped. A little boy's pleasure is one man's pain. [Strange aside. Would you believe that he received the plastic whistle at library story time? Really, a library distributing noise makers. Ah, the irony. Ah, the tortured eardrums.]

Friday, October 28th

If only FOX Sports had existed during the 1907 World Series, some idiot would have put a microphone on Ty Cobb. Those FCC fines alone would have been enough to address our current Federal budget deficit.

2-year-old Ben has opted to wear the same pair of orange socks, with blue and white stripes, for the second day in a row. If this streak continues, it will test the long held fashion rule that orange socks, with blue and white stripes, go with any outfit.

4-year-old Sam has recently offered to potty train his 2-year-old brother, Ben. Unfortunately, this would be like having Ferris Bueller teach classes on how to achieve perfect attendance.

Saturday, October 29th

Since 4-year-old Sam has just started becoming familiar with the mouse on our home computer, I estimate one month time until he has changed all of my settings, 45 days until he is showing me games that he has found on the Internet, and 3½ months until he is filing our taxes for us on-line.

The first sign of the 2012 cataclysm, as foretold in the Maya Calendar, is a team winning the World Series with Nick Punto as their starting second baseman. Personally, I am going to purchase a few cans of corn, in recognition of this terrifying indication of things to come.

Monday, October 31st

Are you suffering from a bad night sleep, due to children crawling into your bed? Stop the suffering and call us! We are Nighttime Intruder Ejection (NIE). Offering a full range of services from "carried back to bed" to the popular "catapult back to the top bunk" option. Now offering 24-hour service to help with "quiet time" siestas. Say goodbye to those little visitors and stop being deNIEd a goodnight sleep.

Not to cry over spilled milk, but after the fourth spilled beverage at dinner, I am thinking of replacing the place mats with a waterproof tarp.

Slowly, but surely, my Sunday morning cookie deliveries are beginning to increase our family's Church Free Agent value.

Tuesday, November 1st

On this All Saints' Day, I reflect on how we live our lives as both sinners and saints. Personally, after committing the deadly sin of gluttony by eating 46 "Fun Size" candy bars, I am more sinner, than saint.

Wednesday, November 2nd

I am anxiously awaiting to hear who will be appointed to the DQgate Commission. They are investigating allegations that I intentionally botched the family's order at Dairy Queen, in order to take advantage of the extra Mini Oreo Blizzard, made with chocolate ice cream. Witch hunt, I say. Or in my case, a sweets-loving warlock hunt.

Thursday, November 3rd

I may have done too good a job at instilling a love of sports into 4-year-Sam. Case in point, last night, he sat down to watch some of the Temple versus Ohio college football game. The dawning of a new sports fan or perhaps Sam has just figured out a way to extend his bed-time... or it may just be the powerful allure of MAC football considering that he woke up at 6:30AM to watch the end of the game.

November 2011

Dave's World

Friday, November 4th

WILLMAR, MN (AP) - Father of three nearly ran over a large display of Melba toast, located in a narrow grocery store aisle. The frazzled parent was driving an oversized shopping cart. Although the male admitted to being distracted by the Kool-Aid closeout sale, he placed the blame on the grocery store filling every square foot with toy displays. He also blamed his children, who kept repeating, "I want..."

Saturday, November 5th

At last night's dinner, 7-year-old Jacob calculated that we have at least 14 desserts per week (one after every lunch and dinner). This resulted in his proposal to limit the number of desserts enjoyed each week by the family. Even though I enjoy a strong 3-2 pro-sweets majority voting block in the family (4-year-old Sam, 2-year-old Ben, and me versus my health conscious second grader and wife), I am still worried that Jacob's anti-sweets legislation will find some way to pass. This is nothing less than Candy Prohibition and I will not stand for it!

Since 4-year-old Sam has started waking up at 6AM to watch football and my elderly beagle enjoys a pre-sunrise breakfast, I will be cutting out the middleman (me) and promoting Sam to "Early Morning Feed and Let the Dog Out" Specialist First Class.

My boys especially enjoy visiting three stores, due to their free-lollipop-distribution-to-children-of-shoppers policy. The grocery store, the post office, and... the liquor store. At least, this is why I think 2-year-old Ben got so excited to come along on a beer and wine run and ran around the house screaming "Liquor!"

Sunday, November 6th

As 2-year-old Ben and I debated whether or not he could wear a football jersey to church, I decided to go with the nuclear option, "Let's ask Mommy." Ben's response, "I'll put it back in the drawer." Smart kid.

Monday, November 7th

I must admit that it was a relief to find that both the Director of Emergency Medical Services and my family doctor are also enrolled in the "family learn to ice skate" class. Now, all I need to do is convince a dentist to attend the class and I will have all of my bases covered.

Tuesday, November 8th

Forget the Oklahoma earthquakes, try sitting in our basement, while the boys play football in the living room above. Truly terrifying!

Ben Franklin obviously did not own a dog or his bright idea of Day Light Savings Time would have been left on the drawing board.

November 2011

Wednesday, November 9th

I appear to be suffering from "Computer Monitor Goggles." Yes, this ailment, most frequently seen in college students, can be observed, when an individual has stared at their computer screen so long that anything they type appears to be beautiful. To the rest of society, however, their work resembles to the random jottings of a sleep deprived lunatic.

Thursday, November 10th

Dear Comrades,

I just purchased a new \$17 faux-fur faux-Russian Ushanka ultra-warm hat.

As long as I feed and walk the hat's faux-animal twice-a-day, everything should work out fine.

Sincerely,

Dave of the North

PS – It is worth noting that this is not the "Rat Fur Hat" featured in the Kenny Rogers Chicken Seinfeld episode.

As I saw the first snowflakes of the season drift down from the sky, suddenly my \$17 purchase of a new faux-fur faux-Russian Ushanka hat was one of the best investments that I have ever made... even though my 7-year-old son observed, "Someone might make fun of you" and my wife's stunned reaction of "Wow" were the source of a little buyer's remorse... still, my ears will be super toasty warm, as I clear snow and embrace my new membership in the "Brotherhood of Silly Hats!"

Friday, November 11th

93 years ago, today, the "war to end all wars" concluded. Looking back, unfortunately things did not work out quite as planned.

Saturday, November 12th

Unfortunately, my son Ben has recently entered his "Terrible Twos" phase. At one time, I was hopeful that he had skipped the phase, but alas, we now live with a little Napoleon. I guess that it is time for this Wellington to warm up the Elba Island timeout bench.

Monday, November 14th

Attention Paulsen Children: Your complaint will be addressed in the order it was received. If you are bleeding, say in a calm voice, "Daddy, I am bleeding. Please, help." Otherwise, thank you for your patience.

"Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the shoes of a boy who does not put away his footwear."

November 2011

Dave's World

Tuesday, November 15th

To the tune of "Total Eclipse of the Heart," I bring you my tribute to post-Daylight Savings cooking. "Once upon a time there was meat on the grill. I really shouldn't cook on a lark. Nothing I can do. The chicken burned in the dark."

Wednesday, November 16th

DIY and Unsolicited Parenting Advice – Volume 1. When deciding between the repair of a plastic toy car for \$1.50 or spending more and replacing it for \$3.50, buy the replacement toy car, because Super Glue makes a lousy accidental hand moisturizer.

Thursday, November 17th

One of the few benefits of Charlene's trip to a conference... The bed is all mine! Ha, ha! The bed is all mine! Sorry, Jasper. You have not earned enough reward points for a one night stay in the people bed. I am sorry. Did I fail to mention? Ha, ha! The bed is all mine!

Friday, November 18th

Exhibit A in the case that the House of Paulsen has too much testosterone: even a game of "Hi Ho! Cherry-O" turns ugly.

Saturday, November 19th

With my 40th birthday approaching in just 40 weeks, I will need to focus on creating the ultimate version of myself... "Dave 4.0"

While draining my lawn mower's gas for the season, I realized that I could keep it running by tying my belt around the controls. Unfortunately, this resulted in me displaying a "plumber's butt" for the better part of the afternoon.

Dear Civilization,

I'm sorry you had to see that.

Please, consider my application to rejoin society.

Sincerely,

Dave of the Now Fully Raised Trousers

Monday, November 21st

While waiting for his turn in the bathtub, I discovered a naked 4-year-old Sam running and sliding on the carpet, while yelling, "Safe!" All that I could think was, "Boy, you do not want a rug burn there."

Tuesday, November 22nd

Today's "Procrastination Tip" has been brought to you by a stalling 2-year-old. When your tired father is trying to get everyone ready for bed, it is o.k. to suddenly become obsessed with clearing your Etch-A-Sketch screen.

November 2011

Wednesday, November 23rd

While showing off my new long johns, I realized that my outfit resembled either a gray Mr. Grinch or that of an ensign on Star Trek: The Next Generation. "Mr. Grinch, engage."

Thursday, November 24th

Judging from my late night grocery store run to buy Hungry Jack Potatoes and a light bulb, it would appear as if we are cooking our Thanksgiving dinner in an Easy Bake Oven. Now, that would be epic.

Friday, November 25th

Since Congress cannot come up with a plan to save the economy, I took matters into my own hands and provided an economic jolt with my Black Friday shopping spree.

Sunday, November 27th

I am the Black Friday Warrior!

Mad. Lack of sleep due to the low battery chirp of a Carbon Monoxide detector.

Madder. Frustrated by our home's lack of functioning 9-volt batteries.

Madderest. After one hour of failed attempts, discovering that I was installing the battery backwards.

Monday, November 28th

After sitting through church with the Paulsen boys, I am proposing an Eleventh Commandment: Thou shalt keep thine hands to one's self.

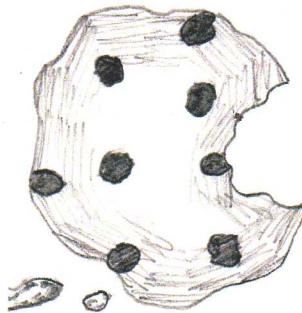
You know that you are still a little sleepy, when you serve your child his Cheerios with a fork.

Tuesday, November 29th

Pumpkin Pie Ice Cream. Kryptonite to my healthy eating efforts over the holidays.

Wednesday, November 30th

Help! I've been buried alive under a collapsed pile of holiday receipts. Someone, please, double click the Quicken icon.



December 2011

Dave's World

Thursday, December 1st

This public service announcement has been brought to you by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). As cold and flu season hits full swing, remember that used tissues stolen from the bathroom trash are considered part of a beagle's well-rounded diet.

Sensitive fillings: God's warning shot for stealing your child's ice cream.

There was no doubt that I am a born and raised American, when I ordered a McDonald's cheeseburger to cleanse my palate, after finishing off a "new," but mediocre, McClub sandwich.

WILLMAR, MN (AP) – Stocks rallied, after news that Dave Paulsen will go grocery shopping today, to feed three hungry and growing boys.

Friday, December 2nd

Kids, take it from me. No matter how tempting it is to sneak some batter, it is not worth it, if even the slightest chance exists of getting the whisk stuck in your teeth.

Saturday, December 3rd

O.K., I must admit that I am a little disappointed on mornings, when the Mom character does not appear in the Family Circus comic strip. I may be married, but I am not blind.

Monday, December 5th

I tend to run a little behind, but this is ridiculous.

Charlene: "We should finish up the Christmas letter."

Insert a patented Holiday sigh of exhaustion from Dave.

Charlene: "I wrote a draft. We just need to update the photos."

Dave, in disbelief, "When did you write it?"

Charlene: "July."

Tuesday, December 6th

During 4-year-old Sam's screening for Kindergarten, he was asked to draw a picture of his Mom and Dad. When asked to describe his drawing, he noted that "Daddy has a big belly, because he eats too much ice cream." I don't know if I should praise him for his honesty, send him to timeout just for fun, or produce an evil laugh and give him a lesson on body types and the genetic code.

Wednesday, December 7th

Happiness is receiving a \$18.04 check in the mail for some random class action lawsuit, in which you were an unknowing participant. Sorry VISA, somehow I imagine that you had it coming to you.

December 2011

Thursday, December 8th

No, it isn't how close he is standing. It also isn't how loud he is talking. It isn't even the level of intensity or passion that he uses to deliver his message. You can really tell if 4-year-old Sam has something important to tell you by the amount of spit that lands on your face, as he relays some important news.

Friday, December 9th

I must admit feeling a tad bit proud and somewhat stunned, when I saw 4-year-old Sam use the Jedi Mind Trick on his little brother.

Charlene addressing newly minted 3-year-old Ben: "What would you like for your special birthday dinner?"

Sam channeling Sir Alec Guinness: "I like grilled cheese."

Impressionable Ben: "I like grilled cheese."

For the record, Ben does not like grilled cheese.

Saturday, December 10th

Sure, church celebrations for Saint Lucia Day have their festive role, but I really cannot wait for the evening's "Saint Lucia Ball," where we get to hang out with Fred and Ethel, sing along to a little Cuban-inspired Babalu, sample some Vitameatavegamin health tonic, and try our hand working on a conveyor belt of chocolates.

Monday, December 12th

A word of advice to husbands. No matter how good your intentions. No matter how much you are trying to lighten the mood. No matter how much it seems to fit into the conversation. When driving your wife to the ER, with an eye injury, never say, "Maybe we could find a paisley eye patch."

Tuesday, December 13th

I was this close to landing a deep fryer for Christmas, then I had to mention my plans for homemade deep fried Snickers. Some dreams are better off remaining private.

Wednesday, December 14th

A strong indication that Dad made dinner the past two nights: two separate meals, two different kids demonstrating the gag reflex.

Thursday, December 15th

Due to the intense emotions displayed, while playing it, I am ready to endorse a plan, which would return Candy Land to its 1967 borders.

December 2011

Dave's World

Friday, December 16th

At one point, while 8-year-old Jacob and I playfully squabbled over the best way to rewind using the new DVR remote, I could not help, but let out the wisenheimer comment, "Now, I could have done THAT." This interaction provided Charlene with a bit of biblical-like wisdom, "Smart aleck begat, smart aleck."

Saturday, December 17th

4-year-old Sam's description of a band that he saw on television, "They sang in Spanish, English, and what we speak." Somehow, I don't see a career as a Linguist in Sam's future.

Sunday, December 18th

It's a Christmas Miracle... the Paulsen Family Christmas Letter is done a week ahead of time!

Monday, December 19th

You know that it is time for the barber, when your hair begins betraying your secret naps.

Tuesday, December 20th

Some have claimed that it is a plot to get out of doing laundry, while others have theorized that it is a complete ineptitude in approaching the chore, either way there is no denying that I am a Sweater WMD, when armed with good intentions and a bottle of Clorox Color Booster.

Wednesday, December 21st

Thank goodness boys grow up, otherwise most dinner parties would involve a nice meal, followed by adjournment to the living room to wrestle.

Thursday, December 22nd

I hope that it is not too late to ask for some more sleep for Christmas.

Friday, December 23rd

Take it from my new spatula, which is in the shape of a Smiley Face... "Don't worry. Be happy."

Much to the relief of my ears, for the first time in about two weeks, 3-year-old Ben failed to conclude a thought with an exclamation point. Examples, from the very loud past few days, include: "This broccoli looks like little trees!", "Where is my Thomas book?!", and the ever popular, "Daddy! Come here!"

Saturday, December 24th

As I saw 4-year-old Sam standing naked in the hallway, getting ready for bed, and one by one using his pieces of clothes to make jump shots into the hamper, it crossed my mind that he may have a future in professional basketball... once they drop the pants requirement.

December 2011

Sunday, December 25th

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, let us remember how to interact with him daily. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Monday, December 26th

As I downloaded our family Christmas photo, I noticed Jasper the Beagle jumping for no apparent reason, 4-year-old Sam displaying shark-like teeth, 3-year-old Ben deciding if he wants to smile, and 8-year-old Jacob raising his hand to the camera. Pointing out the issues, I asked Charlene if we should retake the picture. Her response, "That's our family." She's right. It's already perfect.

Tuesday, December 27th

You can spot a "Minnesota Christmas" by tackle boxes under the tree.

Post-Christmas Report. I am really enjoying my new University of Michigan hooded sweat-shirt. In addition to being warm, when I wear it with the hood up, I look like the next generation of Star Wars Sith Lord. Happy Holidays from the Dark Side.

Wednesday, December 28th

After I upset 8-year-old Jacob, I witnessed his first attempt at installing a puppet dictator. "I'm going to tell Grandpa that he is in charge." Grandpa, I wish you the best of luck. I'm off to Exile Island for a Mojito and some time in the sun.

Thursday, December 29th

In a shocking "Family Game Night" development, the man, who cannot recall any significant details from 1991 to present, won a game of Memory. This just confirms my ability to store trivial details for instant recall (there are 108 stitches in a baseball), while being unable to memorize anything of value (my cell phone number... I have absolutely no idea).

Friday, December 30th

I am so proud of our trip to Mall of America. I did not lose a single child, I ate fairly healthy, and I refrained from purchasing the \$400 Star Destroyer at Legoland. The final point took a great deal of willpower considering that the box of Legos included several of the bounty hunters, as well as what appeared to be Princess Leia's ship, the Tantive IV. Hey, wait a second, where did I leave my kids?

Saturday, December 31st

As Charlene tried to convince 3-year-old Ben to eat a raw carrot, Ben's older brother Sam offered some encouragement, "They taste great now." I was unaware that they had changed the recipe for raw carrots.

January 2012

Dave's World

Sunday, January 1st

In 2011, I trained for both a doughnut eating competition and a marathon. Based upon this morning's weigh in, the winner is... Krispy Kreme!

Monday, January 2nd

After a very bad trip to the store, where the boys would not settle down, a woman in the checkout line turned to me and said, "Your kids should give classes on how to behave in grocery stores." Either (1) she has a Black Belt in Sarcasm, (2) she has very low standards, or (3) my children had recently knocked her down and she was no longer thinking clearly.

Wednesday, January 4th

While I simultaneously perform the roles of referee, concierge, and chef for my children, it is amazing how my preparation of a Rachael Ray 30 Minute Meal suddenly takes close to 60 minutes.

Thursday, January 5th

"Hey, Bert." Either I need to cut back on the gel or get a haircut, because when your style begins to mimic Ernie's from Sesame Street, something has to change.

Friday, January 6th

Now that the 12 days of Christmas are over, I can reflect on the blessing of a safe neighborhood. How do I know that we live in a safe neighborhood? On Christmas morning, 4-year-old Sam ran outside yelling, "Grandma and Grandpa, we got a new TV!" I did not even feel the need to run after him, clarifying for all to hear, "It is a small TV and would not be worth risking prosecution."

Wow! Winter weather in Minnesota warm enough to grill hamburgers. Thankfully, it is not warm enough to wear shorts. I planned on having at least four more months to fit into them.

Saturday, January 7th

It was early in the morning, the room was dark, and I was digging in the bottom of the drawer for my exercise shorts, but it was not until I was walking up the stairs at the gym that I suspected something may be wrong. The fabric was a little too silky. The fit was a little too snug. The feel was a little too unfamiliar. I am pretty sure that I was not wearing my wife's running shorts, but unfortunately the seed of doubt will always be there, along with the creeping sense of insecurity.

Monday, January 9th

Considering his behavior during church, 3-year-old Ben should have gone up for a second blessing during communion or perhaps an exorcism of the impish forest sprite that appears to have hijacked his body.

January 2012

Tuesday, January 10th

I am not sure which is more difficult: getting out of a warm bed on a cold winter morning to go to the gym or resisting the urge to pick up a piping-hot-steamed-caramel-mocha-frappe-espresso-latte-with-whipped-cream-and-a-sprinkle-of-cinnamon on the drive to the gym.

Considering that our yard is predominantly parched permafrost, the three square feet that is muddy receives a disproportionate share of attention from our boys.

Wednesday, January 11th

Open Letter to the Meredith Corporation. I will concede that I am an adequate homemaker, who enjoys baking, but I feel compelled to take a stand. As a result, I will not be accepting your \$5.99 offer for a year's subscription to the "Ladies' Home Journal." When you come out with a "Gentleman's Home Journal" publication, feel free to send me an invitation. Sincerely, Domestic (but still very much a man, spelled M-A-N) Dave

Thursday, January 12th

While traveling, partially dressed, from the shower to the bedroom, the boys asked if I would help them make their breakfast. Unfortunately, poor Charlene walked into the kitchen to find me shirtless, while operating the toaster. Her response seemed very reasonable, "I would prefer that you wear a shirt, when preparing breakfast." Note to self: work on abs and change her mind.

Friday, January 13th

Why would they play music in the grocery store, if they did not want you to sing along? At least that was my justification for belting out a respectable version of "My Favorite Things," from "The Sound of Music," while strolling down the dish soap aisle. Hey, WWJAD... What would Julie Andrews do?

Saturday, January 14th

You know that the New Year's Resolution is off to a bumpy start, when getting a haircut is part of your weight reduction strategy.

Sunday, January 15th

After seeing what he barely misspelled, with his Scrabble Junior Cheez-Its, 3-year-old Ben appears to be developing into a Scrabble savant. Seaboozy (adjective) – having drank a little too much, while boating. "Seaboozy" used in a sentence: "Don't let Mr. Hazelwood captain the vessel. He tends to get a little seaboozy."

Monday, January 16th

Please, please, no more applause. I realize that clinching our family's season long NFL Pick the Winner pool is a big deal, but really, there is no need for this afternoon's parade and celebrity roast in my honor.

January 2012

Dave's World

Tuesday, January 17th

Proof that our marriage has matured... While getting lost on a road trip, Charlene and I did not address each other with "You big dummy." Please, note that since this is a family show, the quote has been altered. We do not actually sound like Fred Sanford, when frustrated with each other. Clutching my chest, "You hear that, Elizabeth? I'm coming to join ya, honey!" If only I could pipe in the Sanford and Son theme song into this status update, "Ba, ba, ba, ba da..."

Bad Mental Image of the Day... My weight loss goal is simple: to no longer be able to hold my toothbrush, with my bellybutton.

Wednesday, January 18th

4-year-old Sam making a classic observation, "Hey, Dad, 'cuties on the booties' rhymes." It may not be the stuff of a Nobel Laureate Poet, but he does have a point.

Thursday, January 19th

You know that you are a NPR junky, when you turn on the radio and immediately get excited to hear judicial correspondent Nina Totenberg's voice.

Friday, January 20th

Following my dog's morning potty break, I bet that Jasper the Beagle did not appreciate me gauging the rate of snowfall by the amount of accumulation on his back.

Saturday, January 21st

When I asked 4-year-old Sam, if he enjoyed our road trip, Sam observed that "It was kind of like a date." Correction. Since it was a classic American road trip, it was a "ManDate."

McDonald's wrappers strewn about the car, the scent of Skittles in the air, and you can add stops to visit random chicken statuary to the list of reasons Sam and Dave should not take unsupervised road trips.

On our trip to Minneapolis, for a doctor's appointment (no need to worry, Sam is fine), 4-year-old Sam seemed a little concerned about my time management.

Sam: "Are we going to be late for the doctor?"

My thought: "No. We are just going to be 5 minutes late, just like every other appointment."

[I would like it noted for the record that we were a half hour early.]

Flash forward 50 years...

Sam: "Dad, we need to leave now for the tour at the Assisted Living Home."

Dave: "They can wait. Let's take a 5 minute detour to see the largest collection of dryer lint."

January 2012

Saturday, January 21st

As 4-year-old Sam and I visited the Largest Ball of Twine, built by one person, I could not help but thinking, "Son, if you start now and really dedicate yourself, you too could gather enough twine to fill an enclosed gazebo."

Monday, January 23rd

Some good news and bad news from this week's "Family Learn to Ice Skate" class.

The Good News: I did not hear a "crunch" sound, when my skate landed on 3-year-old Ben's gloved left hand.

The Bad News: It is only January and I am already out of the running for "2012's Parent of the Year Award."

Tuesday, January 24th

Maybe it is just a man thing, but I will forever be afraid to congratulate a suspected expecting mother, even if they allude to the fact that they are pregnant, and sometimes even after the baby arrives. Better safe (and to appear clueless), than sorry (and awkwardly wrong).

Wednesday, January 25th

There I was pulling into the gym parking lot at 5:29 AM, one minute before the doors open. To my surprise, there were already about 20 empty cars in the parking lot, a fellow running around the indoor track, and the exercise equipment room was pretty full. I only have one logical explanation: the gym opens early to serve the under reported vampire population. It must be hard for the undead to fit in their workout, before the sun rises.

Thursday, January 26th

3-year-old Ben appears to be practicing for the 2028 Summer Games by taking advantage of every opportunity to use me as a pommel horse.

Friday, January 27th

Jinx, shminx. Even though I have had some close calls, I am proud to report that I have had my Pioneerland Library Card for 177 days without a single overdue item, late fee, or some other miscellaneous form of Dewey Decimal punishment. Rejoice! Miracles can happen. Fresh starts are possible, even for a reformed Library Late Fee Bad Boy named Dave.

Saturday, January 28th

I like to think that I mostly avoid interfering in sibling disputes, but nothing crosses the line faster than shoving snow in your little brother's face. Witness one father, who understands the pain of a frosty face, wearing a snarl and growing horns.

I fear that my children have entered into some sort of relay to maintain a continuous stream of conversation.

January 2012

Dave's World

Saturday, January 28th

Nothing demonstrates that the boys have embraced Winter like watching them sprint to the hill for sledding.

Not only is it an unpopular job, but the task of knowing when to end a sledding expedition is challenging in that you want to time the final trip down the hill right before the shedding of the first cold induced tear.

4-year-old Sam had the idea to have sticks pointing out of our new snowman's head to give him spiky hair. Unfortunately, my horror movie phase in High School only permitted my brain to envision Pinhead from "Hellraiser."

Monday, January 30th

I am afraid that if 5-year-old Sam spends any more time with his electronic handheld "Cars" game, that he received for his birthday, the boy and the game will meld into a single being. That should be worth a "domo arigato" from Mr. Roboto.

Tuesday, January 31st

I'm glad that 5-year-old Sam is enjoying his new Vikings football helmet, but he was pushing it a bit, when demonstrating that he could wear the helmet at breakfast and simply fit a spoon through the face mask. Sam finally removed the helmet, when we convinced him that NFL players don't wear their helmets for breakfast. Maybe brunch, but certainly not breakfast.

Cheers! We survived two months packed with the holidays and birthday parties for three boys. I vow to spend the next ten months resting up and not wrapping a single present.

The Wonderful World of Dave's Formal Explanations...

When did you become a Stay-at-Home Dad?

I decided to become a stay-at-home dad just a little while before it became recessionary fashionable. Way back in 2006, Charlene and I lived in the Philadelphia suburbs with our 2-year-old only son, Jacob. I was a small town municipal manager and housecleaning procrastination expert (I still am the later). In just a few months, we were blessed with the news that we would have another baby and Charlene received a job offer that would move us back to Kansas, after our ten year excursion to the City of Brotherly Love. With the move, a baby (Sam) on the way, and a limited number of small town municipal manager jobs available to me, we decided that I would give a try at being a full-time dad and a very part-time municipal consultant. Although the two incomes were nice, my cookie baking has drastically improved with the career change.

February 2012

Wednesday, February 1st

While watching the Food Network's "Rachael vs. Guy: Celebrity Cook-Off" (sort of a foodie warm up to the Super Bowl), 3-year-old Ben fell asleep sitting in Charlene's lap. I was tasked with carrying his snoozing body to bed, up two flights of stairs. As I looked at his peaceful face, I was struck by how blessed I am. No matter what challenges the future holds, the Lord has blessed me with such wonderful children. I will forever be thankful and in awe of these amazing boys.

Now that Jasper the Geriatric Beagle has started waking up at 4AM. I cannot wait until the "Spring Forward" time change, when he will begin rising at 5AM. vgfbbvghnbv I am so sorry, it appears as if my head landed on the keyboard, when I momentarily nodded off.

Thursday, February 2nd

Forget about the groundhog. The real first sign of Spring is the Paulsen boys reading the new 2012 Topps baseball cards at bedtime.

As I finished clearing the sidewalk, for no particular reason I went to kick away a reluctant lump of snow. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a chunk of ice fused to the walk with the density of a piece of granite. As I jumped back, hoping that the pain in my right index toe was a bruise and not a break, I realized that you should never kick snow or at the very least, never shovel while stupid.

Friday, February 3rd

Two Hour Delay: The winter announcement that creates a joyful purgatory on Earth for school children and an alternate reality full of scrambling for the rest of the house.

Saturday, February 4th

As we were grocery shopping, 5-year-old Sam suddenly blurted out, "Snuffaluffagus will die!" Hopefully, he has not issued some sort of Salman Rushdie type fatwa against Sesame Street characters, but it may indicate that he has a future serving on one of those death panel thingies.

[Note of clarification: Sam was trying to say that Snuffy appears to be older than his Sesame Street friends and will probably pass away first. Perhaps he was just trying to shorten the thought for Twitter.]

Sunday, February 5th

Head down and appearing to concentrate on every step, 5-year-old Sam exited the ice arena, after our ice skating lessons. As he inadvertently followed the wrong family to their car and reached for the car door handle, I realized that it was time to welcome him back into our pack. Unfortunately, I am not sure if Sam accidentally strayed from our fold, he was attempting a desperate escape from his brothers, or his subconscious was willing to give a try at a fresh start in life.

February 2012

Dave's World

Monday, February 6th

Bringing our 3-year-old to a Super Bowl Party plunged me into an alternate reality. A reality where only little girls inhabit the house and their TV-less play room is filled with Barbies, ponies, and all sorts of pink colored toys. Thankfully, Bud Light cans are portable.

Tuesday, February 7th

This morning, after spending a good ten minutes building up the self esteem of my 8-year-old son, Jake, in order to prepare him for whatever is stressing him out at school, his 5-year-old little brother, Sam, delighted in knocking down his big brother's emotional house of cards by casually saying to Jake in passing, "You smell like poop." Sam, thank you. Thank you, very much, but your tough love is not needed at this time.

Although not a bad idea, I deny any involvement in the obviously desperate attempt to stick with a New Year's Resolution... the trail of Skittles leading from the parking lot to the gym's front entrance.

Wednesday, February 8th

8-year-old Jake has yet to realize that when he walks off to school, I check to see if he slips on the sidewalk, which lets me know if I should put down any salt. Hey, as long as my canary is not complaining, keep sending him down into the mine.

It is less like "Tax Preparation Procrastination" and more like a feeling of "Tax Preparation Paralysis."

Thursday, February 9th

Other than the sound of forks landing on dinner plates and the slurping of soup, the silence at the dinner table was shocking and unprecedented. Then I realized, when Charlene is not at the dinner table, our conversation level is just a few burps away from that of a Neanderthal family reunion.

Friday, February 10th

Once scorned and pitied in the grocery store (perhaps even spit upon, although it was probably just the mist machine located above the lettuce), while trying to manage a cart full of youngsters, now it is time to respect my power, for I am about to release beasts of unimaginable energy and destructive capabilities. I cannot contain them any longer. The boys have outgrown the shopping cart. Fear me! Release the Kraken!

Saturday, February 11th

Watching 3-year-old Ben play "Operation," it should really be renamed "Malpractice."

February 2012

Monday, February 13th

As I exited the house to retrieve the newspaper from the front lawn, I realized that even though it is Monday morning, this morning contained a peaceful tranquility, sort of like Christmas Eve. Sure it is only because it is 4:30AM and no other living creature is awake, but still this morning has a wonderful peace and stillness about it. Ah, the joy and beauty provided by a mixture of time distortion, sleep deprivation, and delirium.

Tuesday, February 14th

8 out of 10 parents agree that I was right in refusing 3-year-old Ben's request to brush with his brother's toothbrush, even though it caused a major tantrum. Of the two parents, who would have permitted this dental hygiene party foul, one is disgusting and the other has just given up.

Wednesday, February 15th

I am living proof that you can gain weight by just looking at chocolate on a Hallmark Holiday.

Thursday, February 16th

This morning, the breakfast table was strangely peaceful and void of any yelling or conflicts. I may have missed it on MSNBC's morning news ticker, but my children appear to have entered into an armistice agreement.

As 5-year-old Sam interrupted the reading of bedtime stories for yet another Valentine-chocolate-induced-monologue, I realized that Shakespeare said it best. "All the world is Sam's stage and all of his family are merely players. We have our exits and our entrances into Sam's presence and one man in his time plays many supporting parts to Sam's lead."

Friday, February 17th

Yesterday, former Montreal Expos and New York Mets catcher Gary Carter died. In addition to being a great baseball player, Gary was my only direct link to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Seventeen years ago, this Fall, I changed the T.V. channel for Gary in the Adam's Mark Hotel exercise room in Denver. Although he did not say it, I know that Gary was thinking, "This Paulsen kid is amazing. Not even Steve Rogers changes the channel as well as this guy."

To make life easier, I should just have my coffee cup surgically attached to my left hand... Coming this Fall... Johnny Depp stars in a Tim Burton Film, "David Coffee Cup Hand." This film is not yet rated.

After discovering New York Yankees closer Mariano Rivera's birthday, 8-year-old Jake exclaimed, "Dad, he's older than you!" Yes, that is right, son. People older than me can still throw a ball. Sincerely, Your Old Man, who apparently is your benchmark for things that are really old

February 2012

Dave's World

Saturday, February 18th

As I yucked it up with the employees at McDonald's, 8-year-old Jake looked annoyed. On our way to find a table, I asked what was wrong. Jake explained, "When you talk, you embarrass me." Oh, don't worry. I am saving my best material for when you are a teenager.

Monday, February 20th

Sigh. Another Spring Training. Another year, waiting by my mailbox for a non-roster invitation.

Tuesday, February 21st

Preparing for my Fat Tuesday King's Cake. Adequate Flour Supply. Check. Green Sugar Sprinkles. Check. Baby Jesus Figure. Wait a second. We must have lost it during the move! Oh, dear! Breathe deep and calm down, the answer must be in Luke 2:49c. "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" I am not sure how I am going to land an affordable plane ticket to Jerusalem on such short notice, but off I go... and right into what appears to be another bad Indiana Jones sequel.

Wednesday, February 22nd

This Ash Wednesday, instead of focusing on flaws of the past, concentrate on God's plan for your perfect future.

Time to make Lent all about second chances. New Year's Resolution Redux: Diet and Exercise Strike Back.

Thursday, February 23rd

As we exited church, 5-year-old Sam broke into a spontaneous dance routine. Although it may have been the Holy Spirit at work, I am pretty sure that it was a manifestation of excitement from the promised reward of a Shamrock Shake.

Friday, February 24th

Who says that life's wonders cannot be revisited? The first kiss. Your first time behind the wheel of your brand new car. Graduation. I never thought that I would relive the joy of having a baby sleep through the night, until inexplicably Jasper the Early Rising Geriatric Beagle was found still snoring at 6AM. This may indeed qualify as proof of a miracle.

Saturday, February 25th

Reports have surfaced that long time church free agents, the Paulsen family, are close to inking a 10-year, \$192 million deal with Bethel Lutheran Church of Willmar, Minnesota. The deal, which is awaiting approval from the Bishop's office, includes a variety of performance bonuses and perks, including \$250,000 for 40 consecutive weeks of supplying church refreshments, \$100,000 for being named as an all-star in the church softball league, a no assignment provision for church council, and a luxury box in the sanctuary.

February - March 2012

Monday, February 27th

I swear that 8-year-old Jake looked fine when we left for church, but there he was sitting next to me in the pew with a four inch hole in the left knee of his khakis. That's the last time I purchase clothing made from "100% Sackcloth."

Tuesday, February 28th

übertired

Wednesday, February 29th

How do you know that it is Spring Training time in Minnesota? The kids are building snowmen with baseball bats for arms.

I'll never require any genetic testing to confirm my Scandinavian roots. Hearing our snow blower up and running at 4:30 AM is all the proof you'll ever need.

Thursday, March 1st

In a desperate attempt to speed up the arrival of Summer, 3-year-old Ben decided to take a swim in Willmar's largest slush puddle. He vaguely resembled Leonardo DiCaprio, as he sank into the ice cold water. Listen closely and you will hear the haunting voice of Celine Dion, as I look around the parking lot, hoping to find Kate Winslet.

Friday, March 2nd

Recently, 3-year-old Ben has grown fond of a long-ignored hard plastic "corn popper" toy that he wields like a battle axe, as he runs around the house. I admit that I hid the toy. I admit that I lied about not knowing its location (wink, wink, nudge, nudge, hidden under our bed). Someday, I'll ask for forgiveness, but for now I'm doing this for a little friend of mine named "Sanity."

Saturday, March 3rd

Dave's Bad Poetry Diversion Excursion...

"So Wrong, but So Right"

You tempt my tired body.

You sing your siren song.

You are hot, fast, and affordable.

40 cent Y Center vending machine espresso.

You are horrible, but oh how I need you.

Monday, March 5th

It just is not right to ask a sleepy dad to read any bedtime stories about dinosaurs that contain impossible to pronounce prehistoric names. FYI, I was informed that Giganotosaurus is NOT pronounced Gigant-o-saurus. It would make sense if it was, but it is not.

March 2012

Dave's World

Tuesday, March 6th

A little disturbed, when 5-year-old Sam jokingly used his brother's toothbrush to comb his eyebrows. A lotta disturbed, when 3-year-old Ben did not seem to mind.

Wednesday, March 7th

It is important to "Think Green," even at the breakfast table. That is why I have begun serving children, who arrive late for breakfast, the leftovers from their early rising sibling. Reduced food waste, one less bowl to wash, and the Health Department never needs to know.

Thursday, March 8th

The house is eerily quiet this morning. Excuse me, while I go check for pulses.

Friday, March 9th

After witnessing 3-year-old Ben saw a Teddy Graham in two with a toy "key" during snack time, I have begun advance planning for college. As a first step, I am using several keywords to use the U.S. News & World Report database to find the best school that can harness his talent. Search terms: / Surgeon / Coroner / Magician / Covert CIA Operative / Sadistic Locksmith Lumberjack Baker

Saturday, March 10th

As I helped schedule my 8-year-old son's packed social calendar, I took some comfort in the fact that someday my boys will be checking me into an assisted living facility and ensuring that there are plenty of planned activities to keep me busy.

Sunday, March 11th

What I learned from taking my son and two other second graders out for lunch...

- 1) No matter how young I look or how humorous my routine, in their eyes, I will always appear sort of crotchety and dated. By the way, they are wrong, oh so wrong. If anything, I should at least be considered spry and classic.
- 2) They eat a lot. Before entering Culver's, I should have taken out a home equity loan.
- 3) Sitting in a booth is just an invitation to wrestle.

Monday, March 12th

Announcing the new motto for my Spring Fashion, leg and shorts combo... "Very white and a little tight."

After fixing breakfast for two of our little boys, I headed upstairs to take my shower and get ready for the day. Within a few minutes, I heard an urgent call for "Daddy!" Covering myself for the benefit of our neighbors and society as a whole, I hurried downstairs. Upon my arrival at the dining room table, I received the news. "Ben had a huge strawberry in his yogurt!" Thank you, kids. After I towel off, I will make sure to call CNN.

March 2012

Tuesday, March 13th

This year, the dirty slush of Winter rested on my car's floor mats and resulted in a sort of musty vehicle smell. Yesterday, in order to combat this phenomenon, I purchased an "Ocean Mist" scented air freshener. The problem is that if the ocean really smelled like this, people would be sunbathing, while wearing World War I era gas masks. Now life is a bizarre aroma toss up between "your grandparent's attic" and a bombardment of intense chemicals resembling an "old man on a cologne binge." Welcome to my world of rejected Yankee Candle fragrances.

Wednesday, March 14th

Even more than the first flowers, the installation of the baseball pitchback in the backyard signifies the dawn of Spring.

If you overlook the ice on the warning track, it is time for baseball in Minnesota.

Thursday, March 15th

Sure it is only March, but no ice ready for the Frappuccino maker? Rookie mistake, Paulsen. Rookie mistake.

From now on, the only form of ice that I want to see in the backyard is the Popsicle variety.

Friday, March 16th

FDA Nutrition Facts Label: this Status Update contains NO High Fructose Corn Syrup.

Saturday, March 17th

As 8-year-old Jake received his punishment for talking back, he further aggravated the situation by informing me that I am "mean like a warthog." That does it young man, no computer time for you and certainly no more Nature Channel.

Monday, March 19th

I am proud to announce that the Neighborhood Association and I have reached a Grand Compromise for Summer 2012. I am allowed to go shirtless behind the backyard privacy fence, as long as I promise to do 20 situps per day. Winning.

Tuesday, March 20th

You can be certain of a few things in life. For instance, if your Tuesday kicks off by needing to snake the toilet, after that things will almost certainly get better.

March 2012

Dave's World

Tuesday, March 20th

Last night's dream included my attendance at Madonna's wedding, in which I was woefully under dressed in my "In and Out Burger" t-shirt. I also kept getting lost and accidentally attended part of a Civil War commemoration dinner. Upon returning home to change into formal attire, I realized that our house had been robbed. Surprisingly for the first time in several days, I woke up feeling refreshed. Perhaps my dream will lead to a new Freudian theory: the secret to a good night's sleep is letting your Id run wild.

I have found that turning off the lights, while watching TV with the boys, provides both the ambiance of a movie theater and cover for me to take a nap.

Wednesday, March 21st

After winning a \$25 gift card to Casey's General Store in the Willmar Library Raffle, most people would say, "Go out and buy half a tank of gas." Well, not me. I'm a hopeless romantic. Nothing says "Date Night" like convenience store flowers, a taquito, large Slurpee, and a video from Redbox.

Thursday, March 22nd

As I headed downstairs, in my sock covered feet, something epic happened. For the first time in my life, I took flight, without the assistance of commercial aircraft. Imagine the scale of whale jumping from the water, minus the beauty and majesty. My launch certainly lasted longer than the initial Wright Brother's flight and since my landing included bouncing on my tailbone Plinko-style down four stairs, it certainly deserves a commemorative quarter. While my crumpled body rested on the cool basement floor, I debated which phone call to return first, the "clown recruiter" from Barnum and Bailey or my life insurance agent, who mentioned something about an increased premium.

Friday, March 23rd

As the clerk at Walgreen's mentioned, "You can tell they are your boys," it made me wonder. Is it because they are sniffing the lollipop display like pigs in search of a truffle? Nope, this was a rare occasion, when I was not joining them. Is it because they are handsome and smart? No, those traits are isolated to the children. Is it their self deprecating humor? No, that would just be me. Is it their way too revealing and rambling Facebook posts? Perhaps in time. I've got it! We all look like we desperately need a nap.

Saturday, March 24th

I am awaiting independent confirmation from the folks at "So You Think You Can Dance," but during my run on the treadmill, I believe I was doing the "Dougie," when I was wiping sweat off my forehead.

March 2012

Monday, March 26th

Someday, 3-year-old Ben will understand why I turned down his request to read "Puppy and Me," during the second half of the Kansas-North Carolina basketball game. Maybe if "Puppy and Me" had won a Pulitzer, but I doubt it.

Yesterday, you know that the Paulsen household contained a little too much testosterone, when bedtime prayers included, "Dear God, I'm sorry for punching someone in the head." Tomorrow's bedtime stories will include "Mahatma Gandhi for Kids."

Tuesday, March 27th

Imagine my pride, when for the first time, I heard my own flesh and blood say, "Daddy, I have a Goldfish stuck in my nose."

Wednesday, March 28th

Distribution of 60 minutes flying kites with kids: 58 minutes untangling line and 2 glorious minutes that make it all worth while, when the kites are simultaneously airborne. In the Summer, with a few minor revisions, this post can be recycled as "60 minutes fishing with kids."

Thursday, March 29th

Oh, you are so beautiful. That's right, I'm going to hold you tight. You perfect cup of piping hot McDonald's coffee; you are all mine.

Friday, March 30th

The folks at Cub Foods were treated to a Hot Wheels car exhibition, as 3-year-old Ben raced his toy car, on his hands and knees, throughout the store. Sure, it was disruptive to the grocery shopping experience of everyone else, but at no charge, Ben managed to buff the floors in at least five aisles.

Saturday, March 31st

After asking one too many times if he needed to use the bathroom, an annoyed 5-year-old Sam asked if I was the "Poop Boss." I like a prestigious job title, just as much as the next guy, but I don't think that I will be ordering business cards with my new status, anytime soon.

April 2012

Dave's World

Monday, April 2nd

Dave's Bad Poetry Diversion Excursion...

"Don't Think; Just Eat"

The search for perfection; falling short

The Yin and the Yang; continual struggle

Salty versus sweet; a delicate dance

Momentary satisfaction; flirt with mortality

The McGriddle: The Human Condition in a Soggy Breakfast Sandwich

Wednesday, April 4th

When you look down and realize that you have inadvertently worn your slippers to the coffee shop, it can mean one of four things.

Number one: you really need coffee.

Number two: you have very comfy slippers and others should be jealous.

Number three: you have given up.

Number four: all of the above.

Thursday, April 5th

Click (pause) click (pause) click (pause) click (pause)... Better get used to the sound of my flip flops, they will be showing nonstop from now through September.

Friday, April 6th

Wouldn't you know it? Going to KFC for lunch will inevitably result in me spilling some barbeque sauce onto my shorts, as I transfer a popcorn chicken into my wanting mouth. Then, wouldn't you know it? Getting up to grab a napkin to clean my saucy pants will inevitably result in me spilling my small drink onto the floor, which appears to have contained about two gallons of fruit punch based on the size and breadth of the puddle on the floor. Then, wouldn't you know it? Driving our oil tanker back home, going by way of a very curvy road, will inevitable result in me spilling...

Saturday, April 7th

After attending church, we went out for pizza; that is when it struck me. As I looked around the table at my beautiful wife and kids, I realized how incredibly blessed I am. A loving family. Abundant food. A safe home. Clothing (a little tighter than I would prefer, due to the pizza buffet, but very comfy overall). Our health. I may not have won the Mega Millions jackpot, but in so many ways, the Lord has already provided me with blessings beyond my wildest dreams.

Sunday, April 8th

As a striking demonstration of our risen Lord living through us, let us provide our neighbors with love and forgiveness.

April 2012

Tuesday, April 10th

When purchasing a "Family" fishing license, make sure to bring your spouse. Why? Well, you will be asked a series of questions, including "What is your spouse's... name, birthday, eye color, height, and [insert the sound of a car slamming on its brakes and crashing] weight?" Another piece of advice, even if you are off by only two pounds, make sure to guess low on the weight. Your guess will appear in print on an official license issued by the State of Minnesota and will haunt you for an entire year.

Wednesday, April 11th

An Under Reported Smell of Spring: The Diaper Genie in Full Bloom.

Thursday, April 12th

Sorry about the delay in posting this morning's Status Update, but I was running late, due to my new part-time job. I have been hired as "Enforcer" at our breakfast table. During the interview process, I satisfied the two primary job qualifications: I am at least eighteen inches taller than the offending parties and I have a deeper voice than a boy soprano.

Friday, April 13th

As 3-year-old Ben complained to me that his big brother, Jacob, was calling him a "Stinkpot," I decided to play the Biblical Card and ask Jacob if Jesus would call his brother a "Stinkpot." Unfortunately, it turns out that early copies of the Gospel of John contain just such a reference. The unabridged translation of John 19:26 has Jesus saying the following from the cross: "When Jesus saw his brother James, he said to him, 'You have always been a stinkpot.' Then when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.'" This biblical factoid has been brought to you by the AMA (Amateur Monsignors of America).

Saturday, April 14th

In a sleepy haze, I delivered a fiber gummy to the wrong child at the breakfast table. Realizing that the gummy was intended for his brother, 3-year-old Ben picked it up with his left hand and delivered a perfect strike to his brother sitting across the table. Yes, the hope is still alive. Every father's dream. My boy may grow up to be a left-handed relief pitching specialist.

Monday, April 16th

This morning, 3-year-old Ben proclaimed, "I'm practicing jumping!" Good thing, because today, I had planned on hiding all of our breakables and practicing deep breathing techniques.

Tuesday, April 17th

Thank goodness my cold is passing. For a short time, my voice sounded like a product of Kiefer Sutherland and Bea Arthur.

April 2012

Dave's World

Wednesday, April 18th

Faced with the prospect of a day filled with the rigors of potty training, I am going to create the prospect of hope by declaring today, Wednesday... FUNday! If this works, I may have to recommend a similar strategy to Congress for ending the Recession.

I am not sure how long it will take for 8-year-old Jake to catch on that I view it as a great opportunity for nap time, when he offers to read me "The Tennessee Titans" and allows me to "listen with my eyes closed."

Thursday, April 19th

Charlene addressing 5-year-old Sam: "Did you wash your feet good in the bath tonight?"

Sam: "I washed them in the sink."

Needless to say, today's agenda will include cleaning the sink.

Friday, April 20th

Nothing says "Chip off the Old Block" like 5-year-old Sam's request for dessert after snack time.

Saturday, April 21st

On this rainy day, a pretty good indicator that I should kick up my level of productivity: it is 1:26PM and my remaining goal for the day is to take my morning shower.

"Hi. I'm Dave Paulsen and I am here to tell you about an addiction: Black Jelly Bean Allinmouth. Allinmouth strikes, when you experience an unhealthy attraction to these foul little Easter candies. Symptoms include an inability to stop eating these anise jelly bits, an inability to detect any other flavors after a binge, your tongue has turned black, and your spit is a nice dark gray. No fear. The solution is to mail all of your leftover black jelly beans to me and I will dispose of them down my gullet. You'll thank me later."

Monday, April 23rd

Always remember to teach your kids safe habits. For instance, let them see you wearing your bike helmet. Never mind that they sometimes ride with you to the coffee shop, while you ride your wife's bike, since your bike has a flat tire and your car is using one spare tire, due to the flat from something sharp and pointy in the alley. Oh, and you really don't have a plan for carrying two hot coffees back home, while riding your bike, other than anticipating stopping your bike with your feet, Flintstones style. Plus, I forgot to mention that it may be raining and while you are at the coffee shop, the barista mentions that it is brave to be bicycling out in the rain, during a tornado watch that you were unaware was taking place. Sometimes you just really need some good coffee. Other than that, remember to always demonstrate safety to your children by wearing your bicycle helmet.

Oh yeah, I got it. That "Campfire-Smokey-S'mores" scent is all mine.

April 2012

Tuesday, April 24th

Yesterday, we discussed where to stand in the batter's box, always run to first on a grounder, and cover your mouth when having a conference at the mound. 5-year-old Sam may still be working on some other basics upon entering Kindergarten, but he sure will know baseball. At least we are focusing on what is important in life.

Wednesday, April 25th

Early this morning, my sense of security was dashed, as I opened the backdoor to have a moth the size of a Prius fly into the side of my head. As I retreated into the house, the moth followed me, setting up an epic battle of man versus genetically engineered super insect. Armed with a rolled up "Lake Superior Visitor's Guide," I repeatedly took swats at the flying beast, as he spread his reign of terror flying between my head and the hall light. The thrill of taking him down was soon replaced by a feeling of doom, as I was unable to locate his furry body. I sense a sequel in the works... "Mothra versus Davezilla II."

Thursday, April 26th

Thankfully, potty-training appears to be hitting the home stretch, because we are almost out of jelly beans (Ben's incentive to use the toilet) and beer (my incentive to face another day of potty-training).

Friday, April 27th

I delivered a very effective message of scorn to my children for breaking the television remote. Imagine the speech you would receive for breaking an early Ming vase, folding a T206 Honus Wagner baseball card, or using a 1933 Gold Double Eagle coin in a vending machine. I did not deliver them the other appropriate speech complimenting them on sticking to their unlikely story of how the remote broke.

Saturday, April 28th

Sure it is April and a Spring rain is supposed to be refreshing, but next time I decide to jog on anything called the GLACIAL Lakes State Trail remind me to dress warmer.

Memoir of a Man with Three Young Children: "Someday, I will be able to complete a thought. Today will not be that day."

With so many dangerous situations in the world today, a flimsy ceasefire in Syria, delusional young dictator in North Korea, and potentially nuclear Iran, it is refreshing to hear of a frightening situation successfully resolved. As the entire canister of fiber gummies fell to the kitchen floor, I fortunately stopped Jasper the Dog, before he gobbled up the entire batch. As a nation, we were this close to having the first digestively explosive beagle on American soil.

Monday, April 30th

One advantage of sleep deprivation: I no longer have to deal with pesky pillows; I simply lay down on the bags under my eyes.

May 2012

Dave's World

Tuesday, May 1st

As my eldest bounded down the stairs at 6:45AM, his announcement made me realize that he may be desiring a little too much structure in his life. "Dad, we need to make a schedule for toothbrush replacement." Personally, I am trying to muster up enough energy to regularly floss.

Wednesday, May 2nd

8-year-old Jacob to his youngest little brother: "Stop interrupting!"

3-year-old Ben: "That's what I do."

Yes, indeed. Ben interrupts, throws fits resembling a bottled hurricane, repeats a request at least 1,400 times until I finally give in to maintain my sanity, fearlessly climbs anything he can find, possesses an adorable smile that could melt butter, and demonstrates an infectious joy for life. It is safe to say that little Ben has perfected the art of being three.

Thursday, May 3rd

Time to exit the grid and open a cabin. Borrowing from the late great Davy Jones, I'll see you "on the flip side."

During a trip to the grocery store, the boys wanted to look at the Hot Wheels cars, while I picked up the shopping cart. As luck would have it, while I retrieved the cart, the boys decided to have a dispute, complete with 3-year-old Ben on the floor in full tantrum mode. After a good "talking to" from Dad, the argument was resolved and the boys quickly returned to a cheery mood. The whole ordeal lasted less than 20 seconds. Later, a woman saw the kids and said, "You are the kids from the front of the store. This grandma was about to come over and spank you." Yep, that's right. I can breathe a sigh of relief, because I narrowly avoided an incident of "Supermarket Vigilantism."

Monday, May 7th

Forget about the Bird Flu and uprisings in the Middle East, I consider it a genuine sign of the end times, when my favorite towny bar launches its own Facebook page. What's next? A lovely gazpacho salad or delicate quiche popping up on their menu? I shudder in fear.

Tuesday, May 8th

There must be a word for the first person of the year to dive into the lake. "Daring." Too valiant. "Silly." That description lacks proper depth. "Fool-who-experienced-instant-hypothermia." Perfect.

Wednesday, May 9th

I don't know if I am more upset about projections that there won't be any Social Security left for me or the present crisis over the grocery store running out of their free coffee.

May 2012

Thursday, May 10th

[Excerpts from my "Request to Reboot the Day" application]

Walking into the dark kitchen, after my 4:30AM wake up call, I stepped into the treat my dog had left for me.

After repeatedly asking my toddler if he needed to use the potty, he decided to let loose on the back deck and of course on my sweatshirt, as I intervened.

For these reasons and the subsequent cleanups, I respectfully request to have my day rebooted.

PS – a large coffee would also help.

Friday, May 11th

Protests noted, but the sooner 3-year-old Ben realizes that any food left unattended for over 20 seconds will be devoured by either his dad or his dog, the better.

Saturday, May 12th

When asked why he was walking around the house without any pants, 3-year-old Ben explained, "My pants can't control themselves." Strangely enough, this is the same argument offered by most politicians.

Sunday, May 13th

You know the housing market is still slow, when even the noncommittal words, "They liked the house and are going to think about it over the weekend," makes you do a happy dance and put champagne on ice.

Monday, May 14th

Given his level of interest and enthusiasm, 5-year-old Sam may well develop into a "Bassmaster" fisherman. As for 3-year-old Ben, distributing the nightcrawlers seems to be his thing.

Tuesday, May 15th

You can tell that the water in the lake is still too chilly for swimming, when I opt to retrieve a wayward soccer ball with the pontoon. We can place this one in the "Using a Two-by-Four to Swat a Fly" file.

Wednesday, May 16th

My age is starting to show on the softball diamond, as I still have the heart of a Shortstop, but my arm has become that of a Second Baseman.

While grocery shopping, 3-year-old Ben proudly grabbed a box of Special K bars and proclaimed for the entire aisle to hear, "This will help you poop!" At that very moment, I realized I may be pursuing the "Fiber Issue" a bit too aggressively at home.