

Passages #13

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Today is Friday March 29, 2002.

Once again, my best intentions were to type a fabulous "real" zine for SFPA 226, and once again, a combination of procrastination on my part and complications in my ridiculous life conspired to make it not happen. The twins, now 18 months, have both been sick on and off for 2-3 weeks. First, Samantha had an ear infection and a high fever, and her pediatrician diagnosed an ear infection and gave her a course of amoxicillin. No sooner did Kyle take her back to be rechecked, when a virus went through Mother's Day Out; up to 2/3 of the kids were out one day. So then both babies were running a high fever, and needless to say, weren't sleeping during the night. Somewhere along here, their 2-year molars started coming in (Samantha has 2, and Haydon has one so far). Then the runny noses started, shortly followed by high fevers again. Another trip back to the pediatrician, and Samantha had another ear infection, and Haydon now had a sinus infection, so both of them were on Zithromax.

The day after the pediatrician visit, I spent at an attorney's office listening to the second round of depositions in the court case I'm involved in. I was miserable, coughing and sneezing throughout the whole day. At the end of the day, Kyle called complaining of a --you guessed it-- high fever and coughing up green junk. My sinuses were pretty nasty, too, by this time, so I decided we both could do with a course of Zithromax, too. And now, after the Zithromax, I'm not sure I'm feeling better, because solid green stuff is still coming out of my sinuses.

I admit it, I'm a wimp, I can't stand pain of any kind. And I'm not convinced that "non-drowsy" Allegra-D really is "non-drowsy". Because my brain does not seem to be tracking completely.

Not only that, the babies aren't completely better either. They both felt a little warm today. So I'm keeping them dosed up on Advil and Pedia-Care.

About a year ago, I was getting real philosophical about humanity, and how I felt like I was a very much a part of a greater organism which was mankind, and all of us had basically the same needs and wants. Now, I've been having a lot of thoughts about how crowded this humanity really is, and that so many of the teeming millions are so overwhelmingly **selfish**. I guess these thoughts started about September 11. At the same time, a lot of generosity came out, people trying to help strangers, and such. But it just seems like I've been looking around and seeing a lot of strangers, and I find myself wondering where they're going and where they're coming from.

The mideast crisis has been frustrating me a lot. I've had a few political discussions with my partner, Dr. Fadel, and trying to understand the Arab/Muslim point

of view (he's from Egypt). He gave me a book to read about the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, and there definitely are points on both sides. On the one hand, the Palestinians basically had their country stolen from them, with no reparations and no options. On the other hand, the Israelis now have a viable country, and don't deserve to have their civilians attacked. Can't they see that hatred only leads to more hatred? I really wonder that, if the Palestinians were given their dignity and their country's right to autonomy back, wouldn't the terrorism stop? I mean, they wouldn't have time to be terrorists, they would have real jobs and families and stuff, just like what everyone wants. The Arabs only hate us because we're supporting and bankrolling Israel in their one-sided fight against the Palestinians. Why does Israel need the fourth strongest Army in the world to defend themselves against a country with no standing Army, over whom they control the borders? Something is not right here. I guess, like a lot of Americans, I have a soft spot for the underdogs (who would have thought the colonies would be able to fight off England).

Other ways I've been complicating my life: Kyle has been asking for me to find a conference in the Keys that we could go to, and I found one! Mile marker 86 in Islamorada, about halfway down the Keys, a conference sponsored by the University of Miami. We went the week of Valentine's Day in February, and met my brother, Lee, and his new wife, Alecia. We stopped in Fort Lauderdale on the way down, and had dinner with my sister and neices and nephews. Kyle, Lee, and Alecia went fishing one day and they caught 2 sailfish! But they threw them back. They also caught about a dozen King Mackerel and a shark, so all in all, Kyle had the best day fishing in his life. We brought back half of the fish, and Kyle grilled them, and they were pretty good.

Then in March, I went to a conference in Nashville; Kyle stayed home, and I took 2 of my sonographers, since it was an ultrasound conference. It was 6 very intense days, and I came home with my head filled with knowledge! I also decided which ultrasound to buy next-- the "real time" 3D, what they call 4D. This machine is amazing; you can see the baby in 3D, actually moving around. It's incredible.

About 3 weeks ago, I got a call from my riding instructor that one of her clients was selling their pony, since their little girl had outgrown him and they bought her a horse. (I had asked Cynthia to keep an eye out for a good pony, since most ponies have really bad attitudes, and really are not safe for little kids to ride on). She claimed that this was the perfect pony, cute and quiet at the same time, and an "easy keeper" (which means in horse talk that he eats anything that's not nailed down, and never gets sick). Also he wins a lot at horse shows. So I'm having visions of going to horse shows with my kids on this cute new pony. The only problem was the price tag (\$5,000, non negotiable). She claimed they had just dropped the price from \$7500 because they wanted to sell him quick, since they aren't lucky enough to have a pasture in their back yard like me, and now suddenly are saddled with two board bills.

So we went to see him; he's a flea-bitten gray (meaning white with lots of little gray spots), 14 hands and 1 or 2 inches (a hand is 4 inches, the traditional measure of horses), and half Arabian/ half Quarter Horse. He is extremely cute, as quiet as advertised, and has an honest soul. Cassie and Cathryn both rode him and liked him, so

the only challenge was getting Kyle to agree. We managed to come to a deal: I get the pony, and he can get a (used) RV. (Kyle has been renting an RV-camper to go to the big airshow, Sun'N Fun, in Florida, for the last 3 years, and it's hard to spend a couple of thousand bucks to rent a camper that you could buy for \$20,000.)

So we got Chippie home (his name is Chips Ahoy), and he proceeded to start bossing my yearling around. About this time, I caught the yearling nursing again (I had been wondering why my mare had been losing weight!). So now my life is complicated by having to feed 2 horses in 3 different pastures and fill 3 different water buckets and throw hay, since I only have 2 hay bales. Of course, since the kids and I have been sick since we got him, no one has ridden him since I got him. If we're healthy April 7th, there's a horse show in Aiken for Cassia: it's called "lead line", since you put the kid on the pony and lead her around. Everyone gets a blue ribbon. and hopefully. she'll learn to love horseshows like me! My dream is that she and I can go to horse shows together and do some bonding.....

Another way I'm complicating my life: I agreed to be president of the Augusta OB-Gyn Society this year, and as the last meeting of the year, we decided to have a 4-hour Continuing Education Conference last Saturday morning. This is the second year we did it, and I have to say, last year was not very successful. Only about 5 people came, so we were really talking it up. Dr. Fadel agreed to give one of the lectures, on Twin-Twin Transfusion Syndrome. So I agreed to take call that weekend so he wouldn't have to worry about getting called away. Since the conference started at 8 a.m., my sonographer and I agreed to meet at 6 a.m. to start making rounds. Well, the Friday night before, Cathryn was due to take the bus from Atlanta. She wouldn't be leaving Atlanta until 7:30 p.m., and the bus was due in Aiken at around midnight. Kyle was already worried about her being out that late in what could be a skuzzy part of town, so I was a little anxious about this. Well, Cathryn called at 7:45 saying that she had "just" missed the bus, and the next one didn't leave until 11:45 p.m., which would put her in Aiken at 2:30 a.m.!!!! I only thought I was going to get some sleep..... Of course, I have this cold/sinus infection, I'm miserable, on you name it, Afrin, Sudafed, Allegra, aspirin, Tylenol, Benadryl, saline nose drops, you get the picture, everything I can get my hands on, so of course as soon as I doze off a little, Samantha wakes up crying. I dose her up on her cough and cold medicine and Advil, and then of course she's wired, and there's really no putting her down. About this time, Kyle tunes in Lethal Weapon 4, so we both get involved in that. At 2 a.m., I call Cathryn on her cell phone, and the bus got a late start, and is about 30 minutes behind, so I tell her to call when they're crossing the Savannah River. So I finally put Samantha to bed, and doze off, only to be woken by Cathryn, saying they're 30 minutes out. Kyle goes to get Cathryn at the bus station, and I wake up again when she comes in to hug and kiss her, so it's 3:30, and I have one more hour to sleep.

I set my alarm for 4:30 a.m., because I have to feed the 3 different horses in 3 different paddocks, fill 3 water buckets and throw hay, and shower and dress in time to leave by 5:30 a.m. So of course when the alarm goes off, I turn it off and roll over. After the second time I hit the snooze, the answering service calls. Dr. Fadel has a patient 14 weeks pregnant with triplets who is bleeding and may be leaking her bag of waters. So I

tell her to go to the hospital and I'll meet her there and do an ultrasound. So I finally get out of bed and make coffee. The feeding/watering/throwing hay goes pretty smoothly, so I'm patting myself on the back as I'm getting my cup of coffee and going up to the bathroom to take my shower, and I realize that the beeper is not in its case on the waist band of my jeans. Oh my God, I think, I dropped it somewhere in the pasture, and the horses are going to step on it and destroy it. Fortunately, Kyle recently put up a light so I can actually see part of the pasture, so I'm walking around, beeping myself so I can hear the thing go off, praying that the horses don't step on it. Thankfully, I find the thing and go back inside, take the quickest shower I'm capable of, fill up my coffee and grab a breakfast bar, and head out the door. It's already 6 a.m., so I call the hospital to talk to my sonographer, who is already there, and as we're talking, I hear a suspicious, familiar clunking sound under the hood. This is the radiator belt which has broken twice before, so now I have no radiator and no power steering. Making pulling over to the side of the road very interesting. So I apologize to the sonographer, and call Kyle, waking him up to come get me. He takes me home and I drive Cathryn's car to work. I still just might make it, I'm thinking.

So we make our rounds, and then I go to see the triplet lady. Of course, she's pretty complicated, so it's almost 8:30 a.m. when I'm leaving. Oh well, I think, the vice president can run the meeting, I just would like to hear at least part of Dr. Fadel's lecture. I'm backing the car out of the parking space, and my beeper goes off. It's my sonographer, and we have a consult. So I pull back into the parking space and go back into the hospital. A 22-week preterm labor patient's baby suddenly developed an irregular heart beat; should they be worried? I had done a full ultrasound the day before, including the fetal heart, so I knew the baby was normal, but I looked again to make sure the heart was structurally normal. It was, but it was only beating 60-70 times a minute (it should be between 120-160), and definitely irregular. It seemed like the atrium was beating 2 to 3 times for every one of the ventricle. Since there was no signs of heart failure, and since the rate was controlled (slow, not fast), I advised the resident doctors taking care of her to stop the magnesium, and it should spontaneously convert. If not, I would scan her again the next day, and consult Pediatric Cardiology. By this time, it was after 9 a.m., and it takes 20 minutes to get to the hotel where the conference was being held. (Incidentally, the baby's rhythm did convert about 30 minutes after I left).

All this time I was thinking that the forces of nature were conspiring to keep me from hearing Dr. Fadel's lecture, since I thought it was at 8:15. Fortunately, my drive to the hotel was uneventful, and when I arrived, Dr. Fadel was just starting his lecture! As it turned out, he was switched to the second lecture. So I heard it after all. And the conference was successful; about 30 people showed up!

We were going to go to an Easter Egg hunt, but by this time I was too tired. So I just went home and died Easter Eggs and baked bunny cookies with Cathryn, Cassia, and the babies.

So what are the chances my life will get less complicated and I will have a better zine next time? I guess we can hope. Our new partner doesn't start until July 1. I can tell you that I can't wait.