

Nothing says Christmas like the traditional "Falling of the Tree" - which this year took place today at 1:30 AM. Oh, happy holiday! When the tree falls, it's clearly time to sit down and write this thing.



Two thousand, three hundred, eighty-seven days until Jefferson is 21 and I'm no longer the knucklehead he thinks I am. Not that I'm counting.



This year's Most Excellent Adventure only lasted five minutes or so, but what an adventure it was. Following a nice family lunch at Skyline Chili, all four of us - mom, dad, brother and sis - headed to the high school parking lot for Hannah's first spin behind the wheel with her new temporary license (a learner's permit in Michigan parlance). You should ask her about it. She'll tell you of the mystery of the turn signal ("Where is it?"), the free-form style of working her way down a lane and, of course, the car she'll say she nearly hit - even though neither our car, nor the car in question, were moving and were stationed a good 150 feet apart. Nonetheless, it was another car and it posed an immediate threat (or perhaps, WE posed an immediate threat). Anyway, she's not driven since. Might not be such a good idea to have a full audience your first time behind the wheel.



Had fun with all our toys Up North this summer - dead boat battery, broken steering arm on quad, blown gasket in Jet-ski, cracked trolling motor, snapped cable on Jet-ski hoist, burned out trim motor, blown quad muffler, stripped hydraulic fitting on boat. I'm sure I'm leaving things out, but all are reminders of why God made beer. Make that warm beer - the entire county of Gladwin ran out of ice the week of July 4 just because people needed it during power outages downstate. Talk about messed up priorities.



Jefferson will be joining a new baseball team next season. This organization has sent 60 players to the major leagues, including Ken Griffey, Jr. and Barry Larkin. But there is no way on God's "green" earth I'm wearing a Midland Tribe baseball hat. Go Spartans!





Most Excellent Adventure (first runner-up): Driving back from Atlanta on business, I stopped for a Diet Coke in Dalton, GA and to use a restroom in Tennessee. Pulled into a truck stop in Corbin, KY for gas at 11 pm, 190 miles from home. Guess what. No wallet. No credit cards. A \$1.37 in my pocket. Western Union closed until 7 am. Considered begging for cash until some dude came up and asked ME for gas money. I had no sympathy for him and figured there'd be no sympathy for me, either. Fortunately, I had a laptop and knew my Amex # by heart. Reserved a room across the street on Travelocity and with help from a clerk with green teeth (what there were of them), got checked in despite no card to swipe at 1:30 am (what are the odds - same time as today's tree-crashing). Not sure I'll ever stay there again, but if you're ever in need of a hotel in southern Kentucky, I highly recommend the Comfort Inn in Corbin. Oh, and Maynard from the BP in Dalton called a few days later to say he had my wallet, including all \$221 in cash. He's a good man (though I wish he'd sent me one of those wallet chains they wear in them there parts).



This year's serious note involves Chris' mom Jean, who passed away this summer. While it was hard on all of us, the one person who seemed quite at peace with the situation was Jean, herself. I imagine that's because she had spent her entire life preparing. Could there be a better example of what Christmas is really all about.

Celebrate Christmas!



The Ballplayer and the Fashionista