***Elizabeth Madine Chaignot (08/28/1985)***

***Adam Michael Chaignot (08/04/1984)***

[CURRENT](#CURRENT)

02AUGUST2018

Sent post card of Great Wall for birthday. Making the point that we think he is great… just like this wall. Not quite as old… but getting there… not old… just standing the test of time.

12/13/2020

On Friday Beth will be induced.

Beth, you are such a strong , loving person. You are pretty incredible. Thank you for keeping mom and dad engaged and keeping that relationship strong. That has been a gift to us all. Is it hard?

Adma, you steadfastness and love for your girls is incredible.

You guys have built a beautiful family. We look forward to future cousin gatherings, when this old world returns to a bit more normalacy.

Children sweet and kind, home ordered and clean and homey.

06/14/2021

Has been a gorgeous blue sky and billowy, pillow cloud kind of day, Helena— now 2 and a robust towheaded brute— and I are out in the yard and she is ambling over inquisitively toward our small garden plot, bee-lining, in fact, straight at a recently planted maroon and forest-green shock of leaf-blades.

“Do NOT pick my Chard!” I preemptively scold, nearly adding “or I will spank your bottom,” though I do not ultimately add that last part because I know how deadly serious I am, and I sense how deeply uncomfortable it would feel to threaten a child with violence over a salad.

Little backstory, recently she has been insisting on picking the buds and leaves off all of our botanicals almost as fast as we plant them. I, being somewhat more experienced with these kinds of things, find this approach to gardening messy and self-defeating.

We had a similar difference of opinion just the other day about whether or not it was appropriate to re-pot a goodly amount of loamy topsoil into my tantalizingly sweating mason jar of chilled water.

Years ago, before I had kids, I was once at a brunch get-together where I observed one of my friends, who was already the father of three, being a little short with one of his girls over some issue with a cup of orange juice or something. At the time I remember feeling kind of surprised at how impatient or even almost unkindly you were addressing your angelic little Tomte. Maybe, he’s having a particularly stressful day I had thought at the time. Now I realize he definitely was having at least a partially stressful day because, you know, he had children and he was likely not being mean to his child at all, but was, in fact, exerting incredible, if not saintlike-level patience, artfully teasing out and expanding just a bit more your reservoir of that most precious of parental commodities, that greedily gobbled up resource that well before this cup of juice or even this very morning had been pulled and stretched as thin as a gossamer shroud though still somehow holding— together and true through some miraculous act of superhuman effort. Love?

I also now realize that our children are in essence sociopaths that we have been charged with by fate to reform as penance for our own past, if not present, sociopathic behavior. Which is certainly not to say don’t have children, but just, you know, brace yourself… for love.

Best,

***CURRENT***

Dear Beth, Adam, Madmavieve, Giilīne, Admavieve, Maranvieve, Admana, Gianlīne, Admalīne, Adelaide, Admael, Adanel, Gianel, Genena, Emina, Giilaide, Madiline, Adevieve, Marevieve, Mareline, Madiel, Marmana, Emeline, Emilaide, Madanvieve, Emanlīne, Marmalīne, Genelīne, Maranlīne, Gimana, Gianvieve, Gielīne, Adanna, Genmael, Emiline, Madivieve, Adanline, Genanlaide, Genmalīne, Adena, Madelīne, Genanel, Marelīne, Emena, Giena, Marilīne, Emilīne, Adelīne, Maranline, Gieel, Emivieve, Emiel, Adanvieve, Madeel, Madmana, Madelaide, Geneline, Adanlīne, Marina, Emelīne, Adiel, Emmana, Genanlīne, Adeel, Gianna, Maranlaide, Maranna, Gimalīne, Gianline, Marmael, Adilaide, Emanel, Genilaide, Adivieve, Genmaline, Genmana, Genivieve, Mariline, Adanlaide, Marilaide, Madeline, Emmalīne, Genmavieve, Marmalaide, Marmavieve, Geniline, Marmaline, Giina, Madmaline, Gimael, Genanvieve, Emmavieve, Emelaide, Emanvieve, Gielaide, Madevieve, Adeline, Madanel, Emanna, Giivieve, Gieline, Maranel, Madena, Adina, Madmalīne, Emmael, Mariel, Madilaide, Admalaide, Gievieve, Madina, Emevieve, Genina, Gianlaide, Marena, Gimavieve, Giiel, Marivieve, Madanline, Madanlīne, Geniel, Madanna, Genanline, Emmaline, Emmalaide, Madmael, Adiline, Gimaline, Emanline, Genanna, Adilīne, Genmalaide, Genevieve, Madanlaide, Marelaide, Gimalaide, Emeel, Madilīne, Genelaide, Mareel, Emanlaide, Giiline, Madmalaide, Admaline, and Geneel,

Thank you all so much for the birthday card! That was very sweet and the birthday beverage was appreciated. I took a little trip to our favorite beverage store that is just a couple of blocks away across the “North Center” square were we like to run around on the open concrete and astroturf. During the warmer months its always such a hub of activity-- musical performances and religious services, festivals, markets, group’s exercising. Children playing on the rolling rubberized mounds or raised patch of astroturf.

Just across the square and around the corner is *Bottles and Cans* which is a delightful shop-- its relatively small, but they pack in a ridiculous variety of domestic and imported products. Despite the abundance of all n off, I more often than note end up picking up something brewed by *Half Acre* whose original location is just up the road a couple of blocks-- they’re the local flavor.

February’s winter slog has given away to the growing openness and occasional jacketless ease of new spring. Esme and betsy and back to commuting to and from Esme’s school McPherson via the family bike and longer evenings have us all feeling a bit more energetic-- we all still fall completely apart around 8 pm, but the tunnel vision of the darker mornings and evenings are certainly delighting us with the growing abundance of light.

Last night was a full moon and as I crossed the square in the evening after a day of staring at a computer screen and then getting out for a jog, it was perfectly placed above the apartment builds, off away eat over the lake, huge and yellow against the richness of the darkening azure sky. A young couple stood on a street corner holding hands and looking east at the moon. I am now in month 8 of *barefoot/minimal footwear running,* will be surprised if I ever go back to running shoes! Despite the lack of extra cushion my legs/feet/ankles are feeling really terrific. I jog much lighter now and with a more shuffling kind of gait. It’s been a transition, but I think a good one and as I settle into my middle-aged body, an important one. Stretching and light jogging get a lot of credit for my body not just completely falling apart as I slouch over my laptop in stress postures.

Heard a little bit about your trip to D.C. from Mom. It sounds like the kids had a great time. You and Adam re such strong, capable people. There was this little detail of you staying up 24 hours straight being vomited on repeatedly and somehow coming through without even picking up the bug-- that had run through everyone else. You are such a tough, capable, dedicated person. I understand how the love of your family can really pull you and push you to great feats of strength and stamina, I just feel like I am on level two and you are on level 6 (the levels increase exponentially with difficulty).

At any rate. You made it-- there and back! While I have been doing a lot of “computer programming”, I feel like I have been dropping the ball on family programming (coming up with fun things to do, trips, etc.) I think we are all looking forward to being in a more regimented work/family time rhythm, as it is now, when there is downtime or there is going to be down time I feel compelled to rustle through my mess of notes and projects. We are getting there though! What a process. I look forward to some comfortable future moment of achievement and security where I can look back and curtly summarize what this process has been all about. While the objective, quantitative test of this processes will be gaining gainful employment, the qualitative test-- have you changed? Do you feel different? Has already been pushed through. As my knowledge has increased and my time spent working on computer related issues has expanded I have felt my habits change, my thought processes. The main source of my confidence that this process is going to get us where we want to go is the dramatically improved “tech literacy” I have been slowly building. I can feel the learning getting easily and more accessible as my foundation solidifies and my competencies slowly sluff off their ragged edges.

The hope of Spring suffuses the morning. Solid grey skies and the prospect of all day off and on rain syphon some of the enthusiasm from this Saturday, but

Germany poem…

Calm, quiet, love, organization, kind girls, clean spacious space. Loving practice of religion. Deep faith. Great strength. Endurance. Tenacity. Talent for organization, figuring things out, digging down and getting things done.

Gianna, Mariel, Adelaide, Madeline, Genevieve, Emmaline. What a crew the two of you have these days. These girls must be a handful. Our two run us ragged. I suppose there must be some efficiencies that coalesce around additional kids, but parental energy being a finite commodity I marvel at how the two of have kept step with the loving demands of your children. Hat’s off! Seriously.

Capreses sandwich colors flavors smells, funny things that esem and Helena hae done recently or even ust this year…

Describe the jar of erasers-- tiny colorful erasers… do they even erase-- matching, magic tricks stacking separating…516? She guess how many? Her method.

Math chats --

Betsy’s mom feel and broke her femur… while making dinner… not sure what happened. Her dad is going through Chemo therapy for prostate cancer. Their home is clean and bright and relaxing. All the family photo albums are neatly on the shelves of the guest room’s walk-in closet.