

Welcome to the official Summer Solstice 2005 ...

[The free mp3 download link](#)

Jamie Thompson Newsletter

Family news, music news, and free mp3 downloads

Hello Friends! [Here's the link](#) to a whole pile of new free mp3s. Enjoy!

Well, Orion is long gone from the night sky and summer is in full swing. The cicadas are embroidering the days with their cosmic calls and the crickets of August sound like an enormous metaphysical symphony under the stars. The corn's growing tall and the days are getting noticeably shorter...



Visiting the Kirwan House 7/2005

First, let me humbly apologize for the lack of “monthly” newsletters. I imagined I could accomplish that but soon discovered that life as the fulltime caretaker of a 2-year-old and a 3-year-old just won't allow it. I believe that I will be able to do that in a few years when they start school but, for the time being, I'm going to scale it back to quarterly. I figure that the solstices and equinoxes will make for good target deadlines... although June 21st (not to mention March 21st) has, indeed, come and gone! (-O I'll make up

for it by making more mp3's per newsletter and regular new additions to the download page.

Let Me Do It Self!!

Gabriel and Lenora have grown and changed in so many ways it's hard to know where to begin. The



mantra around our house lately has been, “*Let me do it self!*” This was originally Gabriel's epiphany but Lenora caught on right quick! It started before he could utter the phrase when I endeavored to place him in his car seat. He kicked, screamed, swung at me, carried on, and I had to hold him down while strapping him in (a three-handed operation). I finally got the message. All he wanted was to climb into the car and into his seat without any unnecessary assistance, thank you very much! Since then their quest for assistance-free living has extended to all possible tasks... and a few impossible ones! I've learned, though, that all I have to do is wait patiently for Gabriel and he will eventually

succeed or come to the end of himself and cry out tearfully, “Help, daddy, help!” Lenora, as I said, has the independence bug too but she is quick to point out to Gabriel that the proper way to say it is, “Let me do it *MY*self” to which Gabriel sneers, “*Let me do it self!*” Meanwhile, the plain truth is that, while Lenora likes doing things herself, she is still very much her daddy’s girl and loves a good pampering when she’s in the mood for it.

Wild Things and Rubber Boots

[The free mp3 download link](#)

The kids still love going for wagon rides down in the park behind our house and hiking in the woods on the other side of the creek. Our hikes typically end in a grand slosh down the middle of the creek. Lately, though, the poison ivy has encroached upon the trail so now we just go straight to the creek with our big rubber boots on and get all muddy, wet, and yucky. ☺ As we make our way downstream we see gobs of fish, frogs, water bugs, bees, butterflies, dragonflies... we even saw a crayfish the other day! I haven’t seen one of those in a local creek since the mid nineteen sixties! I take that as a sign that our creek is doing all right, considering. The kids are just enamored with life and living things. It is my great privilege to be there with them as they discover.

Here Comes the Hawk!

We have many hawks in our neck of the woods and one can observe them gliding in circles and, from time to time, swooping down on some poor hapless critter. Gabe and Lenora both noticed them and asked me about them so we created a little game where I make a hawk with my hand and say, “Here comes the hawk... he looks down... sees a squirrel and says,” (Lenora speaks) “Ah **HA! LUNCH!!**” To which the squirrel replies, (Gabriel speaks) “I don’t think so!” To which the hawk replies, (Lenora speaks) “Think again fuzzy face!” Then the hawk swoops down and tickles their bellies!

Queen of the Mouse

We just installed a computer in the living room for the kids to use. Lenora is wild about going online to play computer games. Gabe likes to do that too but he’s not yet as capable of running the mouse or



reasoning through the challenges that come up. So, most of the time they sit together in a big office chair with Lenora running the mouse and Gabe pointing at the screen, offering up his opinions about

what she should do. Lenora has picked up basic computer skills at an alarming rate. The other day I left her alone at the keyboard while I went into the kitchen. A short time later she wandered in and announced that she had turned the computer off because she was tired of playing games. I went out to check and sure enough she had powered down the computer properly. A while later I heard the Windows startup music. I went in there to find her sitting in front of the unit, looking up at me. “It’s booting up!” she announced proudly.



Wings, Jets and Propellers Galore! [The free mp3 download link](#)

Gabe LOVES flying machines, especially helicopters. That boy can spot a jet or a chopper even when it’s the tiniest, inaudible speck in the sky. When we were visiting Pittsburgh last July we stopped at the West Mifflin airport to watch the activity. Gabe was in his glory! Among the many small aircraft that we saw come and go, we saw a leer jet take off and a medi-vac helicopter come in for a landing.

Little Drummer Boy and Girl

Back in April I had my digital drums and keyboard set up in the living room. This, of course, was very exciting for Gabe & Lenora and they spent countless hours banging on the drums and exploring the



many preset keyboard sounds. Lenora found one that she called “the bear.” She said, “Listen to this daddy!” Then she and Gabriel both pushed down random groups of keys with their palms and the resulting sound, indeed, sounded like a growling bear... from outer space, or something!



Anyway, Gabe said he wanted to jam so he got on the drums and I got on the keyboard. “Whaddya wanna do, Gabe?” I asked. “How about... uh, (rolling his eyes) Twinkle

Little Star?” he answered. “Ok.” So, I started playing the melody and Gabe played drum hits on the snare that matched my every keystroke. Judy and I looked at each other amazed. “Do that again,” she

said. Sure enough, Gabe hit the snare precisely on each keystroke. We knew that Gabe is profoundly affected by music and dances like a rubber man when he hears a good rhythm. It was then, though, that we really realized that he has a natural talent for percussion. So, we went online and picked up a Groove Percussion Junior Drumset. Now Gabe asks me to teach him things. The only trouble is, he still can't reach the foot pedal!

Pounce the Daddy!

[The free mp3 download link](#)



Gabe's bigger and more rough-and-tumble than ever. His favorite pastime, it seems, is to "pounce the daddy." He learned the art of pouncing from Tigger. He grabs a fistful of my shirt and drags me down to the family room carpet. From there it's WWF time. He dives on me, stands on my belly and then falls butt-first on my abdomen where he then bounces up and down. He dive bombs my head, rolls all over me... and then carefully pulls me up to sitting position... only to dive on me again! This kid's either going to keep me in shape or kill me! Lenora likes to pounce the daddy too but she's much gentler. She likes to sit on my belly,

look deeply into my eyes and say, "Hello hazel eyes!"

A Run-In with Pneumonia



Last June Lenora started a fever that ended in a cough... that never seemed to go away. Meanwhile, Judy went away on a business trip for four days and I took Lenora to the Pediatrician. The doctor said she had a normal pediatric cold that would run its course in a few days... and not to worry. As the days went by, though, the cough got worse and Lenora started running a high fever and waking up coughing in the middle of the night. She coughed for hours

before finally falling asleep again. She was miserable... and I felt like I'd been hit by a truck from systematic sleep deprivation! A few days later Judy returned and we took Lenora back to the doctor... After examining her he told us to take her straight to the hospital emergency room! She was diagnosed with pneumonia and spent 5 days hooked up to iv fluids, an oxygen hose, a pulse/ox monitor, and a battery of medications. Thankfully she pulled through ok and it was a GREAT homecoming. Gabriel really missed having his big sister to play with.



Much better
thank you!



Judy's Corner

We had a few scary moments on Judy's side of our world this year. Judy's company, which was held privately by the same family since 1831, was sold to an investment firm in January 2005. Of course, the first thing that came down was the

ax. After several months of waiting and trying not to be affected too much by all the rumors, many of Judy's co-workers and friends were laid off. Thankfully, Judy was not laid off but it's been a real roller-coaster ride for her to have so many people suddenly gone. Oddly enough, in the midst of all the "carnage," the company had a record month for sales in May. Go figure!

The Music - MTF Voted "Best of the Fest" [The free mp3 download link](#)



On May 1st 2005 Dave Marion, Rich Fissinger, and I performed three power trio improvisations at the Graboyes Music Festival in Harleysville, PA. It was the second time we ever played together.

The first MTF jam took place in our friend Kevin Kirwan's living room back in October 2004. We were delighted with the digital recordings that we made. Now known as "the Kirwan House Jams," these four pure improvisations have been uploaded by gazillions of persons-unknown from all around the world through the [Shareaza](#) peer to peer file sharing network and [my newsletter download page](#).

With such a fine bit of success already in the can I had to wonder if the chemistry we experienced at the Kirwan House was an anomaly or something that could happen again... Well, the day of the Graboyes Festival arrived and we found ourselves on stage and ready to fly by the seat of our pants again – only this time in front of an audience!



The Graboyes Festival was held in a brand-new, state of the art auditorium with a world-class digital audio/video system consisting of big screens, multiple cameras, and a fabulous PA system. Pam Graboyes had teams of excellent people working the video, audio, and lighting. I had my Stratocaster and my new Marshall TSL60 with a 4 by 12 1960A cabinet ready to go. Dave had his 1960 Danelectro, his 1966 Epiphone Rivoli model EBV232, and his stunning pre-Fender SWR 550 bass amp with one 18 inch JBL-2240H and two 12 inch Weber VST Michigan Hi-Power's. Rich was ready but he was at a disadvantage because he performed inside a plexiglas tank for the first time on a drum set that he never played before. Furthermore, he had to use a headphone monitoring system in order to

be able to hear anything. The tank kept sound out as effectively as it kept it in! Rich rose to the challenge, though, and played very well. We performed: *Warpdrive*, *Joyride*, and *Miles to Miles*. Our show was captured on digital audio and video and the resulting DVD is the best thing I have in my archives to date. Thanks Pam! After Pam and Rich Graboyes got a chance to review all of the performances along with other people involved in various technical aspects of the show they all decided that MTF was “best of the fest!” We were very excited and honored! Hats off to Dave Marion and Rich Fissinger! It was a great jam, guys! Let’s do it again!! Would you like to see our performance? [Click here](#). What’s coming up next for MTF? Well, we have a few possibilities to explore. More news next time.

The Epiphone 1963 Reissue Firebird VII

Well, after many years of dreaming and pining away for a Gibson Firebird electric guitar I finally went



out and picked one up. Here’s a pic. It’s actually not a Gibson, but an [Epiphone 1963 Reissue Firebird VII](#) (made by Gibson in Korea). The thing that stopped me from getting a Firebird in recent years was that the first thing I wanted to do with it was modify it

so that it would be set up the way I like it... doing physical modifications on a *Gibson* Firebird, though, is like doing physical modifications on 1957 Corvette. It destroys the perceived value. You just don’t do it. This dilemma was solved, though, when I discovered the Epiphone Firebird VII. It is a beautiful, well-made guitar... and no one cares if I cut a hole in it! I’ve had a longstanding love affair with Stratocasters but this ax just might steal my heart. Stay tuned...

Cry of the Firebird

[The free mp3 download link](#)

In recent years many people have said, “Hey Jamie, when’s the next CD coming out?” Well, unless I die, or something, the next CD is definitely coming out eventually. There is plenty of material for it



already written. I’m planning to call it *Cry of the Firebird* and it will have a winter theme. Now that I actually *have* a Firebird I’m one step closer to the goal. ☺ All I have to do now is find the time to record the trax! I’ve made some stand alone recordings over the last year but I always end up staying up until 3:00 in the morning night after night working on them... then I drag myself up the next morning to take care of the

kids. There’s no negotiating that reality! I’d make *Cry of the Firebird* this month if I could do that and nothing else. The trouble is, as it stands, I’d run myself into the ground and probably get sick as a

dog... No sleep will do that to you very quickly! Anyhow, I'm VERY excited about the next CD and it will come out in time. Maybe I'll end up calling it *It's Been TOO Long... AGAIN!*

Ultimate Reality Education

[The free mp3 download link](#)

There have been times in my life when I hoped to get away with pretending not to notice the lessons that life was offering up. I ended up struggling with the choice of changing and maturing Spiritually, or stagnating and wallowing in a pool of self-absorbed madness while my life slowly caved in all around me.

One idea that I struggled with for a long time is that there is an Ultimate Reality and that the nature of that Reality stands independently of any human being's opinion of what it is, or is not. It has come to my attention in recent years that it's fashionable among sophisticated, educated people, to believe that truth, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. If you believe something is true, then it's true. If you believe that something's false, then it's false... *for you*. It's a blending of Humanism and Relativism. I avoided thinking about Ultimate Reality for years because, frankly, I just wanted to do what I wanted to do – for myself – without regard for alleged objective standards of true, false, right or wrong.

Ultimate Reality, though, is THE big picture. It's the perspective from which the true nature of all things (including people and their real motives) is obvious and no deception regarding anything is possible to perpetrate. If what you embrace as true "for you" is actually, in Ultimate Reality false then, at some point in time, Ultimate Reality will educate you. There's no avoiding it. As the scripture says, "...every knee shall bow and every tongue confess..."

My life as a parent has offered me a hint of what Ultimate Reality is and a glimpse of what it's like to be there and to deal with human beings that are not. My children are mostly unaware of the wonders and dangers that lurk around every corner of their lives. On the other hand, I am constantly pointing out the wonders that they can embrace and watching carefully for the dangers that they need to be protected from. Most of the time they are blissfully unaware of my vigilance. In fact, when they're not being little angels, they often ignore me when I speak, disregard what I say, contradict me, and willfully do what I've asked them again and again not to do. They are usually very sweet to each other, but there are times when they scam each other, contradict each other, grab things from each other, hit, push, and scream and yell at each other over (from my perspective) nothing... and I find myself on the other side of my lifelong dilemma and finally coming to a greater knowledge of God's heart as He deals with human beings.

The scripture describes our relationship with God as Father/child, Shepard/sheep. God surveys Ultimate Reality effortlessly while we can, at best, catch only a glimpse here and a hint there.

Similarly, healthy adult humans survey nature and our civilization with far less effort and a whole lot more insight than small children do.

Being a parent and desiring the trust – sometimes the BLIND trust - of my children when it comes to what I say they can and can not do, for their own good, has been a real eye-opener for me. I find myself intuitively communicating to them a lot of what the scripture communicates to humanity. I love my kids unconditionally with all my heart, with a great passion, and with great concern for their welfare. I forgive them automatically without any personal need for justice to be served. It grieves my heart when they disregard what I say and then find themselves in a pickle. It brings me great joy when, after endless talking about good character and trying to be a good example, I see them treat each other with selfless generosity, dignity and respect.

All this unfolds and I find myself wincing and looking... er, sheepishly into God's heart and feeling sorry for all of my years of disobedience and aimless spiritual wandering. I see now that, like my kids have with me, I've grieved Him and I've brought Him great joy... and I suppose I always will as long as I'm a human. Within the context of parenting I've come to realize just how truly great God is. His



Lab testing the Firebird on the Kirwan House porch after a cool dip in the pool

washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair... But, when I get knocked upside the head, heart, and soul with the realization of just how great God's love is, it makes me want to praise Him.

patience, His longsuffering, His grace, His willingness to accept me and work with me after so many times falling short of the mark. In short, His great love. Try as I might, as a parent I just don't come through with the same high marks... but I'm working on it! ☺

Now, I'm not one for phony religion. You won't catch me in a fancy religious costume with my hands in prayer position making a big show of my godly goodness. I have no Spiritual pride. When I gave my heart to God I was like the woman who

Take care, friends! Until next time,

Jamie Thompson

www.jamiethompson.net

jamie@jamiethompson.net

[The free mp3 download link](#)