

A photograph of three people sitting in front of an ambulance. On the left is a man with glasses wearing a dark blue polo shirt with a fire department patch. In the center is a woman with red hair wearing sunglasses and a black halter-neck top, holding a drink. On the right is a man with a mustache wearing a dark blue t-shirt with a fire department patch and sunglasses hanging from his neck. The ambulance behind them has a blue Star of Life, a red light, and two doors with windows. The text 'FRIDAY FOLLIES' is overlaid in large white letters, and 'September 23, 2005' is overlaid in smaller white letters below it.

FRIDAY FOLLIES

September 23, 2005

Hey!

September 23, 2005

Well, I did it! I finally got out of the house! I thought they were going to have to send the rescue squad for me -- I have been in seclusion for so long!

I cannot remember it being this long since I have been in touch, but I looked back to this time last year, and I sent you Follies on August 13, 2004 and then did not send them again until September 17, 2004. I guess that comes close to this



year. Since this time last year, I

have buried my sweet mama, ended a 12 year relationship that should have ended years before but was put on hold until my mama was at peace, moved out of my home, went to the emergency room with serious scares for my daughter, was diagnosed with arthritis, separated out my belongings, packed up, found a rental house at the Beach, moved thinking I was going to be there for a few years, had to completely pack up and move again less than a year later, and then bought a house by myself for the first time in my entire life!

I can honestly say that I never want to go through another year like that again. I looked back at all of the Follies from the past year, though, and to tell you the truth, even with all that has happened, it has been a pretty remarkable and wonderful year. It was not a BAD year, just a year of healing, growing, and getting my life back.

Well, guess what! I'm BAAACK!





I also watched this past month as my beautiful Mississippi was blown away...one of the saddest things I have ever experienced. I tear up just writing this. I have said from the beginning that what happened in New Orleans was extremely bad, beyond belief...but it is still there. It will survive. It will learn from its mistakes and it will rebuild...in fact will have parts of the city open for business this coming Monday, the 19th. The Gulf Coast, however, will never, never be the same.

My brother called me this week after having to Biloxi for business (he works for a company refueling helicopters down there) and he was all choked up when he called. He said, "Judi, you and I both remember Camille because we both helped out down there after she hit, but you cannot imagine this. It is so much worse than the cameras can even show. It is gone, Judi. Totally gone!"

It just breaks my heart...literally. If I could afford to, I would take six months off and go home to help rebuild. (Thank you Dan and others who can and are going down to work with Habitat for Humanity. Please know that I am literally with you in spirit.)

Both my brother and my sister lived in Gulfport, Biloxi, and Pascagoula after they married, so as a young child, I visited often. I have so many fond, fond, memories of the coast. It was the very first ocean I ever experienced. It was the first vacation I can ever remember my family taking. I was in awe...all of that beauty right there in Mississippi!

I heard my first Beatles song in Gulfport and can still remember the whole two and a half minute experience. I was sitting in the back seat of my sister's car after being picked up from the movies. I remember actually feeling dizzy while listening to it! It was simply surreal! I experienced my first real flood while in Bay St. Luis at church camp, went to numerous football championships and vacations down there, and then, in college and as a young married lady, well, I cannot tell you how many times I partied in New Orleans -- my "back yard" until I was 21 and then my "play ground" after that. It just kills my soul. I cannot imagine how the folks that live/lived there must feel.

ing flown



Well, more on that subject later. I just needed to get that out...

Remember I told you I had moved 19 times since I was 21 for an average of once every 1.7 years? Well, I have to tell you something that has really gotten on my nerves since I moved in this new house... Every time I reach for a picture to hang, I automatically reach for the appropriate hardware -- be it a nail or a hook. I just KNOW by looking at the picture what it takes. It has gotten to be a joke with me. I first reach and then look at the back of the picture. I have been right 100% of the time. (And if you have ever seen my home, you know I have HUNDREDS of pictures)

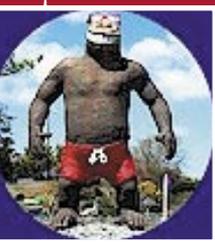
I guess now my desire is to have to LOOK first before reaching the next time I have to hang them! (smile) The house is looking great, though. I am planning another Happy Halloween House Warming for those of you in the area. I will let you know details later.



OK. You know how I love to make fun of myself...well here is another little "something" I thought of this week on the way to work. To help describe the differences in where I lived and where I live --



My old neighbor at "the beach" was new to town and in fact, they are planning a huge party for him later this month to introduce him to everyone....his name is King Neptune and he is a 26 foot cast bronze statue rising from the sand on the beach. Just spectacular and just a few blocks away from my home.

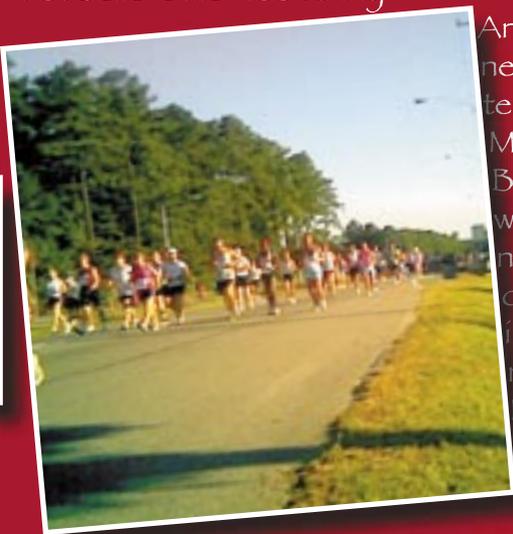


Well, let me introduce you to my "new" neighbor. Hugh Mongous! Now HE is only a few blocks from my home. Bless his heart, over the past 20 years he has been stolen, burned, and rebuilt, but he still wears his cool sunshades at the beach for all of the visitors. I thought this pretty well summed up my transplant. HA-HAHAHA!

Speaking of monkeys...remember my buddy getting the baby monkey for Christmas - the one that was only a month old? Well, I saw him this past week. He is now in diapers and has grown quite a bit! (The monkey, that is.) These photos were taken after Chester's bedtime, so he was a bit shy. He is truly like a human baby in his routines and learning patterns. Just amazing.

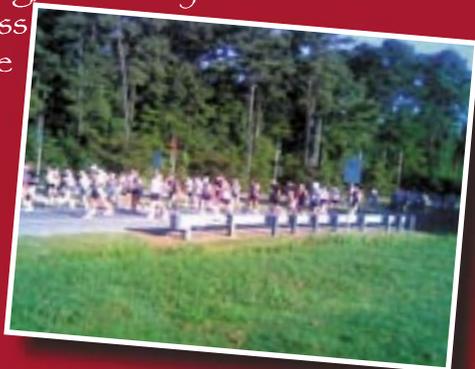


Then, the funniest thing. I have this girl-friend that I have been worried about because she has an only child, a beautiful daughter, who went away to college this fall...a whole five hours away. I knew my friend was having a very hard time adjusting and she has been on my mind so much. Well, I got an email from her this week titled, "What moms do when their children leave home..." I anxiously opened it thinking she was in trouble. Ha! Nope! Here she is - her newest hobby - rock climbing...I told her she was going to love the empty nest, but she would not believe me! Too funny!



Another really neat thing that happened right after I moved in - the Rock N Roll Half Marathon took place here in Virginia Beach with thousands of runners (and walkers) and they ran right past my new house! I kinda forgot about it, so I opened the door to get the morning paper - a vision, I might add, in my nightie and coffee in hand - and I heard all of this commotion! There they were! It was so cool! I ran in and changed and walked closer to hear the band and see the runners.

They were from all over the globe! I felt so guilty sitting there watching them while sipping my coffee. But I was also struck by how many of them were "out of shape." It really made me think that I ought to train a bit and try to at least walk it next year. That would be a worthy goal, yea? Anyway, while sitting there watching, I saw many folks that I knew. One, a friend who had a heart attack less than a year ago, stopped the race, came over and hugged my neck and chatted for probably three minutes wanting to know how the new house was, making me point it out, etc. It was really funny. I was extremely proud of her. (Saw you, too Kim. Yelled at you but you were totally focused!)



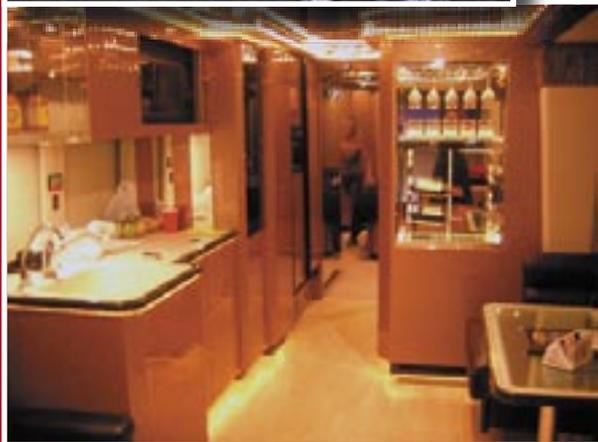
I also got to go with friends again this year to the CYCLEMANIA in Chesapeake. There was so much going on here at the beach this weekend, but with all of the house stuff and just with the way I have been feeling about being in public lately, I made the right decision! It was a blast. Blue Oyster Cult (remember them?) was the entertainment that night.

Here are some scenes from the event. Too much fun!

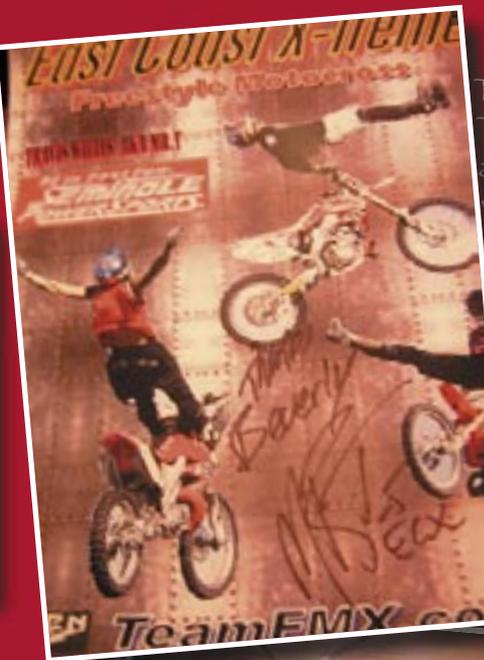


I had to fight the urge to bump one of these bikes and watch the domino affect, but I didn't...

Fun with the chopper!



And our "home away from home!"



There was also this nice guy, Travis Willis, better known as "Mr. T.", an extreme biker. He was amazing and was a really nice guy. He spent literally hours with the little kids teaching them tricks on their dirt bikes.



And he loved signing autographs, too. (No, that is not me...)



OK, my friends, it is time for me to go. There is more to tell, but no more time.

Please pray for my youngest nephew, Andy, as he prepares to go to Iraq. He leaves later this month and will be in Germany for a week or so before going on to command a Humvee Unit in northern Iraq... probably one of the worst assignments over there. We are so worried. I will be sure to let you know how he is doing.

God bless you all and thank you for always sending such wonderful, thoughtful, encouraging, and loving notes. I have missed you all, too.

I will close this week with my favorite picture of Liberty (L'il Birdie) It just makes me laugh every time I look at it!

To all of you on my Friday Follies List, whether you are in Manila, Singapore, Kuwait, Bermuda, Virginia Beach, Mississippi, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minnesota, Indiana, Colorado, Philadelphia, Key West, New Jersey, North Carolina, Indonesia, Washington D.C., Iraq, Costa Rica, Maryland, West (By-God) Virginia, Nashville, Florida, Chattanooga, New York, Oregon, Maine, Australia, Europe, or Yuma, have a wonderful, wonderful week!



God bless.
Remember, life is short...
We need to make it a good one.
Grow in peace and wisdom.

Your Friday Friend,

Judi Godsey

PS. NOTE OF CAUTION... 20 employees were fired from The New York Times here in Norfolk for sending lewd and indecent emails. (To my knowledge, none of the 20 were on our joke list - even though some of the attorneys who represent the company were!) I have asked each and every one of you on this list to tell me if the jokes that accompany these "Follies" place you in jeopardy, or even if they offend you. Please understand that they are intended to be light-hearted and are not mean-spirited in any way. If you are ever offended, do not hesitate to ask to be taken off the Friday Follies Joke List. PSS. If you send a joke and I don't use it, it is because it has been used before, and I try not to repeat. Remember, I have been sending these since August of 1997. One tends to go through huge numbers of jokes that way. Disclaimer: When anyone asks if I type all of these jokes, the answer is, "No!" I cut and paste one evening during the week (30 minutes, TOPS). Obviously I don't have time to sit, read, and retype jokes all day!