

**ALL-DAY PARTY!
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MOTHERS DAY AND BIRTHDAY PARTY

I am a believer in the expanding universe theory, at least the universe of my family. It keeps getting larger. No need to send out for friends. My growing family is a party all on its own, just waiting to happen. And every once in a great while everyone shows up and hangs out. We did that yesterday, all four of my kids, their partners, their kids, a few close friends, and a surprise guest. I will get to the surprise guest in a moment.

I was reading in the current Time Magazine about API (Attachment Parenting). I don't care for all the politics surrounding it, but from a first glance this kind of parenting is more or less what we have done, only we made it up all by ourselves back in the early 1970s, just using common sense.

Well, some of it was just necessity, like early-on what we called the "bed" room at 1041 N. Main Street in Ann Arbor, our first real house, rented of course. The place was so small that we had our beds side by side filling one whole tiny room, and you could walk from wall to wall on beds. We all slept there together, and loved it. We also were involved in home birth and home schooling for some of our kids.

And, as it so happened, we never left our kids. I don't think we had a babysitter for something like 21 years or so. It was not a rule or a conscious decision, but the simple fact that we wanted our kids with us, and never came up with an event that was so important that we wanted to leave them with someone else. And Margaret breast fed the kids for usually a couple of years -- as long as it made sense. My only point with the above is that Mothers Day is something of a big deal around our house. I am sorry to say Father's Day is more like a flash in the pan and does not get this kind of extravagant celebration, but that's just the way it is. Mothering a child pretty much defines the word responsibility, not to mention the word 'love'. I could go on, but this is a blog about the party yesterday, so I want to tell you about that.

For me it started early, like most days. We were having a serious brunch at Noon and some 20 people were going to be there. I did a lot of the cooking the day before, so today I was only in charge of the breakfast potatoes, which meant I was out in the kitchen dicing them up sometime after 6 AM. My oldest daughter's husband, Dana, who is an early bird like me, was giving me a hand. That was fun.

The day was sunny and bright, nicely warm, and with little wind, in other words "perfect." By the time the brunch all came together we had a mountain of browned potatoes, home-made pancakes, and an elaborate frittata (with wild morel mushrooms) made by the birthday-girl May, a wonderful fruit salad made by my daughter Iotis (and I am sure others), and on and on it goes. This is not to mention the endless coffees, teas, and all that juice, toast, English muffins, etc. It was literally more than we could eat, yet still just enough.

We were celebrating not only Mothers Day, but my youngest daughter May's birthday, and it was not just any old birthday, but her 30th birthday. Now any of you reading this who are astrologers (as many of my Facebook friends are) know that the 30th birthday marks the first

Saturn Return in the natal chart, and this is a big deal, astrologically. I am deep into the return of Saturn, so most everyone there knew this was a very special birthday.

All the little kids were entertaining each other racing around playing hide-and-seek in the house or building Legos. As for newcomers, my newest granddaughter Emma, going on four-months old now, was very visible and much admired. Her mother, my daughter Anne was busy most of the time in that department, assisted by her partner Michael Lee. Emma is just old enough to really see you and is starting to get motor control of her hands. I got some good smiles out of Emma this time.

As noon approached, more people came and it all happened as planned, lots of food and just as much eating. For the most part, all of that food was just inhaled. I think I ate that last pancake with just a little butter on it.

Many of my family and friends are musicians, so after brunch there was music for quite some time, mostly waltzes and songs. And May opened presents and then gave a present of her own. She had written a song for baby Emma on the day of Emma's birth (May was there), and yesterday she sang it to Emma in person, who listened in rapt open-eyed attention. After that there were some family photos (using a wide-angle lens of course) and then gradually the mandala began to break up as people headed upstate and downstate back to their homes. But there is one more part of the story which I will tell you that really made the day.

My daughter May is pretty sharp. You don't sneak up on May. In fact originally this get-together was supposed to be a surprise party for May, with a lot more people than just family invited. However, May sniffed that out and nipped it in the bud. She just wanted a small party, with family, so that was that. But she fell into this one:

One of May's and her husband Seth's dearest friends is David Fetzer, an actor, musician, producer who lives and works in Los Angeles. We all love Fetzer, who is a special friend of May, but we don't see him often, maybe once a year at the Harvest Gathering, that incredible celebration the third weekend in September, but anyway, I am drifting.

Apparently May had tossed out a remark at some earlier time that she wished Fetzer could be there for her birthday, but it was just a hopeful comment, and not serious. Well, David Fetzer and my son Michael Andrew (and perhaps others) made a plan to fly David out here for a surprise appearance at May's birthday party. And they went to great pains not to tell anyone, not even Seth Bernard, May's husband. They knew that May can scope out Seth pretty easily, so they protected Seth by not even telling him. And my wife Margaret did not tell me because she knows I can't keep a secret.

Anyway, how it all went down was as follows: Fetzer flew in on the redeye the night before from L.A. and was picked up at the airport by my son and his partner Micah. Then in the midst of the morning food preparation, when May was up and around in the kitchen, my son Michael Andrew's phone rang. It was David Fetzer calling from L.A. to wish May a happy birthday. Michael answered it and passed the phone to May, who was so happy to hear from David.

Then, while May talked on the phone, David Fetzer (who was next door) walked over, phone in hand, and suddenly was standing there in front of May. Well, May was totally surprised and just began crying, hugging, and all of that. It was a precious moment and all of us were there. Very cool.

But May had the last laugh, because she later told us that the night before she dreamed Fezter came to her birthday party. So she knew. Go figure!



Baby Emma asleep in the arms of Micah Ling, my son's partner. Emma had a big day.



There were presents. Here my daughter May (right) is trying on a new scarf given to her by my daughter Anne (left). My son Michael Andrew is in the middle. — with Michael Anne Erlewine, Michael Erlewine and May Erlewine Bernard.



Yes, this is me with my lovely wife of 41 years, Margaret. — with Margaret Erlewine.



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Baby Emma is named “Emma May,” after her mom’s younger sister May, whose birthday it was. On the day of her birth May (who is a professional singer/songwriter) wrote a song for Emma. Yesterday, at her birthday party May sang that song to Emma for the first time. Here is a photo. Emma is listening. — with Michael Anne Erlewine and May Erlewine Bernard.



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My son Michael Andrew on mandolin, my daughter may on violin, her husband Seth Bernard on guitar, and Seth's dad Bob Bernard on fiddle. — with Michael Erlewine, May Erlewine Bernard and Samuel Seth Bernard.



A group photo, not of all the folks at the party, but just of my family and their partners... and kids. — with Michael Erlewine, Micah Ling, May Erlewine Bernard, Samuel Seth Bernard, Margaret Erlewine, Iotis Even, Michael Lee and Michael Anne Erlewine.



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One of two fresh fruit bowls to go with the pancakes.



The much-loved David Fetzer.

[Don't know who the photographer was for this photo. Borrowed it from David's site. Thanks.]