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# Thoughts From A Registered Ohio Voter

Swing state, political battleground, campaign focal point, election ground zero…Â  call it what you will.Â  As a Christian middle-class American, I call it Ohio, and Ohio is my home.Â  With regards to the 2012 Presidential election, like  
countless fellow Ohioans, I’ve grown weary of the seemingly endless parade of dinnertime (wakeup and bedtime) political phone calls.Â  I’m tired of receiving campaign postcards in the mail (between Thursday and Saturday last week, we got EIGHT political post cards in the mail – I don’t want to be wasteful; I’m thinking of incorporating them into a quilt).Â  And what if all that postcard mailing money were being spent on feeding and housing the homeless?Â  Or providing quality health care to the uninsured?Â  But I digress…).  
I do care about the governmental consequences at stake; I note opinions and where the candidates stand on such controversial issues as abortion, the definition of legal marriage, and the state of the economy.Â  However,Â  the Holy Bible is the law by which I try to live my life.Â  And there are no less than 17 Bible passages referring to false prophets.Â  While educating myself about the Presidential candidates, I did a bit of research into the Mormon religion where I determined that Mormonism does not follow the same Bible I believe to be God’s word.Â  Although my political and societal views are  
usually Republican-esque, in this election, I have feltÂ  unrepresented by a candidate, which is why I’ve begun telling the Romney people who call me that they cannot count on my support for their candidate.

We can faithfully pray about the election and how our lives will be affected afterward, and we can also have peace knowing that our wonderful God is sovereign.Â  I like the definition of God’s sovereignty I found on theopedia.com:Â  The Sovereignty of God is the biblicalteaching that all things are under God’s rule and control, and that nothing happens without His directionor permission.  
Have peace.Â  Your vote counts, it matters to people, but also know that God is in the cockpit – no one is going to pilot this plane we call the United States unless our Lord lets him into the cockpit.Â  Whether Americans will call Barrack Obama a 2-term President or if they get to know Mitt Romney as Commander-in-Chief, it happened because God allowed it to happen.  
“The Lord has established his throne in heaven,  
and his kingdom rules over all.” Psalm 103:19  
As a popular saying goes: may the best man win.Â  As far as I’m concerned, that man is Jesus.

### Comments

**Jamiah**AMEN! I have always said that I would not wish political office on anyone but continue to pray for His guidance for all! As for all the political literature, I know a certain community theatre company in need of a large amount of junk mail. Unfortunately, political ads are unusable. Now that would have generated a LOT of mail.

# Famine Games - Year One

Off my usual topic of my family this time…

The Famine Games.Â  Wow.

It was a weekend at a campground with 23 kids who aged from 12-17.Â  But it was so much more than that.Â  It was life-changing, at least for this “mentor” – me.

The idea began with my husband, who will be more than happy to let you know that the Famine Games was God’s idea.Â  So when God told my husband to gather a bunch of kids, make them work for the basics of needs,

But of course, my heart evolved.Â  A swear word, sometimes, among Christians is evolve.Â  Or evolution.Â  Or evolved.

So on Friday September 21, 2012, we converged on a campground in Northern Ohio – probably nearly thirty of us in all. The kids were told to not bring ANYTHING extra – the clothes on their backs and that was it.Â  Couldn’t bring tents, without hairbrushes, carrying no change of clothes, without hairbrushes, deoderant-less, IPODS, NO CELL PHONES.

But let me back up

### Comments

# End Of August 2012

How’s that for a creative title?Â  I don’t have much time to exercise my creativity these days; well, that’s not true…Â  In my daily adventures of running a household of 7 and caring for 5+ kids every day, I exercise creativity all the time.Â  I need to “fly by the seat of my pants” all day and find creative ways to combat boredom, disagreements and to provide a fun, stimulating and educational environment.Â  But as far as written creativity…Â  well, maybe someday I’ll have time to once again work on enhancing my writing skills.

Luke had his 9 month chekcup today.Â  He is actually 10Â¾ months old, but we had to reschedule his appointment twice because of an injury (he’s ok now but had to get stitches in his pinkie) and work.Â  He measured out perfectly for his age on all of their growth curve charts, and he was able to pass all of the physical tests with flying colors (picking up small objects, standing, clapping, etc).Â  He weighs 19 lbs, 11 oz and is 29″ long.Â  He likes all kinds of table food, especially fruits and pasta.Â  Nothing else really of note about the visit, except that he got his blood drawn and ate the band-aid after.Â  I was wondering about the effects of wearing a band-aid on a finger that spends 90% of its time in the baby’s mouth, but they’re the professionals – or so I thought.Â  I meant to take the band-aid off but alas, I didn’t get to it in time…

I was actually going to write more; I wanted to share the homeschool curriculum I wrote for the kids, but I was reminded why I don’t blog anymore.Â  In just the short time it took me to type this, I had to stop more than 5 times to get kids out of the bath, change diapers, and break up fights…Â  now I’ve been informed the baby is poopie and there is still a kid left in the bath, sounds like another one going back in…Â  more later ?

### Comments

**derek**Always good to hear from you, if only for a moment. Just a reminder of what I am missing in my (loveless) bachelor life... Have a great Labor Day weekend!  
**jamiahsh**always exciting... or never dull ;)

# I'm Thinking You Might Like This

[Kids of 1995 Predict the Future of the Internet – correctly!!](http://www.hlntv.com/article/2012/08/15/kids-predict-future-internet-1995-psa-video?hpt=hp_t2" \t "_blank)

### Comments

**derek**I enjoyed the video taylhis, thanks for posting. I wonder what these 5th graders are thinking now of these predictions, if they remember them at all?  
**jamiahsh**HAHA! How prophetic, I DO chat with friends from Australia. It's like they were talking to me personally!

# A Post About Nothing

This post is about nothing because I should be in bed.Â  I’m writing as a way to vent because I can’t sleep.Â  We’ve let our daughter have sleepovers pretty much constantly for the past 2 weeks.Â  We’ve run into some of her friends and figured what a better way to end summer in a fun way than with some sleepovers, especially with these friends we don’t see often.

Problem is, all these girls seem to lose track of the rest of the world when they’re together.Â  They run up and down the stairs like a herd of elephants (I am SO not going to mention this out loud – what could scar a sensitive pre-teen girl more than comparisons to the largest land mammal??), they giggle incessantly, and they BURST into our bedroom at midnight complaining of a scary noise.Â  And that’s what led me here.Â  Having a group of kids burst into my room as I’m trying to relax with some quiet reading time at midnight apparently set off my adrenal glands – big time.Â  It’s now almost 1 am, and I can’t even think of laying down again for fear of my quiet bubble being burst yet again.Â  My adrenaline is pumping so hard; I feel like I’ve just ridden a roller coaster or like I’m about to deliver a speech.Â  The kicker is, with little or no sleep, how I am going to be able to supervise 6 kids tomorrow – with one of them being a VERY exploratory 10-month-old??Â  I don’t know how it’s going to work.Â  All because of a scary noise.Â  Well, unfortunately for this group of self-absorbed ‘tweens, they’re about to find out that a long day with a very tired and grumpy Mom is ***infinitely*** more scary than any kind of noise or bump in the night.

Good luck, girls.

### Comments

**derek**Missed this post- sorry. Not just boys who run around incessantly during sleepovers I see. I do hope Mom wasn't too much of a grump on that next day. I am extremely tired myself right now and I'm not sure why. I do sleep, though not a full eight hours each night.  
**jamiahsh**JINKIES! Don't know if I'd want to be there today... ;)

# WHY Can't Babies Go To The Movies?

Gonna climb upon a soapbox for a moment…

The families in Colorado who were involved in the shooting need prayer.Â  Probably one of the very last things they need right now is a network of UNsupport – people using mass media to put down the people involved and some of their decisions.Â  Mainly, I’m bugged by those who say things like, “What was a 3-month-old doing at a movie theater anyway?Â  Especially a MIDNIGHT showing of a PG13 movie??”

What’s wrong with taking a baby to a movie?Â  As long as the parent(s) willingly leave before the baby causes a disruption, then I don’t understand what all the fuss is about.Â  I have 5 kids, none of whom have slept thru the night until they were over a year old (probably – my youngest is only 9 months old, but he’s the worst sleeper yet, so I’m guessing he won’t sleep thru the night until he’s a year).Â  So if I’m up at midnight anyway with the baby, I think it should be up to me if I want to spend my own money on a movie, knowing there is a chance that I won’t get to see the entire movie if I have to leave if the baby fusses.Â  Babies are not going to watch the movie; they’re not going to pick up any bad things from the screen at that age, and taking the baby to the movies late at night can actually be the ONLY time new parents can find to connect to each other while trying to balance the demands of parenthood and careers.

Or, take the situation of a big brother who REALLY wants to see the midnight showing of Batman.Â  Again, the parents feel they are going to be up anyway with the baby, so why not schedule in some family time at a most unusual, however more convenient, time.Â  Again, if kids (or babies) cause a disruption in the theater, they should be taken out immediately as a courtesy to others who have also paid to see a movie.

Well, that’s all I have time for now, just had to get that out – I just don’t see anything wrong with taking a baby to the movies, and it bugs me a tiny bit that people are so busy worrying about how others raise their children instead of getting out there themselves to improve our society’s crumbling family unit.Â  Please don’t attack the parents who are actually seeking to spend time with their children.

*Dear Lord, Thank you so much for the gift of children.Â  We pray to you to continue to guide us to love them, to nurture them, and to lead them to you.Â  We pray for the comfort and healing of those involved in the Colorado shooting.Â  May they grow ever closer to you, Lord.Â  Amen.*

### Comments

**derek**Laughing at my own mistakes in my post: ...complaints \*ABOUT\* said child. (not "of said child") ...long forgotten when \*THEIR KIDS WERE THAT YOUNG\* (replaces the ridiculously stated "when they were parents") Well, you stated why you hold your opinion, so if they read it I'm sure they understand now (whether or not they still agree).  
**taylhis**Two of my FB friends that were agreeing with it are parents. One has a kid who is a little older now, but the other one has a 3-mo-old and an almost 2 year old, so I was just surprised to see other parents didn't see eye-to-eye with me about the movie thing. Well, anyway... SO not what the tragedy is about... thanks for the comments :)  
**derek**I admit I have been avoiding watching the news on this so I was unaware of the 3-month-old or the complaints of said child. The media just latches onto tragedies like this and don't let go until everyone is sick of it, and feeling guilty for being sick of hearing of the tragedy as the news goes into every detail, every angle. The complainers are undoubtedly not parents of infants so they either don't understand or have long forgotten when they were parents. While not a parent myself (and likely never will be one) what you say does make sense. Thanks for prayer at the end- I fully agree with it and lift it up as well.  
**jamiahsh**Beautifully stated! Social media... or maybe society as a whole should definitely more focused on the healing of the others affected by the tragedy instead of pointing fingers at how a three-month old is raised.

Have you ever had such a happy moment that tears just stream from your eyes?Â  Not caused by sorrow nor pain, these tears could be

### Comments

# My Food Chain Gang - Restored!

I have a wonderful tale to tell – a God story, and I love those.

A few weeks ago now, I met a friend for lunch at McD’s.Â  Later that evening, as my hubby inquired about my day and asked how my lunch was, I talked about how much I enjoyed hearing my friend’s updates on her beloved cat, Mya.Â  I even lamented, “I wish I could have a kitten.”Â  I seem to be an animal person you say (I AM) – so why don’t I just get a kitten?Â  Well, I’m allergic to cats, otherwise I would probably have a cat (or two or three or…).Â  I actually had one for 10 years and loved her very much, but I was very allergic to her and that was tough for both of us.Â  But anyway – back to this Friday night a few weeks ago – I’m wanting a cat.Â  Saturday morning, the early risers in our family were alerted by an “alarming” sound in our backyard.Â  They found 2 cats fighting on the fence, and across the yard, 3 baby bunnies crying out in alarm.Â  Sammie was dispatched to alert me (still in bed, allowed to sleep-in, THANK YOU Hubby!), and in the now-calm backyard I found 3 exhausted baby bunnies resting while my kids were comforting one of the stray cats.Â  The stray was a friendly fellow; he had black and white fur, green eyes, and a few extra toes.Â  I couldn’t believe the obliging attitude – pleasure even – that this cat was deriving from the attention my kids were doting upon it.

I couldn’t resist petting this friendly kitty, and when I did, something strange happened.Â  Well, actually,Â  it was nothing at all that happened.Â  No sniffles, no itches, no hives – no allergy symptoms.Â  How could it be that I wasn’t allergic to this cat?Â  For the record, Hubby is also allergic to cats but didn’t react to this one either.Â  So anyway, we let the super friendly tuxedo cat in the house.Â  He walked right in and looked around, and it really did seem as if he had lived here for years – and he’s been here ever since!Â  Just fit right in with our entire family, and it’s not an easy feat to forge a seamless transition from outdoor feral cat to indoor family cat, especially when the new family =Â  5 kids (3 girls ages 12, 8, 5 and 2 boys ages 3 and 8 mos.), a dog, a parrot, a rabbit, and 2 rats.Â Â  But saying we’ve had a smooth transition would be an understatement!

What a gift he has been.Â  A gift from God for our family…Â  to bring us together as we welcome a new member for however long we’re allowed to take care of him.Â  A gift for us to cherish together while we play with him.Â  A gift for me to help ease the mounting stress I’ve felt lately.Â  Have you seen the medical research on how a purring cat relieves stress?Â  It exists, trust me!

So to acknowledge this gift for us and to honor our God, “Mittens” became “Moses” – and it is cute when the kids rhyme about “Moses with the extra toe-ses”.Â  Moses seems very adept at using his paws, and he acts very cat-like around the house, which I love – just why I wanted to have a cat around.Â  For now, we are enjoying Moses and his company.Â  He gets along with all of our other pets and is wonderfully tolerant of the kids – he fits in our family like the missing piece of a puzzle; not that any of us realized there was a piece missing before Moses came.Â  So could it be that “my food chain gang” has been restored?

Both an article I read and a devotional I heard recently happened to be about the same subject: knowing and having the faith and satisfaction that God sees you, even if you feel invisible to the world.Â  God uses many aspects of His creation to bring people closer to having meaningful relationships with Him and to help us receive His messages, even animals.Â  My family was getting burnt out from a busy schedule, and it really rejuvenated the kids’ spirits to get to have this cat.Â  And they aren’t the only ones ðŸ˜‰

“…You are the God who sees me…”Â  from Genesis 16:13

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2012/06/Taylor-and-Moses-6-3-12-1.jpg)This is a picture of our oldest daughter holding the cat.Â  No, my 12-year-old does not normally wear make-up; this was “spa night”Â  

God is so good!!

### Comments

**derek**No fair! two months since I made a blog post and you bounce mine from the top of new posts in mere minutes. :D Congrats on being picked to care for this cat. A gift indeed. I sometimes miss the days when we had cats. One day again. No dogs though- just another way I am so unlike the stereotypical male is that I am most definitely not a dog person. But then, in some ways it is good to \*not\* be that stereotype...  
**taylhis**Moses is playful like a kitten, but without the unnecessary trouble causing mischief of a kitten :)  
**jamiahsh**That's a kitten?! Strange how both of you were unaffected allergy-wise. But welcome to the family, Moses with the toes-es. And... NO MAKEUP! You are growing up too fast as it is ;)

# The Amazing Story

### Comments

# Checkin' In

Here it is mid-April already!Â  It’s funny that a few days ago I thought I had made the decision to not blog anymore, but here I am (part of this doing-less-for-me-more-for-others mentality I’m attempting).Â  I have a kid who wants to train to be a babysitter by watching her siblings, and I have a baby who decided he needed a nap – so I find myself with idle time.Â  Wait, idle time?!?Â  What’s that?Â  I’m not used to this; I don’t know what to do!Â  Usually I try to cram in some housework or laundry or food prep in my “down” time, but right now I just want to sit…Â  so writing I will do!

Nothing much to say, just a generic update on my family.Â  The kids are doing great!Â  There hasn’t been any sickness in our house lately, so we are thankful to God for that.Â  So a quick update on each of us if I can get it in before Luke’s nap is over…

Taylor is 12 and a half now, and she is a great kid.Â  She shows so much responsibility and genuinely cares for others.Â  She is challenged at times with patience with her siblings, but she does well.Â  I can’t imagine it would be easy to be the oldest in a house where there is always so much chaos and needy little kids!Â  Taylor leads the worship music for the kids at church, and she also enjoys using her artistic gifts to make posters for church events.

Sammie is almost 8 and is a pretty good babysitter.Â  She LOVES her baby brother, and if it’s the right day, she’s great with her 5 year old sister and 3 year old brother.Â  But Sammie has her off-days too, and if it’s one of those days, WATCH OUT!Â  Â  She will push buttons of all of her siblings, and she is quite good at getting them going.Â  She is watching the littles as I write though, so it feels wrong to say bad things about her behavior.Â  She is getting ready for her 8th bday party coming up in May!

Disney has been causing 90% of the trouble in our house lately.Â  Our sweet little Disney is going through a phase right now that is making all of us (her included!) crazy!Â  She had a good day today, but in the past few weeks, she’s been upset about EVERYTHING and also intentionally pushing the buttons that drive siblings over the edge.Â  She loves school, and she is excited to start Kindergarten in the fall (we do homeschool, but we don’t start homeschooling our kids until 2nd grade for a number of reasons; one is because we like the social skills that kids learn at school in the early ages).

Christopher has been acting like such a big boy lately!Â  He’s been potty-trained since New Year’s day, and he does well with that.Â  He’s stopped throwing so many tantrums and is really acting more like a kid these days instead of like a crabby tantrum-throwing toddler.Â  He does get into his fair share of messes, and he gets especially upset when he goes thru candy withdrawal.

Luke is 6 mos. already, and a handful as always – it’s only getting worse as he gets older.Â  Then again, he is getting even cuter as he grows, so that’s the plus side Â  But what a strong personality and eye for mischief he has for such a young age!Â  I try not to think about it, but I find myself tempted to worry about how I’m going to stay sane when he is actually moving!Â  Right now he’s just scooting and rolling around, but he puts EVERYTHING in his mouth and is quite demanding; wanting 100% of the available parent’s attention 100% of the time!Â  You can see why this is challenging when there are 4 other kids – it’s just one reason why I gave up my social life 

Hubby and I are doing well also.Â  His working 2 jobs keeps us busy, but in some ways, it’s actually not as stressful as I thought it would be.Â  It’s amazing how much easier things are when you truly trust the Lord to get you through.Â  By no means is life easy these days, but I am so much better equipped to handle the twists, turns and busyness now than I was a few years ago thanks to Him.Â  As I mentioned, we have given up our social lives.Â  I miss my friends, but luckily we live in a world where I can still keep up with their lives and know how to pray for them when they need it.Â  I’ve tried hanging out with adults a few times in the past few months, but unfortunately with all these kids running around and being so demanding, it seems better for everyone if I just focus on the kids and live a kid-oriented life.Â  So, with Hubby now working on the weekends, we’ve been having our family SaturdaysÂ  on Fridays when we can.Â  And we’ve been doing less of the expensive entertainment stuff and have been trying dedicating our hearts to serving more.Â  My husband has thought of some very creative ways to do this, and we’ve had many an opportunity to get out into the local communities and give and share God with others.Â  It’s been wonderful!

I was going to write more, but the baby has woken up, and he’s demanding my attention, of course.Â  I just can’t think straight when he cries and he knows it!Â  More next month…Â  haha!

### Comments

**carriealw78**I had to jump over and check your site out since you checked out mine. 5 kids? YIKES! I only have 2 myself, so I can't imagine the chaos that could create! My best friend in Florida has 5 though, so I've heard some of it first hand in the background at her place. I'm thinking about home schooling my youngest. I'm a bit more confident now that I've found the home school online thingy. You might wanna check out their website simply because they have links to so many learning programs, and a lot of those are either cheap, or have free sections to their site that your kids could check out (it has something for all age groups). You can just google Epic Charter Schools to find it. I personally am in love with Brain Pop. It's very animated, but it teaches them on all sorts of topics at the same time, and without the potty humor I try to avoid. I saw your next post mentioned teething - all I can do is pray a LOT for ya there. I remember THAT nightmare :( We went through tons of those teething biscuits, and Dani especially LOVED those frozen plastic thingies you put in the freezer for a bit then let them chew on them. Whatever works, right? I just didn't wanna start off having to give my kids tons of medications, so I was all about home remedies and teething rings of all shapes and sizes :P Thanks again for commenting on my page, and I wish you the best of luck on your site, and with your kids!  
**taylhis**I will save the picture for you, and I have a bag of stuff for you that you left in Florida still!! Keep forgetting to give it to you! Looking forward to that post :)  
**derek**Ha- I "quit" blogging a couple times too, yet I still make the occasional post. I was going to make an Easter post a couple days late, but now that it's a week gone, and I forgot what I was going to say anyway, the next post will be...something else. End of year coming up, end of AWANA in a couple of weeks, getting busted by taxes on top of my share of the 6 grand I just paid out... My problem isn't so much time though as will. I'm glad you were able to get some time to post about your life. PS- please save that photo I left behind (along with the bread, but don't try to save \*that\*- just enjoy it!) for me, or you can email it if you want. I can't print it right now but lucky for us Costco is having a $60 off sale on an HP printer/scanner/copier this month and I will pick one up soon.

# Throes Of Teething

I have a baby in the throes of teething.Â  And that’s pretty much all I have time to say – time to pick him up again to stop the endless screaming and biting.Â  Poor thing 

### Comments

**taylhis**It's been getting steadily worse for about 3 months now, and no teeth to show for it :( Some kids just have a rough time with teething unfortunately.  
**derek**Hey, he should man up and be done after one! :D  
**jamiahsh**Three days of teething and out?! Wow, Derek! ;)  
**derek**'been three days- hopefully he's done. Okay, I know it's not quite that quick... Getting much sleep?

# Blessings

We always knew that we were blessed with our 5 healthy babies, but the reality of how blessed we really were is beginning to sink in.Â  Our first 4 children were very easy, content, healthy babies, so our 5th child, Luke, has rocked our world a little bit.Â  He has always been an intense baby; very energetic, playful, sleepless, alert and specific about his wants and needs.Â  But during the past few months, he’s been sick as well, so the poor little guy is havingÂ  trouble being comforted.Â  We’ve taken him to the doctor a few times, and he’s been diagnosed with bronchitis and an ear infection.Â  As if these illnesses were not enough, his chest x-rays show he has an enlarged heart.Â  We are currently praying that this is not a symptom of something seriously wrong with little Luke’s health.Â  My husband made me promise not to google it since we’ve made a few medical scares in our family worse by scaring ourselves with random internet information.Â  We are currently waiting for our appointment with the pediatric cardiologist.Â  Scary stuff.

I will continue to update when I can.Â  In the meantime, prayers for Luke would be wonderful 

### Comments

**derek**Will do. I will bring this to my church kids as well- kids praying for a kiddo.  
**jamiahsh**I agree... sometimes googling things like this can be scarier than getting the word from the doctor. Continued love, hugs, and prayers to you all. Hope you don't have to wait too long.

# Willie The Pig

A few weeks ago, our family had a houseguest for a few days.

His name is Willie, and he is a 4-year-old pot bellied pig.Â  The pig-sitting saga began when during a visit to the local pet store, we overhead our friend who works there regretfully saying into the phone that she could no longer pig-sit. After a brief discussion, my husbadn and I unanimously agreed that watching Willie would be a fun and entertaining homeschool lesson for our kids on responsibility, animal care, and

Willie arrived at our house on a Wednesday afternoon – not much choice on our part but for the record, Wednesday is our busiest day of the week.Â  My husband works outside the home all day Wednesdays and then we have about an hour to rush through the dinner prep, eating, and cleanup before we are off to youth group..Â  needless to say that having a strange animal in the house did not help things go smoothly!Â  But back to our introduction to Willie..Â  His “mom” had told me that he weighs about 50 lbs., so I was prepared for his size, however he was a bit bigger than my kids and soem of their friends were thinking.

### Comments

# January 2012

My blogging style has changed – maybe temporarily, maybe permanently.Â  It’s evolved, if you will, to meet the growing needs of my family.Â  I no longer have time to sit down 5 times a week and write about my thoughts, my plans, my stories, my ideas, nor do I have the time to detail my agenda.Â  With 5 kids now and all of the new things we’re doing (new baby, homeschooling, new career for both Hubby and I, new ministries…), I rarely do find myself sitting down and when I am, it’s rare that a computer is in front of me.Â  So for awhile, I will just post updates on the members of my family and our lives.Â  This will still serve as a way to keep in touch with those who read my blog (those especially that I cannot find as much time as I’d like to talk on the phone with because of all the noise in my house – phone conversations are nearly impossible at certain times of the day!), and my blog will also continue to serve as a family diary for us to look back on someday and enjoy together.Â  Updates:

Family – we began homeschooling last fall, and we still like it.Â  We’ve had to make some adjustments to our planned curriculum since new little bro Luke (born Oct 7 2011) is quite a happy though demanding handful.Â  We began co-op on January 9, which is a local program they have here at a church for homeschoolers.Â  We go every Monday, and each grade level participates in 3 different classes taught by the moms of the group.Â  Since it’s our first year, I don’t have a class to teach yet – I pulled nursery duty.Â  Yep – 3 hours every week working in the nursery with my little Luke and about 5 other babies – Luke is the only boy.Â  My husband asked me how I managed that one (because I LOVE babies!), and I don’t know – lucky I guess!!Â  Apparently there are some ladies who don’t want to deal with diapers and fussy babies and all that, but for me, there couldn’t be a better job for me to serve at co-op.Â  My other kids really like co-op.Â  Beeber (age 3) is in Preschool, and he came home the first week with a “carrot project” – the top of a carrot in a cup of water.Â  It was supposed to grow some green out the top, but ours didn’t.Â  He didn’t seem to mind though.Â  It’s funny because when he handed me his carrot as I was picking him up, I thought it was the remainder of what he had done with his snack until the teacher explained it to me – haha!Â  Disney is in Kindergarten at co-op, and she really likes it.Â  Since we’ve decided to homeschool our kids beginning at 2nd grade, Disney is also in public school preschool, and she loves both of them!Â  The older girls enjoy co-op too; it gives some of the structure of school without all the unnecessary rules and drama, and the classes are taught from a Christian perspective.Â  I like that the kids are held accountable to other adults besides their parents for their assignments and quizzes.Â  The Sunday-Monday rush is taxing for our family since we have seven bags to pack Sunday night for co-op AFTER a big weekend spent getting ready for church service, but it’s worth it and we are settling into a routine.Â  Wednesday sees us leading groups at youth group, and we had a friend offer to take the 3 middle kids to AWANA and they really like that.Â  Thursday we have Bible study, and as I said, much of our weekends now consist of planning Sunday church service and TRYING to find time to rest and relax.Â  Overall, we’re busier than ever, but I feel happier than ever – God is so great!Â  I felt so run-down and was having a really hard time for a few months, but I had some checkups with the doctor and think I got the problem solved.Â  I feel better than I have in years and I can’t thank God enough!!Â  Now we just have to get Hubby some more sleep since he is waking with Luke all night, every night AND working 2 jobs, not to mention all of the help he gives me around the house.

The past few months, I’ve learned better to accept the circumstances of life as seasons that are constantly changing.Â  I’ve also learned to better accept that the way things are now are most definitely going to change in a few months.Â  I’ve learned to look forward to seeing what God has in store for my family rather than to let the ever-changing dynamics of our lives fill me with fear, dread or worry.Â  As far as things at the new church, we’ve set up a wonderful childrens ministry, and we have about 20 kids that come every weekend.Â  This is an AMAZING thing when you realize that the church had 0 kids attending only 4 months ago.Â  We have been contemplating ideas for a youth ministry (tweens and teens) as well as some other things, and only God knows where we will be with that in a month or two.Â  As I tried to say, things change so fast that it’s difficult to update it all on my blog, especially when this post alone has taken me a few weeks of having to put it aside and come back to add more later in order to finish it!

Before I stop writing for the day, I do want to share an amazing God story we got to witness this past Sunday.Â  My husband had been up late most of last week writing his sermon, and there was a pancake supper at church on Saturday night.Â  I ended up staying home with my boys because I was feeling run down and Luke was crabby and oozing things from places (you don’t really want more details, trust me…Â  baby stuff).Â  So late Saturday night, Hubby decided to start telling God in prayer that he needed rest, and I was doing the same.Â  Sunday morning, I was making my runs for church – I am the designated driver for the childrens ministry.Â  Many of the kids that come to our church need rides because their home situations are…Â  let’s say complicated.Â  Our church is located in the middle of the country about 6 miles from town, so I make 2-3 trips there in the morning to pick up the kids and to drive my own family.Â  Sunday we saw a man riding a bike on US Route 6; his bike was pulling a trailer that normally is used for pulling children, but his was loaded with supplies.Â  I wondered if he was homeless or someone who was making a long trek because it isn’t all that unusal to see someone journeying down US 6 – our little corner of the world seems to be on the way to everywhere!Â  So we see people journeying down 6 from time to time, but not usually in the winter.Â  On my last run, as I pulled into church, I noticed the man on the bike was also pulling into church.Â  I got the kids settled, then went out to welcome him.Â  Turns out, his name is Michealangelo, and he had been on his journey on his bike for FOUR MONTHS!Â  He’s from Los Angeles, and he began by biking north in California, and then coming out this way headed to New York – because God sent him on this journey.Â  He saw the sign for our little church on US 6 and decided to stop.Â  Michael has amazing faith, and he had amazing stories to tell!Â  My husband asked him if he would share some of these with our congregation, and Michael obliged, even after sharing his concerns about the way he was dressed.Â  I don’t have the time to go into all of the amazing details of the personal touches that God put on this story – I’ve already burnt the eggs that I was cooking and the house smells disgusting.Â  But I will sum it up briefly:Â  Michael’s unexpected visit meant that my husband’s sermon that he had carefully prepeared was not used last week because we were treated to the testimony of Michael instead.Â  So my husband can rest a little easier this week knowing that his sermon is already prepared.Â  Also, we’ve been talking in our own family and at church about really living a Godly life and what that looks like; we’ve been trying to make opportunities to GO OUT and serve God rather than just sitting around, doing the same old things for US.Â  Michael’s testimony reaffirmed these concepts – here is a man who has devoted his entire life to doing what God wants him to do.Â  He left the life that he knew and WENT OUT THERE and is sharing the Word…Â  And here I am frustrated because my words are failing to convey the story…Â  And I wish I could find the links to the info about this guy on the internet.Â  Hubby found them so maybe when he gets home from work I can ask him and add them to my blog.

But anyway, it was a magical Sunday, and I am thankful that I got to be a part of it!Â  I will leave you now with a little update about my little Luke – he tried his tot wheels for the first time in January.Â  He likes it, but only for short periods of time.Â  He is a grown up little guy in a baby’s body with a baby’s attention span.Â  He loves to stand, and practice walking ALREADY even though he is not yet 4 months old.Â  He also loves to watch other kids in action – his sisters and brother and also the kids at co-op and at youth group.Â  WOW – I really have to blog more often!Â  Once I got going, I had so much to say but not enough time to say it…Â  sorry that I was kind of all over the place, but that’s the price I pay for sitting down and trying to do this with all these kids running around and my many tasks to accomplish!Â  Until next time…

lukes first time in tot wheels.mov

### Comments

**taylhis**Mike's FB page: http://www.facebook.com/mike.mariona#!/mike.mariona?sk=wall  
**taylhis**Thanks Mysmichelle - good to hear from you!  
**Mysmichelle**Glad to know you are hanging in there, keep up the good work. Shesh just reading about your life is tiring!! Best wishes.  
**taylhis**There are 3 hours (classes) of co-op, and before regular co-op there is an optional creative arts hour where they do a year-end program. Since we joined co-op mid-year, we could not join creative arts, but I don't think I would have anyway since co-op itself is so intensive. I can't imagine getting all the kids ready even earlier in the morning and having more work for them to do.  
**jamiahsh**Me, too! Sounds great and inspiring. US 6 is a US route for a reason... it goes all the way from California to New York and we are just lucky enough to be a small stretch along it. That would be cool... entertainment from the co-op! ;) Glad that new endeavor is working out so well.  
**derek**Wow, you could have cheated and made a few blogs out of this one. :) It's great that homeschooling is going so well for you and I'm glad you got your preferred role this year in the co-op. Do they do plays together? I saw a Christmas play from a local co-op in December. It looks like you and C have an additional duty now with AWANA- helping your Cubbie, Sparky, and T in T'er (did I get that right?) memorize sections. :) I look forward to hearing more about this Michaelangelo. Thanks for sharing.

# Florida 2011 - Trip Diary - Part 4

*(NOTE – This is part 4/4 of our family’s trip diary detailing our vacation to Orlando, FL taken a year ago now.Â  This last installment is quite late, but better late than never, I think!)*

Friday, January 21 – Today our house seemed quite empty as our travel companions left and it was just Hubby, me and the kids.Â  We did enjoy a day of family time, beginning with breakfast at…Â  Sizzler.Â  Actually, I don’t remember where we ate breakfast.Â  To be honest, I put the Florida trip diary aside for the past few months and now I don’t remember where we ate breakfast.Â  I don’t remember all of the details of the day, but I have enough treasured vacation memories to know that it was an excellent day spent with my family.Â  We drove over to Downtown Disney to try something different for a change – we had never been there.Â  Downtown Disney has so much to see that we just walked around for a few hours and were entertained without having to spend money.Â  My personal favorite was the amazing Lego store where one can buy just about any type of Lego a heart desires.Â  You can buy the flat building platforms, bricks in any color of the rainbow, minifigs, and there was even a sort of Lego buffet – you can fill a container with all different types of pieces, any kinds you want: basic building blocks, doors, windows, steering wheels, joints, hinges, you name it.Â  There were stations with samples to play with, and I had to exercise some self-control to let the kids play instead of sitting there myself for hours on end.Â  Because this is Florida, there were Lego things to see outside too – little stations with ramps where you can build Lego vehicles and race them, as well as full scale Lego models of people, the London Bridge, and even a large Loch Ness monster in the lake:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2012/01/Florida-Jan-14-23-2011-040.jpg)

It’s really a good thing for my family’s budget that there is not a Lego store within 100 miles of our house; I could go nuts in there!

We also went to the Rainforest Cafe and a few other stores and restaurants where they had really cool decor for the kids to see.Â  There was a restaurant with huge dinosaurs where we stopped to use the bathroom, and the kids even enjoyed the Little Miss Match shop (a company that sells socks in sets of 3 and none of them match.Â  The store has socks and lots of other stuff that little girls love to accessorize with).Â  It began to rain, so we got on a boat to cross the lagoon to get to the bus.Â  If you are on vacation in the Orlando area and you find yourself with an extra day or some downtime, then I recommend taking a spin on the Disney transportation – especially if you are over-budget on your trip because it’s all free.Â  A fair warning that Disney property is so large that riding the buses, boats and monorails can take up a significant part of your day, but it is a fun and FREE way to see the sights of Disney.Â  So we took a bus to the Grand Floridian hotel to catch the monorail, just for fun.Â  Parking at Downtown Disney is free, so we got on Disney grounds without even having to pay parking!Â  We did have to spend a good 45 minutes on the bus though, but by now it was pouring, so we didn’t mind too much.Â  Besides, Hubby surprised me on the bus when he presented me with a Severus Snape minifig that he had picked up as a surprise without me seeing when we were at the Lego store!!Â  I could not even tell him that Snape is my favorite Harry Potter character because he would have wanted to know why – I didn’t want to spoil the last Harry Potter movie for him when it wasn’t out yet at that time.

At the Grand Floridian, I had to take some kids to the bathroom, and while I was in there, Hubby got a last minute great deal on a character dinner for us!Â  So we enjoyed dinner with Cinderella, her prince, her step-sisters and her step-mother.Â  The food was wonderful, and the kids loved meeting the characters as they walked around to greet tables.Â  After that, we made our way back to our car, and we were exhausted…Â  I think we called it a night – I’m not really sure; it’s taken me so long to finish this trip diary that my memory has faded.Â  All I know is it was a really great day, and a super way to end a wonderful vacation – SO WISH we could go back this year!

Saturday, January 22, 2011 – On this day I know we began to make our way back to Ohio, but I don’t remember the details.Â  I think we had told the kids we were going to do some souvenir shopping, but we ran out of time and just wanted to hit the road.Â  Then we had an idea – there are Cracker Barrel restaurants lined up along the expressway all the way home, so we found one on the GPS and got there just before it closed.Â  Cracker Barrels have little stores in them, and the one we stopped at (in Georgia) had a great sale going on.Â  The kids were able to shop and had fun getting some great deals – it was a nice way to add a little more fun to our trip.Â  We arrived home very early Sunday morning, if I’m not mistaken, and probably slept all day and unpacked.Â  SUPER trip that made awesome memories – can’t wait to do it again someday, I hope!!

### Comments

**taylhis**Yup - first year in awhile not going to FL. It's the new job(s), financial limitations, the fact that we wouldn't really be able to fit all of us + luggage in the car for a 20+ hour trip... just not in the cards for this year.  
**derek**Is this your first year not going to Florida in awhile? New career and all would prevent it I would gather. In the two or three times I went down there I don't think I ever went to downtown disney. Hmm. I think next time I go I will have to do that and maybe some of the non-disney/universal sites as well.  
**jamiahsh**Downtown Disney is VERY cool! I went for an open casting call there about 6 (or maybe 7) years ago! Legoland was there, Planet Hollywood, Rainforest Cafe ("VOLCANO!"), and the Christmas Shop that I had to stop and get a surprise for Ma2 who always decorated her entire house year after year. A GREAT trip once again!

# Harvey, You Were Awesome

I was thinking that I should get in one more blog post before the New Year.Â  I was going to write a general update about my beautiful family, but before I got to writing it, I found myself thinking of Harvey.

Let’s begin at December 26, 2011.Â  My husband and the kids surprised me with a wonderful Christmas gift:Â  they had **all** saved and planned for months to buy us a zoo membership.Â  Our family loves zoos and has had a membership to the local zoo (whichever zoo happened to be local at the time)Â  for as long as Hubby and I have been married.Â  I remember that our most recent zoo membership expired on April 1st of last year – I remember this because I made sure to visit on April 1st for what would be our last visit to the zoo for many months.Â  For budget reasons, it didn’t make a lot of sense for us to renew the membership because I was expecting our 5th child in October – what pregnant lady wants to take her 4 kids to the zoo in the summer?Â  Not this one.Â  So we let the membership lapse.Â  I missed our visits to the zoo, but at the same time, plagued by pregnancy related nausea and fatigue, followed by post-cesarean surgery recovery and the joys (and trials) of caring for a new baby brother to 4 other kids, I didn’t *really* miss our visits to the zoo…

But then my family surprised me with that membership.Â  Now that I’m healed from the surgery.Â  Now that the baby has stayed with the babysitter a few times and actually liked it.Â  Now that I can take my home-schooled kids to the zoo any time I feel like taking a field trip!

This past week was a great one!Â  Hubby was able to flex his work schedule to spend a lot of time with the family, and we all enjoyed the break, which included visiting the Toledo Zoo.Â  In our travels to zoos over the years, we saw many amazing things and learned many amazing things.Â  Among them:Â  zoos are GREAT to visit in the winter!Â  Many animals are so much more active in the cold weather, and there are many less people, allowing visiting families opportunities not normally offered (Example: my kids made bird feeders as a craft at the zoo and *loved* it!!).

Being winter, some of the exhibits were closed.Â  Other animal environments were rearranged from the last time we had been there, so we couldn’t quite keep tabs on our familiar favorites.Â  We did notice that the Great Apes area was rearranged.Â  There was a sign saying that the Great Apes area was going to be closed for the Lights Before Christmas event, but we saw the gorillas and orangutans, so we didn’t think much of it.Â  Until we didn’t see Harvey the Chimp.Â Â  When I got home, I looked in the Toledo Zoo’s newsroom onlineÂ  and saw that Harvey had passed away in August.Â  It was sad for me; Harvey’s exhibit was one of my favorite stops at the zoo.Â  He was an elderly chimp who loved little kids, and here is a video I have of him playing with my kids.Â  I can’t be too sad though; Harvey died in his sleep, at the healthy chimp age of 52 – DOUBLE the average life expectancy of a chimp in captivity.

My other favorite exhibit at the zoo, the orangutan family, was also rearranged – during our visit we saw only the mom and daughter – what happened to Boomer (my favorite zoo animal until Harvey stole the title), the patriarch of the orangs?Â  Such things are commonplace in zoos, and I’m thankful that I once again have a membership that gives me insight to studying the wonderful creatures inhabiting the zoo.Â  As much as I mourn my old favorites, I will be looking forward to watching the new additions as well:Â  baby Lucas the elephant, the new baby tigers soon to be exhibited, and the new addition soon to be announced to the public due any day!Â  Yes, I have inside info!Â  One thing I love doing while visiting the zoo is talking to the volunteers, and one was beside herself with the awesome news of an impending birth!Â  So much so that she couldn’t keep it to herself, even if she was supposed to!Â  Would I do the same if I was a zoo volunteer?Â  Dunno…Â  but in the meantime, a HUGE THANK YOU GOES OUT TO HUBBY AND THE KIDS!!!Â  I’ve already enjoyed my zoo membership more than you would have ever hoped for when you planned and saved!!Â  LOVE YOU GUYS!!!

I wish everyone reading this a very happy and safe New Year!

Here are tribute videos to Harvey the chimp – watch how he played with my kids!Â  We will miss him!

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

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### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**What a wonderful gift from your family. I know how much you all love the zoo. I remember when you and I used to go to Brookfield. Enjoy your gift.  
**jamiahsh**Happy New Year! I remember hearing of Harvey's passing but must have inadvertently forgot to mention it to you. Sorry. Your family is the best... WHAT A SURPRISE!  
**derek**Happy new year. Here I thought tangents was down again and it turns out it's just my blog. Expired from inactivity? ;)

# Monday, Monday

Don’t you just hate when you run out of certain household staples and a trip to the store becomes imminent whether you planned it for that day or not?Â  Happened to me today, and wouldn’t you know, it was a cold December rainy day.Â  Complicating what should have been a simple run to the store were my 5 kids and the fact that the rain decided to change over into sleet and ice during the trip.

As always, it took us almost an hour to get ready to go.Â  It takes forever for the kids to listen well enough and to stop playing long enough to pull on socks, shoes, and coats.Â  Since 2 of my kids are in diapers and one is being bottle fed, my diaper bag these days is huge and takes some time to pack every time I leave the house; especially when I have to take breaks from packing it to tend to the baby and the various needs of various kids.Â  Finally, we were ready to leave the house, but somewhere in the melee I decided to leave my 2 oldest kids home.Â  Contributing to my decision, Sammie was having a rough and crabby day, so I decided it would be most productive for the family if she and her brother were separated since that’s where today’s fights were centered.Â  Except that meant that I had to come up with a home-schooling project for the girls to do while the rest of us were out, which meant further delay.

I get most of our family’s staples at Walmart because they are usually cheapest and it’s the whole one-stop shopping thing.Â  Except that their milk prices are horrible, so today I found it worth the savings to unload all 3 kids (ages 2 mos., 3 years and 5 years) to make an extra stop at Rite Aid.Â  Besides, I’ve had a hankering for some Combos and Rite Aid often has them on sale.Â  But wouldn’t you know it, today was a Monday and there wasn’t a sale on Combos, nor was there any milk on the shelves at all!Â  “The truck is usually here by now,” said the clerk when I asked about the absence of milk, but his musing didn’t help me any.Â  So I re-loaded all the little kids and headed to Walmart – by now the rain was turning to sleet and the driving visibility was compromised.Â  We made it across town safely with a quick pitstop at the gas station because it was coffee Monday, which meant all sizes of coffee are just $.89.Â  But they were out of 24 oz. cups.Â  Which meant that I had to have a 20 ounce cup for the same price as a 24 ounce cup would have cost – the kind of stuff that normally gets my goat.Â  No matter, I shouldn’t have coffee greed anyway, but now I was cold, wet, and slightly irritated…Â  and I had all these KIDS with which to deal…Â  that extra 4 ounces of coffee could have served me well!

On to Walmart where I had to circle the lot 3 times to find a decent parking spot.Â  Not that I’m lazy, but it makes me nervous to walk through the parking lot with so many little kids, at least one of whom doesn’t listen well and tends to run off whenever he pleases.Â  I got a break because my parking spot was next to a cart return, so I loaded all 3 kids into a cart – though it was a bit of a feat to fit them all in along with my huge diaper bag.Â  We had plans to switch into a more kid-friendly cart once we got inside, but the kid-rider carts were all buried behind other carts, leaving me no choice but to leave my kid-filled cart in the path of every other shopper who entered the Walmart in that particular 5 minute span.Â  The shopping itself was uneventful, unless you count the fact that my son tumbled out of the cart (did it have to be while he was explaining to me how he likes Justin Beiber’s songs just not Justin Beiber himself?Â  And one wonders what that all even means when coming from a 3-year-old…)Â  We had to stop a few times to nurse his wounds and to feed his brother, but then we were on our way.Â  I didn’t realize until my groceries were all bagged up that I forgot my wallet, meaning that I had to drag all the kids back out to the car in the now freezing rain (it actually made noises as it bounced against our cheeks) to get my wallet and thenÂ  to return to the store to buy our groceries…Â Â  not to mention maneuvering BACK to the car to load up all the kids and the groceries…

Following that, my intentions were good; I was going to bring Hubby a special half-price fountain drink from Sonic for Happy Hour, but I ran out of gas.Â  Well, I didn’t run out of gas and get stranded in the cold, so for that I’m thankful.Â  But after all of the illustrations of Murphy’s Law I witnessed on this Monday, I decided not to risk stopping at the gas station again for gas – coffee Monday or not.

In case you had the same sort of Monday and need a theme song:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**Mysmichelle**Hang in there girl, 5 kids is no small undertaking!! Winter + Monday+ shopping can not end up good. Glad you made it through.  
**jamiahsh**WOW! Now THAT IS a Monday! UGH!

# Little Luke Likes Lights

Thought I would post a quick little update about our youngest child who is growing so quickly that I don’t know if we can call him our “new addition” any longer!Â  Luke James is almost 2 months old, and among his likes are being held, listening to music, and looking at lights.Â  He’s been especially impressed by the colorful lights on the Christmas tree.Â  These things are common favorites among many almost-2-month-olds, but Luke is a very special baby – he has been able to hold his head up for a few weeks and is extremely alert for a baby his age.Â  His VERY FAVORITE thing to do in the whole world is to be held like this while his little hands open and close and his eyes bulge as he takes in the world around him:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/12/Lukes-fav-position-11-26-11-1.jpg)[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/12/chuck-e-chzl-12-3-11-13.jpg)Luke doesn’t sleep well at night, but we aren’t really surprised because none of our 5 kids were very good sleepers as babies.Â  But Luke doesn’t sleep much during the day, either – he takes about one good nap per day about 3-4 days per week.Â  And by “good nap” I mean him sleeping for over an hour without waking up.Â  Actually, I thought of the perfect way to describe Luke the other day: he is an *intense* baby.Â  He wants **what** he wants **when** he wants it, and he’s not shy about asking.Â  Don’t get me wrong; it’s not that he is a disagreeable baby, and he is very smiley.Â  He’s just very demanding, and since he is always awake…Â  well, you can understand why my free time is down to almost none and the blog posts from me remain infrequent.Â  Especially because he demands to have 100% of the available attention, whether it’s eye contact while playing with him or using both hands to feed him – he is not a fan of a multi-tasking parent.

He’s already able to play – he loves looking into the eyes of people who play with him, and he especially likes to exchange baby talk with “goo” being his favorite word.Â  He loves when his sisters and brother play with him, but it’s hard to tell if he has a favorite yet.Â  Christopher is 3 and Luke’s only brother, but he doesn’t play with him often – it seems like Christopher is afraid of hurting Luke, and he also seems shy about talking to him or playing with him.Â  Disney likes to hold Luke (she’s 5), but she loses interest in a matter of minutes.Â  Taylor is almost 12, and she enjoys Luke’s cuteness, but she is too busy with a life of her own to spend a lot of time with her baby brother.Â  Sammie stands out as the remarkable sibling.Â  7-year-old Sammie just adores her baby brother; she’s always asking to hold him, and she doesn’t soon grow tired of it.Â  She plays with Luke, asks how he’s doing, expresses interest in his activities, misses him when she’s gone, and loves seeing cute pictures of him.Â  I’m looking forward to watching their special bond strengthen even further as they grow up together.Â  His brother and sisters love their baby brother in their own ways, and any time Luke does something new, he is crowded by an admiring entourage that can rival that of most celebrities.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/12/Sammie-and-Luke-12-4-11-3.jpg)[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/12/Sammie-and-Luke-12-4-11-2.jpg)

Luke also really likes baths.Â  He smiles like crazy the whole time he’s in the bath; he’ll even throw out a couple of “goo”s and “gaa”s and doesn’t seem to notice that he sounds different when his ears are under water.

Luke is also the tie-breaker in our family – we have 3 brown-eyed people and 3 blue-eyed people.Â  Two months old is too early to tell what color a baby’s eyes will be, so right now we don’t know which “side” will win.Â  It’s interesting also that our 2 blue-eyed kids are left-handed while our 2 brown-eyed kids are right-handed.Â  Will Luke be a tie-breaker in only the eye color category or will he break the mold and be a blue-eyed righty or a brown-eyed lefty?

Even with his intensity, Luke is a wonderful baby and it’s been nothing but a pleasure so far to get to know him as his personality develops – I wouldn’t change any part of him or anything about him, no matter how far behind on stay-at-home-mommy-work I am!Â  Here he is wearing the adorable camouflage hoodie someone got him – it’s so cute!Â  And here’s an interesting bit of culture clash for you – where I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, Luke would wear this and we’d be trendy.Â  Here in the woods of rural Northwest Ohio, I put the camo hoodie on Luke, and we heard no fewer than FIVE comments about hunting and him being a little woodsmanÂ  

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/11/Luke-likes-his-camo-hoodie-11-30-11-2.jpg)

### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**What a wonderful blog. It seems like forever since I have seen him. I can't wait to hold him in a couple of weeks. And don't worry about being behind on the "stay at home mommy work". You see how fast your children grow up. You MUST enjoy them while they are little.  
**jamiahsh**And nice use of alliteration!  
**jamiahsh**Well.. we ARE in the throngs of deer hunting season, so no surprise there! I can't believe how much he has grown! Look at that precious face :D

# King Praising King

Our new addition, Luke James, is almost 2 months old (already!), and he loves music.Â  While I sit cuddling, feeding, and playing with him, I’ve been perusing youtube.com looking for music for us to enjoy together.Â  Being the time of year that it is, we’ve really been appreciating Christmas tunes, especially Martina McBride and Celine Dion’s versions of O Holy Night.Â  How I love to sit with my little Luke and think about what the lyrics of these songs REALLY mean!Â  I’ve also been especially appreciative of Elvis’ gospel songs and praise music lately.Â  My favorites are “How Great Thou Art” and “Put Your Hand in the Hand”.Â  Today it came to my attention that my friend’s dad composed a praise song for Elvis and sang backup for the track with his music group, The Imperials!Â  How cool is that!Â  Thanks to Amanda who shared her dad’s talent on this song, “If the Lord Wasn’t Walking by My Side”:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Pun intended in the title of the movie.  
**jamiahsh**HOW FUN IS THAT! To know someone who has a connection to E! I think I have come to appreciate Elvis' gospel music more than his mainstream. I like Put Your Hand in the Hand. Did you know that he played a doctor (almost said a priest but I knew that was wrong) in his last movie "Change of Habit" Mary Tyler Moore played a nun. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2mxa1iZZHc&feature=related Still think it is awesome that the only Grammys he received were for his gospel music.

# Getting Old... Er, Growing Up

Wednesday November 9 is the 2011 Country Music Awards – an event once so important to me that I would put my schedule on hold so I could enjoy watching this annual awards show on tv.Â  For a few years now, I have committed my Wednesday nights to leading a small group for church’s student ministries.Â  The past 2 years, one of my kids happened to be sick on the same Wednesday nights as the awards show, so I volunteered to be the parent to stay home with the sick kid and I didn’t have to miss the show nor play hooky from youth group – I had a legitimate reason for calling in sick.Â  This year, there is again a virus circulating through our family, and I think I have a mild case…Â  but things have changed.Â  Even if one of my kids was ill tonight, I would be the one to go to youth group and let Hubby stay home with the sick kid(s).Â  Luckily, I think we’ll both be able to make it to youth group tonight, and I am so excited!Â  The new series we started last week is about demons, and it gave me a great connecting point with my girls – we had a great group time last week!Â  Now that I’m back from maternity leave and free from the distractions of pregnancy, I am stoked to build relationships with my youth group girls and help them build their spiritual relationships with Jesus Christ.Â  I am so excited about youth group tonight that the country awards show hardly matters to me – I might try to set up a recording device so I can watch it later, but watching it live doesn’t matter to me at all when once it was dire for my entertainment.

Maybe I’m getting old…Â  no, I think I’m growing up!Â  It’s so cool to me that God is teaching me about prioritizing and also about using my free time and leading me toward hobbies that glorify Him.Â  How amazing is it that I can be entertained, relaxed, refreshed, and feel fulfilled, not by doing something that only **I** enjoy but by doing something that affects others in a positive way as well?

### Comments

**taylhis**Here it is a week later and there is more virus... think there are 3-4 running through our house right now. Well anyway, thanks for the well wishes! Mysmichlle - good to hear from you again! I had that feeling a few years ago when I started to drift away from the country music scene. I hardly listen to country radio anymore, so I wonder if I will recognize the music, singers or jokes? Still haven't watched it yet...  
**Mysmichelle**I'm proud of you for your new priorities, and if it makes it any easier, they made me feel old because I hardly recognized any of the people participating. It didn't seem very "country music" to me this year. I'm so glad you are doing so well and happy with your new additions!  
**derek**Hope you're feeling better, soon if not now. Yeah, I've taken time off from reading the blogs- sorry.  
**taylhis**I think it's just a slow virus - slow to come on, slow to leave. I felt increasingly awful as the day wore on, but there was no way I was going to miss tonight, especially after writing this post ;) I must admit, meds helped me get thru the night. We'll see what tomorrow brings.  
**jamiahsh**Growing in wisdom, perhaps? But glad that the virus is hopefully running its course?

# How Hubby Saved Halloween

October is normally one of the busiest months for our family, and that was true before October 2011 – the month that saw us being blessed with a new baby, starting homeschooling, and Hubby starting a new job/career all at the same time.Â  There are so many fun fall and Halloween events and activities that we like to do this time of year; we didn’t even realize exactly how many until this year when we had to scale it back a bit.Â  We skipped the corn mazes, the pumpkin farms, and all the haunted attractions this year.Â  We did take the kids to the mall for the trick-or-treating there, and it was lots of fun even if there were 50 times more people than last year – there was a line circling the perimeter of the entire mall!Â  Not a problem, seeing as how we live near the smallest mall I’ve ever seen and the line was continuously moving – as I said, lots of fun!

I heard about a congressman on the news who wants to pass legislation to move Halloween to the 4th Saturday in October because it’s safer for kids and easier to work around school if trick-or-treating is always on a Saturday and earlier in the day.Â  Some lady they interviewed for her opinion on the street was against it; she said that would be like moving Christmas to make it more convenient.Â  Umm, not even close in my opinion, but I won’t go there.Â  My point is that the area in which I live always schedules the Halloween stuff on Saturdays anyway – I guess we’re ahead of our time here in rural Ohio, haha.Â  This year we had 2 Halloween parties and our trick-or-treat on Saturday October 29.Â  Except we found out during the mall trick or treat (which was on Tuesday night) that baby Luke is a homebody – he gets really fussy when we try to take him places, especially if it’s outdoor places, and yes, we do bundle him up.Â  Saturday was a very big day for all of us because Hubby’s and my lack of sleep finally caught up to us.Â  We began the day on a very grumpy note, and everything was very hectic as we tried to get our work done at the church and ready the kids for the Halloween festivities.Â  We made it to the first party – the community Halloween party they have at the ice rink (no ice of course).Â  We had tons of fun as usual, and we even got on the hayride before the rain came and before the line got too long.Â  But Luke decided he was finished with the Halloween party before we were.Â  No sticking this baby in a stroller and feeding him on the go like we did with the other 4 kids; he just won’t have it and voices his complaints loudly.Â  Luke is our fussiest baby; the others were all very adaptable babies – in retrospect, I guess we were spoiled.Â  We are a very busy family, so either us scaling things back for Luke or trying to get him to adapt to our busyness will be interesting.Â  He can go from what I call ‘zero to screaming’ in a matter of seconds, but don’t get me wrong – he’s oh-so-incredibly cute and lovable.Â  It’s just that his idea of a good time is being held and cuddled – constantly.Â  Which also explains my lack of blogging lately – while I am feeling better after being sick most of the pregnancy and am recovering well after the surgery, I am not a very successful one-handed typist.Â  There really isn’t a choice between cuddling a cute baby or blogging, now is there?Â  So anyway, I took Luke to the car while Hubby finished up at the party with the other kids, and we decided to put off trick-or-treating until another day and do it in a nearby community that had scheduled it on Sunday.Â  We also decided that Hubby would stay home with Luke that evening while I took the other kids to our other planned Halloween party.Â  We went home and tossed a couple of frozen pizzas in the oven for a quick dinner, but wouldn’t you know by the way that Saturday was going – we burnt a pizza and only the kids got fed.Â  At least our evening plan worked out – I went to the party with the 4 older kids, and we all had a blast.Â  Luke actually let Hubby catch a nap while we were gone too!

Sunday we drove the 10 miles to the town where we were going to trick-or-treat, but we quickly became confused – no one was out; it was like a ghost town.Â  Hubby stopped at a gas station and found out that the trick-or-treating was from 3:30-5.Â  We had readied ourselves and arrived there ready to trick-or-treat from 5:30-7.Â  Apparently my lack of sleep had impaired my ability to read the time correctly in the newspaper.Â  I can’t beleive I did that – I had checked the paper probably about FIVE times throughout the week to make sure I had the right time, day, and place.Â  And I had misread the information each of those FIVE times.Â  So my genius Hubby made us a plan.Â  He stopped at Walmart and picked up 2 huge bags of candy – at full price I might add, which was hard for him.Â  He loves store clearances and sales, and it’s a testament to how much he loves his family that he bought all that candy at full price knowing that it would be half off in just a day or two.Â  But anyway, we got the candy and stopped at the dollar store and bought each kid a flashlight.Â  We drove over to the park, and Hubby hid the candy all around the park and then we let the kids loose with their flashlights and trick-or-treat bags to find it.Â  They loved it!Â  They said they liked it even more than trick-or-treating, and we even got an unprompted handmade thank you card later that evening from 7-year-old Sammie – and I quote, “I love wat we did today”.Â  I should add how great the kids were in the car as we tried to figure out what was going on with the trick-or-treating.Â  They were all in their costumes and ready to go, and then mom and dad starting driving around aimlessly.Â  When they found out they wouldn’t be trick-or-treating after all, there was not a tear, not even a protest.Â  Just a few questions and much patience as they waited to see what we would do instead – they are AMAZING!

I think I have some video of the kids at the mall, but other than that, things were way too hectic during our Halloween celebrations to take many pictures or video.Â  We have our wonderful memories though, and those of course are priceless.

Here’s a picture of my kids dressed in their Halloween costumes on the day they arrived in the mail from Grammie.Â  11-year-old Taylor was a pirate, 7-year-old Sammie and 5-year-old Disney were princesses, and 3-year-old Christopher was Superman:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/11/9-5-11-kids-halloween-costumes-002.jpg)

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Better than Easter Egg hunting I dare say! Way to go pal! I don't think you can "change" the official October 31st but it is good when the community adapts to make the festivities relatively accessible for the most people. I was CK/Superman one year when I worked at Wally World in 3rd. The surprise was on me as I did not have to work that night, but it was still fun. Glad you had a fun holiday, sleep deprived that it was ;)  
**justj**Great thinking! I always wondered about moving halloween to a 'more' convenient time. I like it best when it is on the 31st.  
**Phyllis Beyer**What a wonderful blog, Lisa. Chris is a genius. I can only imagine how much fun the kids had at the park - great idea! I wish I lived closer. I would cuddle Luke all the time while you went with the other kids.

# Warning About Potty Training At Walmart

My little boy Christopher is 3 years old, and we’ve been working on potty training for a while now.Â  He gets it, but he just doesn’t remember to make it to the potty every time he has to go.Â  The other day we were in Walmart, and he wanted to use the potty.Â  Because he was with mom, he had to go in the ladies’ room, and because he is an independent little guy, he wanted to go into the stall by himself.Â  Next thing I know, there was a huge CRASH!

It seems that Christopher had taken off his diaper and tried to throw it away in the little “garbage can” that they have in each stall of a ladies bathroom.Â  The receptacle somehow fell off the wall, clattered to the floor, and now used tampon applicators were rolling everywhere.Â  Beyond disgusting, right?Â  How are those things not a bio-hazard?Â  Being the considerate little boy that he is, Christopher tried to pick up the garbage, but thankfully I was right there and shouted NOOO just in time before he touched anything.Â  After that happened, my sensitive little guy was trying to finish going potty with his hands on his ears.Â  He wouldn’t let go, not only because of the loud noise the “garbage can” made when it fell but also because the automatic flushing toilets really scare him too.Â  After we got all that sorted out, he did pry his hands off his ears long enough to wash them, but then those darn automatic energy-saver hand dryers got the best of him – those things are loud!Â  In the end, potty mission accomplished, but in the future, it might just be easier for us to stay home until we’re done with this potty training business!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/10/blog-pic.jpg)

### Comments

**Jamiahsh**Poor little buddy. Hope he wasn't too traumatized ;) but keep up the good work Beebs!  
**taylhis**Yes - exactly the variety I was talking about. SO LOUD! And those are so powerful that they actually blow the skin on your hand around. Ok, that just sounds weird...  
**derek**Yikes! Lot's of noise in today's public restrooms. One dealer I have been to has a newer type of blow dryer, vortex is the name I think. It is high speed, and as you can imagine as the air speed increases, so does the noise. A mini jet-engine...

# So How'd It Go?

Overall, so much better than my fears were telling me it would go.Â  I had my second cesarean section on Friday, October 7.Â  Boy was I nervous beforehand!Â  I figured I would write out the details, just in case we decide to do this again I can look back at it and know what to expect.Â  So I warn you, if you’re squeamish about medical procedures or just plain not interested, then skip the post.Â  But if I can make just one person feel more at ease about their impending cesarean, even if it’s future me, then it’s worth writing this all out and sharing the details.

The day of my scheduled cesarean, the hospital told me to arrive at 5:30 AM.Â  Hubby and I set the alarm for 4:30 and got there a little early so we could visit the hospital chapel and pray together.Â  Thankfully, Grandma had arrived in town the night before and had our 4 kids at her hotel.Â  The first nurse we asked did not know where the chapel was in the hospital, which I found strange, but then again, our local hospital is undergoing major expansion and renovation, so I guess that’s the excuse I’ll let them have for the fact that their chapel (when we finally found someone who knew where it was) was just an empty room.Â  No matter because God listens where ever you are, so we prayed together and went back to the maternity ward where they began to prep me for my surgery.Â  They put an IV in, which didn’t go very well.Â  Seems I have great veins in my arms for drawing blood (theÂ  blood techs always ooh and ahh over me and my veins, which makes them weird in my book), but in my hands, not so much.Â  Getting IVs is always very painful for me, and it bruises up my whole hand.Â  This day was no exception.Â  It hurt a lot, and they had to give me 2 holes before they got it right.Â  Then the nurse comes and tells me that because of the combination of it being my 5th baby and the fact that I had to have a blood transfusion last time that they were going to have to give me a back-up port in my other hand just in case.Â  So they start doing that, and that one hurts even more.Â  Next thing I know, I have a golf ball sized lump in my hand – “The vein blew” the nurse told me.Â  I don’t ever want to hear anyone tell me that something carrying blood throughout my body “blew”, and I still haven’t googled that one to see what it is because it sounds so nasty.Â  And at this point, I’m near tears thinking that if things are going wrong already, what will happen when they cut me open?Â  But they finally got my second IV port in, and then after the insertion of the catheter (not a big deal and I will spare the details), I was ready to be wheeled off to the surgery room in a wheelchair.

Luckily I had taken the c-section class at the hospital, so the cold sterility of the operating room did not alarm me, and I also knew that my Hubby had to wait outside until certain preparations were made.Â  On our way into the operating room, I saw the backup doctor, and he was talking to himself in the hallway in kind of a strange way.Â  He is known for being a bit different, so it didn’t really worry me, especially since I knew my regular doctor would be there also.Â  Besides, Dr. Strange delivered my 3rd child, and she was the easiest delivery I had.Â  I will spare details for what happened next; it’s a bit personal – if you really need to know how they prep a patient for a c-section then take a class at your local hospital.Â  Then the anesthesiologist came in, and my heart sank when I realized it was the same lady who gave me my epidural during the birth of baby #4 – the epidural that never worked.Â  She gave me my spinal, and it pinched a little, but much less than an epidural, not really a big deal at all.Â  My legs started to get tingly, and I was really starting to panic big time.Â  I kept asking the anesthesiologist if everything I was feeling was normal, and she was so nice and reassuring. Â  They had a blood pressure cuff on my arm which kept going off every few minutes, and they also gave me oxygen in my nose – I felt very well cared for.Â  They let Hubby in, and he and the anesthesiologist (so tired of typing that word, think I’ll just call her Dr. Drug from now on) sat by my head the whole time.Â  Dr. Drug said that they would test me to make sure that I was numb before they did anything, but guess what – they didn’t.Â  I brought this up to someone after it was over, and they had a good point – they probably tested my numbness but didn’t even tell me about it.Â  Since it was working, I didn’t feel the test, so they proceeded.Â  Duh.Â  It’s just that I was so nervous about the numbing not working after what happened with my epidural; you can’t blame me for being concerned.

The next thing I remember is the tugging and pulling, which is also something for which the c-section class prepared me.Â  But it was actually much less unpleasant than I had panicked it would be.Â  It’s just that it seemed to take forever.Â  They said it would take about 1-2 minutes and according to Hubby, it took 4 minutes.Â  If you ask me, I would say it took 15 minutes.Â  The whole time I could hear the doctors talking and I kept asking Hubby what they were saying because I was panicking about the health of the baby and the fact that I was lying there sliced open on the table.Â  He said they were just discussing their techniques.Â  My Hubby kept looking down there, past the curtain, and I kept wondering how he could do that – if it were him lying on a table sliced open, I don’t know that I could look.Â  But then again, I don’t think it was like surgery looks on tv – I was picturing a completely open body cavity, but that’s a different kind of surgery.Â  I guess that’s why there was all that tugging and pulling.Â  So anyway, finally Hubby says that the baby is out, but I don’t hear crying, so I begin to panic even more (notice a trend here?Â  I am a worrywart, in case you haven’t noticed).Â  But both people seated at my head tell me everything is fine, and then I hear the baby (Luke James) cry.Â  I feel so relieved, and I can’t believe it’s over.Â  Except it’s not.Â  They clean up the baby, and they hold him up in front of my face for about a millisecond, and then they take him out of the room along with my husband and probably about half the staff that was on hand.Â  At some point, I don’t remember when, but I’m pretty sure it was after the baby was born, Dr. Drug held up a little vial and says, “I’m going to give you this.”Â  She puts it in my IV, and I find out later that it was Duramorph, a form of morphine.Â  I’m wondering now if this is something they give all their c-section patients (those who are not opposed to medications), or if I got the “panicking patient” special.Â  At any rate, after the morphine, my memory gets fuzzy, but I do remember lying there getting sewed up (still not feeling a thing below my chest).Â  My complaint was that it seemed to take FOREVER because I had nothing to do but lie there, and all I could think about was seeing my baby.Â  I even got envious of my poor husband, because here I had just gone through this surgery and now HE was getting to spend all this time with the baby and I hadn’t even barely gotten a look at him.Â  They should really think about putting a tv in there or something…Â  or would that distract the doctors?Â  Best not to think about it, I guess.Â  I had to keep talking myself out of looking at the ceiling because it was reflective, and I could see a little of me and a lot of red there – they ought to fix that too; I would bet that no one wants to see themselves getting surgery.Â  But finally they were finished, and a few of the staff people worked together to lift my helpless body onto theÂ  gurney for the transport back to my room.

When I got there, there was Hubby with the baby, all excited to see me, and then I finally got to hold our new son.Â  And he was (is) so incredibly beautiful.Â  The rest of the day was wonderful.Â  Slowly my legs began to work again, and I could not believe it that I had absolutely no pain!Â  It did not resonate with me that I was on drugs.Â  I did feel kind of loopy, but I didn’t really think much of it and enjoyed the euphoria of having a new healthy baby and the relief that the worst part was over.Â  Weather-wise it ended up being a terrible weekend to be stuck in the hospital – it was 80 degrees out and sunny, and the grandmas took my kids to the zoo on Saturday, so I had to miss that, but at least they got to go.Â  When I was released from the hospital on Monday, it was still very nice out for a few days, but I didn’t feel up to going outside and by the time I did, Northern Ohio fall weather was in full swing and I’ve been cold ever since.Â  Oh well, such is life, and my Hubby had perfect advice when I was bummed about missing the beautiful fall colors (it was amazing how different our neighborhood looked with all the leaves on the ground after just 3 days!).Â  He said, “There will be plenty more color-changing seasons, but there are only so many baby seasons.”Â  What a wise, wonderful man!

Back to my recovery in the hospital, it went fairly smoothly, although I did have a lot of pain starting Saturday once the morphine wore off.Â  The baby was up all night on Friday, but I didn’t mind at all because I just wanted to be with him.Â  I haven’t watched tv in years, but over the weekend, I watched countless episodes of 3’s Company, Roseanne (forgot about the one where Becky gets into the liquor cabinet, haha!), and Everybody Loves Raymond – you know, shows from when tv was actually good.Â  I learned about the Prohibition era from PBS, and I also learned that there are conspiracy theorists who believe that there really isn’t gold in Fort Knox – hmm, that’s something to think about I guess.Â  Luke slept a full 5 hours on Saturday night from 1:30-6:30, and so did I since no one came for my blood until 6:30.Â  Last time I was in the hospital, I seem to remember them coming for blood every hour on the hour which made it really hard to sleep, but then again I had a lot of complications last time including the need for an emergency cesarean and a blood transfusion.Â  Sunday night, little Luke decided he wasn’t going to sleep again, and I woke up from my 45 minute nap that night feeling terrible – achy and lots of other pain, and chills because of a fever I was running.Â  Not only that, but there was a mean nurse who informed me in a not-so-nice way that I was over my limit of acetaminophen, which meant I was not allowed any pain medicine.Â  That really ticked me off; partly because of the way she said it, and partly because no one had given me any indication that this was a problem.Â  Had they warned me that I was getting near the limit, I would have declined some of the meds offered to me to avoid this.Â  Actually, all of the other nurses had been telling me that I should stay ahead of the pain.Â  They specifically said not to wait until the pain was really bad to take the meds otherwise they wouldn’t work.Â  The staff must have known I was upset because at 11pm Sunday night, my doctor called my bedside phone personally and reassured me.Â  And my doctor is the one I credit with my smooth delivery and quick recovery – she has been 1000% better than my previous doctors in every way throughout this process, and for that, I am so thankful.

Since I’ve been home, I’ve been resting (probably not as much as I should have, but I have 5 kids now, who can rest with 5 kids in the house??).Â  Hubby has been *amazing* at taking care of me AND things around the house, but he also started a new job 2 days after the baby was born, which leaves him with 2 jobs, taking care of the 4 kids and me AND waking with the new baby at night as he likes to do.Â  My mother did a ton of laundry while she was here, and I’m just now starting to do laundry again a week and a half later, so that helped a lot too.Â  People from church have been wonderful about sending meals for our family, and that has been incredible.Â  Not only that, but we also have frozen meals that people sent and that my husband’s mother made while she was visiting for when our meal delivery runs out.Â  It’s been crazy, but we are managing, and a week and half later, I’ve been out and about and back in the real world.Â  I still have pain, but nothing extreme, and my 600mg ibuprofen works pretty well for that.Â  There are 2 complications I had that I was not expecting; one is worthy of a blog post all its own and I’ll get to it next time.Â  The other is the return of my backaches.Â  I’ve had a sore back since high school; I worked fast food and had to pop a Doan’s before every shift to make it through.Â  There are various things that I think caused it, but what does that matter now.Â  The strange thing is that during my pregnancy, my backaches disappeared.Â  Most women find new backaches during pregnancy, and mine disappeared.Â  I didn’t think much of it until I get home from the hospital and experience my back pain again.Â  This is discouraging because I know the incision pain will go away with time, but the backaches seem to be getting worse, and I have no guarantee that my back will ever feel better.Â  I guess it’s something to talk to my wonder doc about in my 6-week follow-up.Â  I already had my 1 week follow-up with the doctor, and she said my incision looks really great and my body is healing well – for that I am thankful.

Baby’s healthy, 4 big sisters and brother are healthy, I’m getting healthy, and Hubby is healthy (even if he needs much more sleep – praying for that to come soon) – what more can we ask for!Â  Life is good; God is great!

And oh yeah…Â  everywhere little Luke goes, he has a constant crowd of admirers.Â  If it wasn’t so sweet, it would be annoying because hey, when is it MY turn to hold the baby?!?Â  ðŸ˜‰

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/10/10-12-11-Avell-5.jpg)

### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**Wonderful post. Pretty much what I remember from my c-section when you were born. I did not recover nearly as fast as you did - you must be part Wonder Woman.  
**taylhis**WOW! Didn't notice that before. I thought it was such a cute picture, but now I want to take it off the internet! LOL! You're right by the way - it really IS just his thumb, I promise!!!  
**derek**I took the cowardly way out and only read the first, then last three paragraphs. I am glad to hear you are getting such support from your community and family on this. Five kids now- wow. I pray the doc finds something in regards to your back. That pic- at first I thought something was...off with little C's pose, but looking closer I see his hand is behind T so only his thumb shows.  
**taylhis**Probably more sleep in 6 mos or so, but alas, we have not yet had a baby sleep through the night before reaching the age of 1 year. But thanks for the kind words :)  
**Jamiahsh**Love your post! Even when relating serious topics, you still manage to bring a light touch! So glad that all are well (tired, but well) and I do know how much C likes to try to balance work, wife, kids, and sleep (that will come in 6 months or so , right?)

# Luke James

Our 5th bundle of joy arrived on October 7, 2011.Â  His name is Luke James, and he was born at exactly 8 am, weighed 7 lbs 11 oz and was 19.5 inches long.Â  He is healthy and a very happy easy-going baby.Â  He seems to have his days and nights mixed up though, which I suspected based on his movements when he was still in the womb.Â  We are enjoying him immensely, and so are his 3 sisters and his brother.Â  I am recovering from the c-section pretty well, and I will write more about Luke’s first days at home when it doesn’t hurt to sit in a chair for longer than 10 minutes.Â  I would love to put up a hundred pictures of gorgeous little Luke, but my bunny chewed my camera cord, and I can’t get any pictures off my camera.Â  I hope to have this situation remedied soon, but I depend on Hubby for all my tech-related needs, and Hubby is exhausted staying up with the baby at night, taking care of me and the kids during the day while also keeping up with his responsibilities at both of his jobs.Â  It just seems mean and commanding of me to place more demands on him now, so I will have to somehow be patient about the picture taking and sharing.Â  I wonder how long I can last; Luke is one of the cutest babies I’ve ever seen!!!

\*\*UPDATE\*\*

Hubby devised a way to transfer my pictures using my ebook reader – genius!Â  So anyway, here is a picture of swaddled Luke at 1 day old:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/10/Baby-bundle-of-Luke-10-8-11-1.jpg)

### Comments

**derek**I already spoke to C, but not to you- congrats on #5. I am sure he will be the blessing to you a gift from above is meant to be. Funny thing, my pastor's name is James and his first son is Luke... Use the fo... Just kidding. :D  
**Jamiahsh**Last one, I promise. Couldn't resist ;)  
**taylhis**Bible references ok, Star Wars, not so much :)  
**jamiahsh**He is adorable! I am sure that we have an abundance of pictures to gaze upon soon! Many wishes and congratulations on number 5. WELCOME MASTER LUKE!

# Running Out Of Steam

To quote a funny movie, Drop Dead Gorgeous, “I’m like, due or something.”Â  That’s the response that’s been popping into my head whenever my husband wants to make plans for our family.Â  I am 38 weeks pregnant, and I don’t feel like doing anything.Â  I just want to lay in bed, get up to eat, then lay in bed some more.Â  And I do sleep when I’m laying down, so I must be tired and needing the sleep.Â  But this is weird for me.Â  I haven’t been bored in years, and now I feel bored, not because I have nothing to do but because I don’t feel like doing anything.Â  It’s so annoying!Â  There is so much to do around the house to get ready for the baby, and I don’t feel like doing any of it.Â  On top of that, I feel badly not having the desire to entertain my 4 kids, but luckily they’re very good at self-entertaining and their oldest sister has been amazing with spending fun time with them every day while I rest.Â  But I don’t remember feeling like this with my other pregnancies.Â  I do feel tired, but this lack-of-motivation-to-do-*anything* thing is getting old!Â  Then again, this is the first pregnancy I’ve had being in my 30’s.Â  Maybe that has something to do with it?

### Comments

**taylhis**I think I know someone who has a special day every day in October: birthdays, anniversaries, etc. Luke's birthday is up to God, but I think he would like his own special day every year, not a reminder about who else shares his bday :)  
**derek**@Phyllis: yes and thanks! Happy early anniversary! Another vote for the 5th, L- make it happen. ;)  
**Phyllis Beyer**Age definitely has something to do with it. I noticed a difference between my 2 pregnancies. You're almost there so enjoy the rest. Christine and I can clean your house when we get there. Just leave us a list. Think of the end result. Soon you will be holding an adorable little boy in your arms. Derek, our anniversary is the 5th. I assume that is your birthday. Happy Birthday early!  
**jamiahsh**I said something similar for the last pregnancy but alas, he arrived a day later ;) Not to worry, though, tay. I'm sure that you will be back to your normal routine in no time!  
**derek**Maybe he will be born Oct. 5, never mind the plans? :) Aren't some other birthdays among your family and friends around this time too? Any one will do, but especially the 5th. 8)

# teens

## My preteen daughter has a very bad attitude. Whenever I ask her any questions, even casual fun ones, she responds with rolling her eyes or a smug look and then answers very rudely. A simple yes or no would get her no trouble but she has to answer with a cocky attitude like I asked a dumb question.We have had several arguments about her attitude and that she needs to show respect to others. (It’s not just me that she acts like this to.) Nothing seems to work. She hurts my feelings as well as embarrasses me when she gets this attitude with other adults or her friends.

She is well into puberty, but I don’t feel that is an excuse. I understand and am more lenient on her when she is going through PMS but she has this attitude about 25 days a month. Please tell me what I am doing wrong or what I can do to help her change. Is it too late to change her?

I love her and try to have a fun relationship with her. I joke around with my kids and try to talk to them and their friends. She is not setting a good example for her younger siblings. My 4-year-old is very aware of her older sister’s behavior, and I fear that she will see this as acceptable. Please help me.

Welcome to the wonderful world of raising a teen. Since we humans aren’t very good at pushing our babies out of the nest, they help us by being totally obnoxious. Your daughter loves you but has to act hateful to begin to let go and, likewise, she is helping you let go. If she is rude to other adults, she is probably busy bonding with her peers. What appears to be rude behavior between young people is often normal to them. The under 30 crowd talks with a very sarcastic edge that is quite different from when we were growing up.

This does not mean you have to tolerate her behavior, but do not be dead set on changing her either. Just let her know how you feel when she makes her comments. DO NOT tell her she is rude or has a bad attitude. Simply say what you feel (not think) inside using the word “I.” “I feel sad (mad, like Jell-O, chopped liver) when you talk like that,” and then walk away, hopefully before she has a comeback.

When you’re in the mood for it, join the “fun” and imitate her with an eye roll of your own or pretend you are her and say, “Parents ask the stupidest questions.” It is good to have a variety of responses. However, there are times when she will get “on your last nerve,” and you’ll blow up and that is fine, too.

As much as possible, do not initiate contact. Allow her to come to you. This will be very hard. Teens think almost any parental question is intrusive. As a parent, I’ve been able to manage this myself a few times, and it is surprising how it helps.

Talk to other mothers with daughters. I think you will find that many are going through the same thing, and if they are not yet, they most likely will be soon. I personally think Webster should add a new word to the dictionary: “shutthedoor â€“ an adolescent word used to draw a boundary between children and parents.” My daughter is 17, and I’ve been hearing that since the preteen years when I pop my head in her room to ask necessary questions.

It sounds like you’re a great mom and take an interest in your kids. I wouldn’t worry too much about the younger ones. I remember before my daughter turned 12 she thought teens were terrible people. It is not too late for your daughter. You don’t have to change her; you are not doing anything wrong, and not all of your children will be so difficult. Once she moves out of the house, she will, most likely, be very devoted and likeable.

### Comments

# A Most Blessed Day

Tuesday September 27 2011 was an amazing day.Â  Our entire family was up before the crack of dawn because it was my husband’s big day in Findlay Ohio – his meeting and official interview with the church conference that was going to decide if they agreed with the local church board’s recommendation that my husband be their new pastor.Â  We allowed plenty of extra time that morning because we weren’t sure what bumps we might encounter while rousing 4 kids out of bed while it was still dark outside.Â  But it went perfectly – all the kids were agreeable and all were ready before it was time to leave, unprecedented!Â  No one complained about going to the babysitter’s; actually, they seemed excited about it.Â  My husband and I dropped off the kids, and as we turned onto the long country road that would take us most of the way there, I noticed a stunning effect of the sunrise.Â  A beam of orange light was coming down from the clouds – not in the east where the rest of the sunrise was visible, but off to the west.Â  It was really more like a column of soft orange light – an orange rainbow.Â  It was beautiful, unlike anything either of us had ever seen, and we enjoyed it together until it faded into the dawning of the new day.

The almost 2 hour drive was most pleasant; my husband and I always enjoy each other’s company.Â  Plus our spirits were buoyed by the kids’ great behavior that morning and the blessing of the orange rainbow.

My husband’s meeting went well while I explored Findlay by myself a bit.Â  I found an African Grey Parrot (my favorite kind of bird!) at the pet store, so I played with her for a while and checked out some other stores.Â  We ate a wonderful lunch, and then my husband got the call – the conference approved him; he is the new pastor of Union Chapel!Â  Now the waiting is over, and we know for sure the direction that God has been pointing us.Â  We finished out our day in Findlay with a movie and another peaceful long drive, just the two of us.Â  As we left the town of Findlay and headed out into the Ohio countryside, there was a full-size, full-color rainbow in all its glory.Â  Two rainbows in one day (occurring almost 12 hours and dozens of miles apart)?Â  They seemed to perfectly epitomize God’s blessings on this day for us, beginning with the kids being so great, followed by our long drives going safely and smoothly, and finally, the good news about my husband’s new calling.Â  Does God speak to people using rainbows?Â  For sure, He used a rainbow to illustrate his promise that He will never destroy the earth with flood again in Genesis 9:11-15:

*Â “11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.â€ 12 And God said, â€œThis is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: 13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.”*

And, God loves it when we notice His works of art in nature and offer praise to Him – there are more than a few examples of this in the Bible as well.Â  My husband and I saw the rainbows as messages to us from God; reassurance to us as we embark on yet another new journey at this stage in our lives, stamps of approval for a very blessed day and extra nods of encouragement from Our Heavenly Father as we might be tempted to be distracted by our uncertainties.

It was a very blessed day spent with my favorite person in the whole world.Â  I am so proud of him for everything that he is, everything he is becoming, and for his being hand-picked by God to take on this incredibly awesome responsibility.Â  And to say that I am honored to realize that I am the one who gets to experience this life by his side is a gross understatement.Â  For these reasons and others, I thank God every day.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/09/rainbow.jpg)*Unfortunately, this isn’t either of the rainbows we saw the other day because I didn’t have my camera with me to take pictures.Â  But I figured that I needed a picture of a beautiful rainbow on this post!Â  *

### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**Beautifully written blog Lisa. You have such a way with words. Congratulations Chris. Dad and I are so proud of you. I am extremely grateful that I will be there to hear your first serman. You both are so special - it's no wonder God chose you.  
**derek**I just tried to call C back and no voicemail? In any event, congratulations to both of you on this new direction you have begun to undertake. This is not just C's journey but yours as well. You have but to keep in the faith and I know it will take you to incredible places. God bless.  
**jamiahsh**Wonder if anyone found the pot of gold at the end of that rainbow! But WOW... how special was that day? Kids getting around before the crack of dawn without grumbling, TWO rainbows, a wonderful day just the two of you, and THE CALL! He truly does work in mysterious and wonderful ways. Love, best wishes, and prayers to you all as you embark on a new, exciting adventure. Hope you and the little one about to make his appearance are doing well.

# A Lesson In Forgiveness

It was one of those hectic mornings.Â  You know the type – little things go wrong, several small crimps in the daily schedule add up to both slow and threaten to steer the entire day off course.Â  My husband was running late for a meeting, so he left abruptly, and that’s when I realized that the younger kids were being very quiet.Â Â  I was chatting with our oldest (Taylor, she’s 11) when I our 7-year-old took the kids’ pet rats outside along with their whole play setup: a play enclosure, cardboard box, etc.Â  The kids had been doing this frequently, so there was nothing out of the ordinary, except that in the chaos

### Comments

# One Foot Out The Door...

Changes abound!Â  So many things happening that I can’t keep up writing about them on my blog.Â  It seems like every time I sit down to relax, I’m doing something with the kids – playing board games, homeschooling, doing puzzles, cuddling while we watch home videos together…Â  Mommy and kid time is so much more important than blogging, of course, so I’m not losing sleep over it…Â  but I do miss blogging, and I know I will miss having a chronicle of these days for future reading.Â  I was just looking back at my blogs from the past; looking to see how I felt after my cesarean 3 years ago, hoping to maybe find some tips for recovery this time around.Â  It was so nice to read about what was going on in our lives at that point, the challenges we were enduring, how the kids were growing, what they were doing, that kind of thing.Â  But these days, if I have a kid in my lap, there is NO extra room to have a laptop nearby!Â  As of Friday September 16, I am 36 weeks pregnant – home stretch for sure!Â  While my belly is not bulging nearly as much as it did with my previous 4 pregnancies (I’ve actually LOST weight since July, but dr said baby is growing fine and that’s what matters), I am looming large these days, and the seemingly most mundane of tasks is an effort on my part and seems to take me forever.Â  I am blessed with an awesome Hubby who has really stepped up around the house to keep us running despite the craziness and challenges that a 4-kid household brings.Â  Very Honorable Mention goes to my oldest daughter who has also been amazing lately with her willingness to help.Â  She has gone above and beyond, not only doing everything that is asked of her but also coming up with her own ideas to pamper pregnant mom, following through with these ideas, and also excelling in our newly designed homeschooling program.Â  A few weeks ago, Taylor surprised me with a manicure/pedicure, and she even kept going outside to check on the little ones while Mom’s nails were drying.Â  The other day, she came up with the idea and made me breakfast in bed.Â  Her emotional and spiritual growth lately has been amazing to see, and hopefully I will have the time to blog about the lesson in forgiveness that she taught our whole family.

So how is the homeschooling going for us?Â  If you remember, we began homeschooling our two eldest this year – 6th and 2nd grades.Â  Many people have asked how it’s going, so it’s time for a formal update on the blog…Â  It’s going GREAT!Â  Thanks for asking!Â  We began with a very planned out schedule, but we’ve found it necessary to be more flexible.Â  We’ve also tweaked our planned curriculum here and there and attended our first homeschooling book sale and picked up some things to supplement our curriculum.Â  All normal and necessary parts of the process, and we’ve seen the kids become closer with each other and us their parents, all while getting to watch them learn new things up close.Â  I can’t wait to jump in as a full time homeschool teacher, but my patience is being tested since I have to wait until I recover from my planned cesarean in October.

Now for the big news: a few blog posts ago, I wrote about many doors opening for our family.Â  We were still determining at that time which paths to explore, and our prayers have been answered; the paths whittled down to an almost definite road.Â  Loonnngg story made very short is this: my husband was offered a job as a pastor at a local church, and he accepted.Â  This means that we will be, in effect, switching churches.Â  Talk about something that came out of the blue!Â  There is nothing about our current church that I don’t like, and I had planned on going there for years to come and raising our kids among our church community.Â  But, as we all too often learn, God has plans for us.Â  And who am I to argue?Â  I KNOW His plans are so much better than any road map I could have drafted for myself and my family.Â  So now comes the transition to the new church.Â  It’s a much smaller church, so among my husband’s and my first duties will be to acclimate ourselves into the new church environment and create a children’s ministry.Â  It will be challenging but also extremely exciting.Â  My husband has one final meeting with the regional governing board of the church to finish out the interview process, but everything we’ve been told by the elders of the church is that this is just procedure.Â  So, last Tuesday, I sadly gave my notice to my friend and mentor that oversees my 2nd/3rd grade girls Sunday school class.Â  Oh, how I will miss those kids!Â  I’ve known them and watched them grow for a year and a half now, ever since I had them as 1st grade students last year.Â  But as I said, who am I to challenge God’s plan?Â  While this all happened so suddenly in our lives, the chain of events and circumstances that led up to my husband being chosen to lead this church was so obviously orchestrated by God that there is no need to doubt whether it was meant to be, nor is there need to go into detail about exactly how it happened.Â  I will just say how much we KNOW that it was meant to happen, and that will guide me in the future if I ever begin to have fears or doubts in my own abilities to fulfill His work for me.

October 7 is when I am scheduled to have the baby, and 2 days later (while I’m still in the hospital) is when my husband is to spend his first Sunday at our new church.Â  As soon as I feel up to it, I will join him there, and our kids will follow as soon as we set up our children’s ministry.Â  That leaves me 2 Sundays to teach my current Sunday school students, or possibly just one if I decide to go and meet more of the congregation at the new church before I go into the hospital.Â  I may have one foot out the door, but I’m walking into a whole new world.Â  Because it is the world that God has designed for me at this point in my life, I could not be more excited!!!

### Comments

**derek**So, are you going to be the head of the new children's ministry? :) From what C told me it sounds like your family will \*be\* the kid's ministry for the most part. With a younger pastor though, other families will come. I expect C to do no less than preach God's Truth, and where God's Truth is taught He will send people there to hear it. A very large endeavor this is, but I know you two are up to it. God has brought both of you there, so you can bet that besides the great plans He has for you and the new church, He will also make sure the kids you are leaving behind at the other church are well taken care of. It's great to hear of T as well. She is another step closer to the mature adult she will be one day.  
**jamiahsh**Love reading about your families adventures! I am so excited to hear of your oldest's maturation... What a remarkable young lady! I adore each of them... all with their own unique personalities... can't wait to see what Luke brings. I pray that the craziness that you are going through and that which is approaching will be met with the same determination and strength I have come to adore about you all!

# DW secrets

I’ve had this draft sitting on the backend of my blog site for a long time – I guess you could say that my blog needs its backend trimmed, haha.Â  However you want to say it, I would like to blog more and I have some drafts that can be published.

So while this might seem random, here are some highlights from articles that I came across about Disney World – each offers fresh insiders’ insight that

**1.Â  [Disney World from the past on WaltDatedWorld.com](http://waltdatedworld.bravepages.com/index.htm" \t "_blank)**This site memorializes changes that have been made in the parks, from slight tweaks on well known rides to entire attractions that no longer exist.Â  The site is well organized and contains easily identifiable links to each park.Â  Haven’t you ever wondered what became of the submarines from the 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea attraction?Â  Turns out you can explore a sunken sub while scuba diving at Disney’s Castaway Cay, a port of call for the Disney Cruise Line.

**2.**

http://www.cnn.com/2011/LIVING/07/01/ten.secrets.disney.mf/index.html?iref=obnetwork

http://www.mentalfloss.com/blogs/archives/36855

http://www.theneverlandfiles.com/disneyworld/westernriverexpedition.php

http://waltdatedworld.bravepages.com/id207.htm

http://glbscoasterzone.tripod.com/themepks.html

### Comments

# Disney's First Day

Disney had her first day at her new preschool last week, and she had a great time!Â  She really likes going to preschool every day!Â  Here are some pictures of her on her first day.Â  One picture features her little brother who wanted to go to preschool too, but he’s such a cool dude that he got right over it and is happy going to pick her up every day (despite his parents making him wear the Chicago Cubs shirt):

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/8-26-11-Disneys-first-day-of-Bryan-preschool-001.jpg)[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/8-26-11-Disneys-first-day-of-Bryan-preschool-004.jpg)[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/8-26-11-Disneys-first-day-of-Bryan-preschool-002.jpg)

### Comments

**justj**It looked like a lovely day for a new student. They are growing so quickly.  
**taylhis**He doesn't have a taste in teams. He wouldn't know if he likes to watch baseball yet or not since it hasn't been on in the house all summer - nothing to watch and no time to watch it. It was a comment about how embarrassing it is for ANYONE to walk around wearing a Cubs shirt these days. Nuff said about that.  
**jamiahsh**"dispite his parents making him wear his Chicago Cubs shirt"? Is that a reflection on his taste of teams or your feelings on the season? Well.. back to the topic at hand... YAY for Disney! How cute!  
**derek**Dora? Is that show still on? I'm glad to hear of a child who actually \*likes\* school! I suppose when tests and projects happen things will change, but for now just enjoy it, D. 8)

# I Saw The Saws, But They Weren't My Final Destination

Recently for date night we viewed Final Destination 5 in 3D at the movie theater.Â Â  We had seen the previews for Final Destination 5, and it looked good, so we decided to watch the rest of the movies 1-4 in preparation to see 5 in the theaters when it came out.Â  The Final Destination movies are just fun, gross

### Comments

# And The Journey Begins...

Even before we were married and had kids, my husband and I have always liked the idea of homeschooling our children, but the time just hadn’t been right in the past so we put the idea on the back burner.Â  The idea resurfaced last spring, and we began to pray and meditate on it and to do some planning.Â  Over the summer we were able to visit with some of the families we know who homeschool, spending hours learning about resources, comparing curriculum, and getting to know their families better.Â  My worry-prone mind tells me it’s completely insane to take something like this on while expecting a new baby, but on the other hand, time keeps passing us by and our oldest is in 6th grade already.Â  Never being exactly sure about God’s plan for us ahead of time – how many children we will be blessed with or paths of service my husband might be called to in his career, etc – now seemed like as a good a time as any to try homeschooling our two oldest children.Â  Besides, I’ve been told that it’s easier to teach when there is a baby in the family rather than a troublesome toddler, which is all the more reason to start now instead of next year or the year after.Â  So in addition to “Mom of 5″, another new hat I will be trying on this fall is “Homeschool Teacher”.

I am 90-95% ecstatic and 5-10% terrified, depending on the day you ask me – but only because I’m worried about taking on all these responsibilities while enduring the lack of sleep that accompanies a new baby.Â  Other than that, I know we can do it – after all, we believe this is God’s plan for our family, so we can always appeal to Him through prayer for strength, endurance, and patience.Â  Also, I have tons of ideas; actually one of the main problems I came across when designing my daughters’ curricula was finding a way to include all of the subjects and ideas that I was so excited about.Â  I didn’t come close, but there are always future years.

Our 6th grade curriculum is complete: it’s designed and outlined, and we have the materials.Â  Our 6th grader is extremely excited about our adventure, and it helps to have an amazing support system through friends who homeschool – a good percentage of my daughter’s friends are homeschooled, and they are amazing kids.Â  Actually, ALL of the kids I know that are homeschooled are amazing kids, and the vast differences between the emotional maturity and the moral integrity of the homeschool kids and the public school kids in our church youth group was one of the leading contributors that led us to this decision.Â  As youth group leaders, my husband and I have gotten to know many of the kids in our small town.Â  They are all great kids, but seeing how distracted many of them are by all of the emotional dramas that are manufactured in the public school setting was both eye-opening and heart-breaking – another factor aiding our decision.

Tangent over – back to curriculum.Â  We are using [A Beka curriculum](http://www.abeka.com/" \t "_blank) for our 6th grader, and we found a complete set of workbooks and teacher guides on ebay for a great price – barely more than our school fees would have cost.Â  Taylor is extremely excited about her books; especially the art book which looks REALLY cool!!Â  And the great thing about A Beka curriculum is that it is Christian-based curriculum, which is very important to us and another key factor in our homeschool decision.Â  We also found a whole bunch of workbooks and textbooks the other day at Goodwill in mint condition and at a great price!Â  It’s incredible how many resources there are out there, and also surprising how fun it is to hunt, shop, and piece them together to make curricula!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/our-homeschooling-room-005.jpg)

Most of Taylor's A Beka Curriculum

I know it’s going to be a lot of work.Â  I know I’m prolonging indefinitely the things I might want to do for myself once my kids are old enough to take care of themselves – any hobby, job or career path I might have wanted to pursue when the time came to put all of my kids on the bus for the day is moot.Â  But I’m accepting that my career is Mom + Homeschool Mom, and right now, I can’t think of any better use of my time than the investment I’m making in our family and the futures of my children.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/our-homeschooling-room-001.jpg)

This summer we worked so hard on getting this homeschooling room ready!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/our-homeschooling-room-002.jpg)

Taylor's books are on the table

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/our-homeschooling-room-004.jpg)

### Comments

**derek**Hey, congrats on choosing the brave new world (for all of you that is) of homeschooling. As a witness to some of the craziness in middle school as a sub a few years ago, I would say yo- err, God, picked a great moment to start. Okay, some of the decision was yours of course, to say yes or no, but it is such a blessing to say yes to Him. Bast wishes from me on this!  
**justj**Likewise, best of luck in thi endevor. We never had the courage to try this with our girls.  
**jamiahsh**Best of luck on your new journey. I know that with HIS guidance you will do a great job!

# In General...

Here we are in the middle of August already, how did that happen?Â  I know how July flew by for me since most of it was spent traveling, but where the heck has the beginning of August gone?

I am 30 weeks + a few days pregnant.Â  I talked to the doctor yesterday and am most likely going to have the baby at 39 weeks (planned cesarean), so there is not too much time left of this pregnancy – for that, I am mostly glad!Â  I cannot wait to meet little Luke!Â  Plus I’m sick of the soreness, the nausea, the moodiness, and all that good stuff.Â  I just hope that I turn back into a normal person again because right now it seems like an impossibility.Â  I can’t remember my life before I was pregnant – did I really have enough energy to function every day?Â  Sure don’t now, but most days, I can fake it but that is exhausting in itself.

I wrote a few posts ago about making important decisions and about doors of opportunity opening for us.Â  For certain things, we are still praying, being patient, and waiting to see what God’s plan is for us right now.Â  In the meantime, we did reach one decision about a lifestyle change for our family, and we are very excited to get started.Â  Close family already knows what this is about, but do I want to reveal it to others for the first time in a blog?Â  I’m not sure…Â  But either way, we are very excited about it, and it’s been a lot of fun already to begin this journey.Â  Just another thing to look forward to this fall!

Tonight is the last night of our Wednesday night Bible study, and it’s been great to make new friends and to get to know these families.Â  I am looking forward to having 3 (THREE!!) free Wednesday nights for our family once the class is over and before youth group starts again.Â  And how is this for irony?Â  I wrote the preceding paragraphs, saved it as a draft, then did lunch with the kids before coming back to it.Â  During lunch, I checked the mail and I found postcards notifying us of youth group leader training meetings on TWO of my THREE free Wednesdays.Â  Sigh.Â  I need to be happy with that one free evening, but my human nature disappoints me because I almost had 3 free Wednesdays instead of one…Â  oh well, such is life.Â  Wednesday nights are fun anyway; I just wish I had more energy to enjoy them.

My Monday morning Bible study is drawing to a close also – that one I will really miss.Â  I’ve become close with the other ladies in my class, and it’s been so great to get to know them and learn about the similarities and the differences in our lives and journeys in our relationships with Christ.Â  I will even miss the 5 hours a week of homework – it was SO incredibly valuable and eye-opening for me to spend this time with God’s word.Â  If I weren’t taking on so much this fall, I would definitely sign up for another one.Â  Maybe in the spring or next summer…

Seen some movies lately, as usual – I think it’s probably mine and Hubby’s favorite thing to do together, snuggle and watch movies after long days of work and tending the kids.Â  I had heard that the new Planet of the Apes movie was supposed to be good, so we saw that, but I was disapointed.Â  It was okay, but I was hoping for less ape, more planet – meaning, the movie ended just as the apes were about to take over.Â  I would have liked to see their rise to power as they actually take over the planet.Â  Maybe that’s going to be saved for the next movie?Â  The movie was entertaining, but there was a little too much animal cruelty and not enough payoff – seeing the apes take over the planet – for having to watch all that animal cruelty.Â  Of course the creatures were CGI so you know none of them were hurt during filming and it was just a movie, but that doesn’t mean in my spare time I want to sit and watch that and think about what goes on in animal testing labs.

We haven’t visited the Redbox in a while, mostly because we had seen many of the movies they had (we watch a lot of movies!).Â  But Hubby ventured out last night and picked out Cedar Rapids, a fun (a bit more vulgar than I usually like, but interesting just the same) movie about insurance salesmen starring Ed Helms (Andy Bernard from The Office; he’s also in the Hangover movies).Â  It was a different kind of movie, and we both enjoyed it.

That’s about it for now…Â  I just had the opportunity to sit and blog for awhile – I MADE the opportunity, actually – because I just HAD to today.Â  I’ve had this awful headache that’s been lodged behind my left eye for a few days now, and running around chasing kids again was just too much for today.Â  And I do need to sit more.Â  For someone in my condition, I really thinkÂ  I should be resting more, but the nature of the busyness in our household makes it an impossibility.Â  I’m finding it quite a challenge to take good care of myself, finding time to eat right to take care of my anemia and gestational diabetes and all that stuff.Â  It’s just too hard to put myself first when I have 4 little ones to take care of and Hubby has his own full plate with work as well.Â  I hate to complain about physical stuff, but I really need to feel better soon.

### Comments

**taylhis**Thank you Mysmichelle, good to hear from you. Hope you've had a great summer!  
**Mysmichelle**Best wishes taylhis, I hope you feel better soon but having been pregnant it might be the 9 weeks :-) you will make it though. Congrats to you and to little Luke, he's being born into a wonderful family!  
**derek**I believe that line is reserved for Chris. ;)  
**taylhis**Yes Derek - Luke James, as in Dr. Luke, the only gentile to have written a Gospel and also the book of James. Especially fitting that Chris' grandfather's name was Luke, and my grandfather's name was James. As far as my health, I just keep feeling worse these days, but a few weeks ago, I thought I was over the hump cuz I felt so much better - so there is always room for hope, right? I keep praying, and the bottom line is, I just want little Luke to be healthy. And I was happy you didn't make the already tiresome "Luke, I am your father" joke... it's already very old!! :)  
**derek**Ah, some information has been revealed (at least in this blog) about #5. Luke, as in Dr. Luke from the Bible, writer of one of the three Synoptic Gospels. I have known many Lukes in my church, including one in my men's small group, one a son of our pastor, and several over the years in kid's ministry. It will be a pleasure to add one more to my list. Seeing as it has been a few days since your post I hope you are feeling better.  
**Jamiahsh**Here's to feeling better SOON! I forgot to mention that I walked to and from church today (something I have not been able to do for it seems like ages). But if you ever need an escape for an hour or two some afternoon AND I am off give me a shout. Sounds like your August is just as busy as July. I can't wait to meet Luke, either. Take care and enjoy those cuddle times with your hubby ;)

# A Smurfin' Good Time

I was so pleasantly surprised by how much my family liked the new Smurf movie that I was inspired to write a short review.Â  Going in, I thought I would hate the movie because it didn’t look funny.Â  And I was a fan of the Smurfs as a kid, so not only did the movie look stupid, but I couldn’t figure out why it took place in our realm rather than the Smurf’s realm – wouldn’t fans of the little blue mystical creatures, kids, and everyone else want to see Smurf village on the big screen?

Don’t worry, we get to see Smurf village, and it’s pretty cool.Â  Especially the scene where Gargamel breaks in!!Â  Ok, so I guess that’s kind of a spoiler, sorry about that…Â  but this is a kid’s movie we’re talking about.Â  And kid’s movie it is – my kids all really liked it (ages 11, 7, 4 and 3).Â  The Smurfs have screen time for pretty much 100% of the movie, and there aren’t any boring scenes with a lot of dialogue – these tend to lose the attention of kids.Â  There are some Smurfy jokes – in this case I’m using “Smurfy” to describe inside jokes written for fans of the Smurfs from decades ago.Â  Much like the Brady Bunch movies are actually enjoyable parodies of the hit tv show and poke fun at it,Â  The Smurfs movie has gags about such shout-outs to the 80s cartoon as their names reflecting their personalities (a hilarious joke in the movie that I’m still chuckling about), cracks about how Smurfette always wears the same dress (although more than one joke about this was overdoing it and took the humor away), and multiple references to creator Peyo.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/smurfs.jpg)*(the Smurfs as I knew and loved them)*

From the previews, I thought Gargamel was going to be a bumbling bafoon, one of these over-the-top characters who might be ruined by the actor portraying him as he flailed around aimlessly in a ridiculous looking costume.Â  But Gargamel as a live person in today’s New York City was actually quite entertaining and even hilarious at times (If you grew up watching the Smurf cartoon like I did, watch for the way Hank Azaria runs as he portrays Gargamel – he imitates the cartoon character so well that it made me laugh out loud!).Â  I especially liked the inclusion of the little details from the cartoon – like seeing the Smurf cages that Gargamel always had lying in wait for when he finally caught the little guys.Â  There was backstory explained; everyone knows by now that Smurfette was actually created by Gargamel as Smurf bait, right?Â  The story line was cheesy but not unbearable even while it made several futile attempts at teaching positive life lessons to kids in the audience.Â  I could have done without the Katy Perry song reference (is “I Kissed a Girl really a song for kids?Â  I’ve never heard the song and don’t want to know), and Katy Perry as Smurfette’s voice didn’t really give any personality to the character anyhow – she was just a girl Smurf and nothing like her character in the cartoon.Â  Clumsy Smurf on the other hand, was a perfect 3d replica of his cartoon counterpart – both in voice and graphics.Â  I did stop watching the Smurfs sometime after the Smurf cousins (Smurflings) came in, so I have no idea where Gutsy Smurf came from (seems to be a brave Scottish Smurf complete with red sideburns and a kilt?).Â  I would have liked to see my personal favorite Smurf, Jokey, get more screen time in the movie.Â  On that subject, I don’t understand why the group of 6 Smurfs with the most screen time (the ones who get to go to NY) did not include such series regulars as Jokey, Greedy, Handy, Vanity or Hefty.Â  Actually, I didn’t see those Smurfs at all, but then again, we arrived late to the movie so maybe I missed their appearances.Â  The production staff also did an excellent job of utilizing aspects of modern technology to make funny jokes involving the Smurfs.Â  Case in point: see the wikipedia reference.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/jokey-smurf.jpg)*(My favorite Smurf, Jokey)*

Overall, Smurfs was an entertaining film for the entire family – and there was a huge gap between my low expectations and my high level of enjoyment of this cute movie!Â  A must-see for anyone who has kids to take to a movie – bonus if you are a Smurf fan!

One more note – here is a list of characters I would like to see in the sequel:  
Hogatha, Johan and Peewit, Clockwork Smurf, and Baby Smurf.Â  But please, NO SMURFLINGS!!

And oh yeah…Â Â  I did a search on my own blog to see if I had written about the I’m a Pink Toothbrush song from the Smurf’s 1979 album.Â  Turns out, I did include it in a [blog post that I had written in March 2010](http://taylhis.tangents.org/2010/03/12/smurfingly-insider-info/" \t "_blank), and my kids (and me still!) are big fans of this adorable tune.Â  It was really fun to read about my speculations on the Smurf movie in this blog post given the limited info I had that time on this “in production” project!Â  (if you read it, you should know that Quentin Tarentino was oringally cast as Brainy Smurf, but both actor and studio are quiet on why the pairing did not work out…)Â  So apparently I HAD heard of Gutsy Smurf – and wrote about it in my own blog a year and a half ago!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/08/smurfs1.jpg)*(modern Smurfs from the 2011 movie)*

### Comments

**derek**I used to watch it now and again. I remember the full-length feature Smurfs and the Magic Flute. I also remember the somewhat smurfy term a camp gave for their blue moon ice cream when I was a high school freshman (naked smurf). A less obnoxious memory is the Smurfs game for Colecovision. This sounds like one to watch when it is released on DVD.  
**Jamiahsh**Yes of course they used it as every part of speech. How Clumsy of me ;)  
**justj**Never been a smurf fan, so I guess I'm glad you enjoyed a movie I will never see.  
**taylhis**How many times was the word "smurf" used as a desciptive word? You mean in the movie? By descriptive, do you mean adjective only? Cuz they used it as every part of speech of course - noun, verb, adjective, adverb, etc. But either way, it doesn't matter - not like I could count something like that with 4 kids in the movie; 2 of them squirmy, all of them constantly demanding popcorn and pop :)  
**jamiahsh**BTW, how many times was the word "smurf" used as a descriptive word?  
**jamiahsh**HEHE. the more I see the ads and such now bombarding the airwaves, the more I am willing to go see it. I don't remember Gutsy Smurf, either. Of course, there were at least 100 of the critters in the original series. I always liked Feathers (my cousin had a parakeet named after him), Big Mouth the ogre, Harmony Smurf, and of course Jokey. Yes, indeed Smurfette was created by Gargamel... she was originally brunette.

# July 2011 (part 1)

The July 2011 page on my calendar has been filled since spring, so I knew we had a busy month ahead.Â  Organizing everything I had jammed into those little squares on the calender was going to be challenging enough, but then we were even able to add a few family mini-vacations to the mix!Â  It’s been a great summer so far despite the challenges of sometimes trying to be in 2 places at once, and I wanted to chronicle everything to enhance the wonderful memories we made as a family this summer – but be prepared; this will be quite the manifest when I’m finished!

June 30 and July 1 – We began the month with a last-minute trip to an indoor water park that’s an hour away.Â  After a sudden burst of cabin fever, my husband found a super internet deal that afforded us some much-loved family time.Â  The kids loved the indoor water park, and Christopher was old enough this time to go on some water slides which he found to be a blast!

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

Best of all, the constant lower back pain that had been making me short of patience, irritable and tired all the time seemed to be remedied by my getting to sit in water for 2 days.Â  I should note for future reference also how interesting it was to pack different people for 3 different trips at the same time.Â  Simultaneously, I was packing 6 people for an overnight stay (with a separate bag for changing into street clothes from bathing suits, I might add), 1 little girl for a 4 day stay at camp, and also for a 3 day trip for 6 people.Â  It felt hectic at the time, but not unmanageable – due to the fact that my wonderful family did much of the work for and with me.Â  And you know what?Â  I don’t think we forgot anything!!

July 2, 3 – After the water park, we got a day of rest (and unpacking, re-packing, laundry) before we set out Sunday for the 4-hour drive to Nashville Indiana – with one small glitch:Â  Hubby had food poisoning.Â  He had to miss church to rejuvenate, and then we were off – well, after packing up the car and some other in-town odds n ends.

July 3-6 – We spent the 4th of July in Nashville – a yearly trip Hubby and I take with our 4 kids, my parents, my uncle, and my sister, her husband and their 2 kids – there were 13 of us staying in a large house in the middle of the Brown County woods.Â  It was a beautiful place, and we’re torn on where to choose to have next year’s gathering.Â  Last year, we had a beautiful house where each family had their own bedroom and bathroom.Â  The few downsides to this house (called The Oaks) was the large steep hill that led down to the pond and fire pit – it proved to be dangerous last year when someone took a nasty spill (but was uninjured), so we didn’t want to gamble with it this year when we have an adult who is practically incapacitated (me being 5.5 mos. pregnant).Â  Also, the kids have to be watched constantly down by that pond, so it was a nice break for the adults this year to not have to worry about who was going to take them down there.Â  Also, there wasn’t really any yard for the kids to play in at The Oaks.Â  There was a swingset, but really only the two 3-year-old boys were of the age to enjoy a swing set this year, and that leaves 4 other kids with no yard to run around in.Â  Both houses had pool tables inside and hot tubs outside (which became little swimming pools for the kids since we didn’t want to turn on the heat in 90Â° weather), and The Oaks had tons of dvds,Â  board games, and a foosball table, but then again, this year we brought our own dvds and games and the kids had TONS to do and were never bored.Â  Another plus to this year’s cabin vs. The Oaks: the large dining room table that fit almost everyone at the same time so we could enjoy meals together.Â  The Oaks had only a small breakfast nook that seated 4 people or about 6 kids, so the adults had to eat elsewhere.Â  Given these pros and cons of each cabin, it’s going to be a tough decision next year on where to stay!!  
The kids’ favorite thing to do this year was to go down to the creek that ran around the property (this cabin was called “Ginley’s Gulch” for future reference).Â  There they would walk the creek, hunting for crawdads, geodes, and minnows, and they found quite a few of all of the above.Â  As I said, this property had a larger yard, and also 85 acres of forest, and in the future I would like to explore the gorgeous property more since I wasn’t quite feeling up to that this year.Â  I did enjoy walking down the cleared path into the forest though – there were many beautifiul butterflies, cool looking insects, and birds to see and hear.Â  And oh yeah!Â  I forgot to mention another huge plus of Ginley’s Gulch – the screened-in porch!Â  It had a ceiling fan, so it was a wonderful, mosquito-free place to spend our Brown County evenings together.Â  A great trip!!

July 6 – We arose at the crack of dawn to pack up the car and get the kids roused for the 4+ hour drive to Michigan to drop daughter #2 at camp.Â  We were all exhausted, and the kids slept much of the way.Â  We did stop in Fort Wayne for something to eat, and we finally tried a little cafe where we had always wanted to try their eggs benedict since reading an ad for them years ago.Â  The eggs benedict was a bust – sauce from a packet, don’t you know, but they did have one of my seasonal favorites that’s very hard to find in the northern part of the country where I live: fried green tomatoes.Â  And they were yummy!Â  We dropped Sammie off at camp just a little late, and we were excited for her after seeing what a great place [Camp Selah](http://campselah.org/" \t "_blank) is (Camp Selah is a Christian camp in Reading Michigan, and both of our kids who went had a SUPER time!)

July 7-9 – These next few days were a bit quiet without the whole brood together, and we fit in another family min-vacation: since Sammie had to be picked up in the morning in Michigan, we took the other 3 kids to the drive-in in Coldwater Michigan and spent the night there – lots of fun!Â  Saturday the 9th we picked up Sammie, and she said she had a good week during her first ever time at camp.

July 11 was the 3rd birthday of a very special little guy, and we took him out to dinner at the local Mexican restaurant where they sang to him, put a sombrero on him, and dabbed his nose with dessert.Â  I of course forgot my camera Â  but he liked it all the same.Â  It reminded me of last year when the staff at Bob Evans sang to him, and he dove into my shirt to hide – the year of experience helped him to enjoy the attention more this year.Â  And in the morning of little dude’s birthday, I had to drive Taylor to camp in one of the nastiest storms of the year.Â  We made it there without a problem, but the ride home was dicey with driving rain and wind.Â  I was glad I didn’t have any kids with me which would have made me nervous, and as you can tell I made it just fine – even if I did arrive sopping wet and very late to Bible study.Â  In the newspaper the next day, I saw a picture of a power line that fell into the road which turned out to be the same road I had been driving down during that storm.Â  Just goes to show you what kinds of things to look out for when driving during inclement weather in the middle of desolate farm country, and I feel blessed to have made it safely.

July 11-14 – So with our eldest away at camp, the week flew by…Â  even though we missed her (I especially missed having someone old enough to have a normal conversation with me during the day).Â  We had 3 days of doctor appointments (me and our youngest-for-now had his 3-year-checkup) and meetings, and then… freedom!

July 15 – Hubby and I met my mom in South Bend, and she took “the littles” (our family name for the younger kids in our family; in this case it meant our 3-year-old, 4-year-old, and 7-year-olds) to Grandma’s for a vacation – which left Hubby and I kidless for a whole day!Â  So Hubby took me to the Potawatomi Zoo in South Bend, and the amount of walking and the weather was perfect for me even while pregnant since it was just the two of us.Â  What a great idea as I was just starting to get zoo withdrawl!Â  After the zoo, we decided to take the scenic route home from South Bend and fell upon a perfect date purely by accident:Â  in Middlebury Indiana, there is an excellent Amish-style restaurant called [Das Dutchman Essenhaus](http://www.essenhaus.com/index" \t "_blank).Â  We were driving by on a day when they had a buffet, so we could sample many varieties of their very delicious food.Â  Even better, there were some Amish men offering carriage rides in the parking lot, so we took one!Â  It was so romantic, the grounds of the mini-resort were beautiful, the weather was perfect, and hearing the history of the grounds as told my our Amish guide was wonderful – best date day ever!!

*(below is a picture of a horse and buggy like the one we drove in (ours was more of a carriage than a buggy).Â  I had to take the picture on the way home since I had forgotten my camera and couldn’t take any pictures while on the buggy ride!)*

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/07/our-horse-and-buggy-7-15-11.jpg)July 16 – This was the day we picked up our oldest from camp, and we got to hear every detail about her awesome week while driving from Michigan to Fort Wayne to see…Â  the new Harry Potter movie ON IMAX IN 3D!!Â  Yes, it was as cool as it sounds, and it was fun to take Taylor out for a fun day with only parents and no younger siblings – dinner was at Golden Corral, one of her favorite places since she loves steak.Â  I’m thankful that the awful nausea I felt earlier in the day did not persist through the movie, and the cause of it that day still perplexes me…Â  such is a mystery of pregnancy, I guess.

July 17-18 – The 3 of us tackled the huge project of cleaning out our spare room – what a mess!Â  I wish we had taken some “before” pictures, but the most important thing is that it got done, even if I felt like I was going to fall over in exhaustion by the end of it.Â  I’m so proud of Hubby for all the hard work he did for this project, and especially that it was his idea to tackle it earlier than we had scheduled – we began Saturday night after Fort Wayne rather than Sunday after church as we had planned.Â  But it looks GREAT, and as I’m writing this at the end of July, our family has gotten so much use out of it already.Â  We made it into a craft / hobby / school room, and it has a computer, Taylor’s new sewing machine (a present from Grandma), all kinds of paper, crayons, glue, etc, and all the many, many arts and crafts kits and supplies we had been saving (and losing) for the past 5 years.

*(July manifest to be continued – need to give your eyes a break!Â  But first, here is a pic of a creative, cute fire hydrant in downtown South Bend Indiana I snapped while sitting at a stoplight – look for it near the silver van’s rear bumper)*

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/07/cute-fire-hydrant-in-S.-Bend-IN-7-15-11.jpg)

### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**What a fun July you had - so glad Dad and I could be a part of it. As for next year's Nashville trip - I vote for McGinley's Gulch. I just loved the screened in porch - did I ever sit anywhere else in the house. I had so much fun having the kids here in Illinois. It is such a special time for Papa and I.  
**taylhis**Derek, sorry to hear that! I didn't know your mom sews. From what I hear, sewers love new sewing machines, so it sounds like a great gift - I would see what I could do to get her a new one.  
**derek**Well, you've been all over the place this month, in more than one way I might add. I look forward to the next part. Something random that caught my eye- you mentioned a new sewing machine for T. I just bought a new sewing machine to give to my mother for her next birthday. Unfortunately I put it in the basement to store it, which got flooded last weekend when the sewer system backed up into the homes of us and our neighbors. I wonder if they'll exchange a slightly damp, yet unopened, product...  
**justj**Sounds like a good summer so far. I hope the rest of it goes well for you.  
**Jamiahsh**HAHA! Cute hydrant... But WOW what a month! And still more?!

# I'm Thinking... I'm Thinking...

Some comic relief in the title of this post to distract me from quite an overwhelming day today:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

Received some devastating news (for us, but don’t worry – it’s great news for some friends of ours) prayed about it, and examined the possibilities that may arise from it.Â  There’s also been several intriguing and excitingÂ  doors being revealed to us lately, and we are praying on, thinking about, and waiting to see which ones will open and where they might lead.Â  We’ve been contemplating a huge decision in the past few months regarding our family, and it’s time to finalize that decision.Â  We spent some time with friends today gathering information and establishing a support system for this possible lifestyle change.Â  I’m excited but for the lack of sleep wearing me down and making me feel overwhelmed – it’s all a lot to process.Â  I will write more in a bit – as you can see, I have a new keyboard.Â  I have a whole July manifest half-written that’s kept me busy – I want the kids to be able to read about our family’s stellar July 2011 on my blog someday, so I’d better get around to it.Â  Same thing with my chronicle of the Florida trip we took in January that still has the last part missing 6 months later – oops.Â Â  I don’t know what my problem is – the only thing that distracts me from blogging is doing homework for my Bible study class – and the fact that I found my Zoo Tycoon game; that’s really distracting from productivity.Â  And oh yeah – the 4 kids running around the house because it’s been too hot to play outside; that can make blogging a bit difficult.

### Comments

**derek**Just getting back to reading blogs again after a really busy week at work following the sewage upheaval of 2011 (into ours and several of our neighbors' basements). The house still stinks of must... Big changes? Sorry to hear about the closed door, but I am glad you are looking at other exciting ones that are still open. I patiently await further news of this when you are ready and able to post.  
**jamiahsh**Best of luck to you no matter which doors you may choose to open.  
**justj**Devastating news that is good for friends? Exciting doors? Sounds like you have a few irons in the fire. Always with the best for you my friends.

# Random Destructon

was n te mddle of wrtng a blog post on my laptop wen my keyboard’s buttons started fallng off.Â  You migt be able to guess te letters tat ‘m now mssng, and t’s really ard to type lke ts.Â Â  ope to get t fxed ASAP, tenÂ Â  wll blog more.Â  Computers, ug .

### Comments

**derek**@Taylhis: You know, your comment just made me think of [this Monty Python sketch](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcCuBWXd-hc" \l "t=01m13s)... @Jamaihsh: Yes, that would sound a bit \*ahem- Lumberjack sketch\* without that letter, wouldn't it... :D  
**Jamiahsh**Good thing you weren't trying to type my name ;)  
**Taylhis**The creative input was amusing - thanks! I have a new portable keyboard now that I have to get used to using - my hands keep going to my laptop keyboard instinctively. You can't tell by the sentences I was writing, but the other 2 letters I was missing was "c" (had a replacement key for that one though) and "j". :)  
**derek**I lk frward t it. I hpe it is sn. The ther brken key I wuld like t mimic is . :D Until later then!  
**jamiahsh**Hope your HI gets fixed soon ;)

# Cool Summer

The kids are growing by leaps and bounds before my eyes, and it’s unbelievable because I’m used to seeing them most of the day, every day – and I can still see the changes.Â  They are growing up literally before my eyes!

So far this summer, the kids and I have carried a normal daily schedule that finds our time divided between fun activities and miscellaneous appointments (like Bible study class, violin lessons, doctor’s and dental appointments, etc).Â  I think we’ve done a good job of making the days fun, and we’ve also had some great family weekends since school has let out.Â  Father’s Day weekend saw us heading out to the [African Wildlife Safari Park](http://www.africansafariwildlifepark.com/" \t "_blank) in Port Clinton Ohio.Â  We love that place, but it’s almost 2 hours away so we hadn’t made it out there in a few years.Â  But there was a Groupon a few months ago, and we got a great price on admission, so Hubby planned a trip there.Â  Can’t go to Port Clinton Ohio and not stop at [Cheesehaven](http://cheesehaven.com/) – 88 types of cheese, meats, sauces… yummy stuff.Â  They have free samples so you can try before you buy.Â  Should you find yourself in this little Lake Erie town (which is near the more well known tourist attraction: roller-coaster filled Cedar Point), stop by Cheesehaven and get a fresh corned beef sandwich – YUM!!

The Safari Park is great –Â  you drive around the animals’ huge enclosure, and herds of all types of different animals approach your car looking for food!Â  There are alpacas, llamas, white-tailed deer, elk, elands, bison, reindeer (I never found this one in the guidebook, but it looked like a reindeer to me!), even giraffes and zebras at the end (while you can still feed them, the giraffes and zebras are behind a fence whereas the other animals are not).Â  It’s so cool to feed all these guys!Â  Some are dainty, skittish eaters (the smaller deer), while the huge animals like the bison will fill your car with this hot, half-digested hay breath.Â  It’s delightfully disgusting, and only animal lovers should attempt to stomach this!Â  Here is the best video I could record while getting accosted by a thousand-pound bison (the kids were frustrating us adults since they would freak out and drop the carrot before the bison could grab it – we felt bad for the hungry fella!)

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

And what is the poor thing in the picture below?Â  A llama, I think?Â  He had a funny lip, which coupled with his flat ear gave him a whimsical look – he was a favorite to feed.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/06/safari-park-6-18-11-020.jpg)

And next is a video of the giraffeÂ  – sorry for the shakiness, but he was too tall to get in one shot!Â  You can see his curly toungueÂ  that came out and helped him grab his carrot.Â  The car in front of us had the right ideaÂ  – they were feeding the giraffe out of their sunroof – it was a sight to see and I should have taken video!

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

The Safari Park also has pig races, an animal show, a small walk-thru zoo, and pony and camelÂ  rides for the kids.Â  It was a SUPER day, followed by a special day to celebrate Dads after 

### Comments

**derek**I didn't expect the giraffe's head to be quite so large- but then it is so far away when the giraffe is standing. Sounds like it was a good day indeed. Oh, was the cheese shop anything like this one? :lol: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3KBuQHHKx0>  
**jamiah**Looks like fun as always... but where's Ludo?!. Cool giraffe. A fun, slobbery time.  
**Mysmichelle**Looks like you're up to ever interesting things as usual. My computer went kaput and lost link to your site. Always enjoy reading you're posts. Hope all is well with your gang.

# Pet Balance

We have a dog fence AND a regular fence, and they have been digging under both fences to get out.Â  So a friend put in a border of concrete blocks, and it looked great – we were sure it would work.Â  But today we found out that the dogs were able to get past that, and also past the concrete brick we put in the hole they had dug in the big yard.Â  My husband went out looking for them, but we had an appointment that could not be rescheduled, so he had to give up.Â  Later in the day, we got a call from a friend, who had almost hit one of the dogs with her car.Â  She couldn’t capture the dog, so we had to rush out of our appointment to corral her –Â  the dog, not the friend.Â  We found the dog in the middle of Main St. –Â  it’s a 4 lane road that is as busy as it sounds – just standing there.Â  My husband got out of the car, so I circled around the block, and they were gone when I came back.Â  I circled about 10 more times, didn’t see them, then I left because we were about to run out of gas.Â  And all this while I’m fielding calls on the cellÂ  phone about the other dog and my husband’s work – where he was supposed to be today.Â  Long story short – this dog situation has been a nightmare, and we thought we had solved it with the concrete blocks.Â  But it’s worse than ever.Â  And I simply cannot keep these dogs from running away while I’m pregnant, feel yucky, and have 4 other kids to care for.Â  So we have to surrender one or both of the dogs.Â  We’re going to try one at a time – the older one is the one who leads the team inÂ  the escapes.Â  We think she is just so desparate to get away from the year old puppy that she will do anything to get outÂ  – including moving concrete blocks and plowing through chain link fence.Â  And now, becuase it’s clear that she would rather get struck by a car than live with her “brother”, for her own safety I think we’re going to have to return her to the humane society.Â  We can only hope she will find a good home and that our other dog will stop escaping from the fence.Â  Numerous people have suggested putting them on tie-out chains, but the older dog has already snapped one of those, plus they would get tangled together.Â  I just can’t believe we’ve spent over $400 on these dogs in the past week and we still have to give one or bothÂ  up.Â  It’s not about the money, but it adds insult to injury. It’s about disappointing the kidsÂ  and me having to feel terrible for adding to the homeless pet problem in this country.Â  I always wanted to be part of the solution…

### Comments

# Highlights From A Beth Moore Bible Study

One of the activities that’s been keeping me so busy lately is the Beth Moore Bible study I’m attending on Mondays, called Jesus The One and Only.Â  It’s great; I’m learning a lot, getting to know other women from my church, and it gets me and the kids out of the house for a few hours every Monday morning.Â  The kids can blow off some steam while I go through the workbook with my small group and watch the dvd.Â  A fun class, but there is a side effect of all the learning: homework.Â  Our workbook is divided into weekly sessions, and there are 5 days of homework for every week’s lesson.Â  Each day has about 4-5 pages of homework that involves creative thinking and looking up passages in the Bible, contemplating them, comparing them, and answering thought-provoking questions.Â  Time-wise, it’s intense, especially for this pregnant mother of 4.Â  This is the 3rd week of class, and so far I’ve been able to get all my homework finished on time and am really enjoying it.Â  I struggled a bit at first with the stress of trying to find those extra hour 5 days a week that I was sure I didn’t have, but I’m managing and reaping the rewards.Â  Before I begin today’s homework, I thought I’d share some things that I’ve highlighted in my workbook.

Before I do that, however, I will recap in a nutshell what the study itself is all about: Jesus.Â  We began our discussions talking about Mary, and Beth Moore is really great at delving more deeply into things and encouraging the student to give more thought.Â  We talked about what Mary might have been like as a young Jewish woman (Mary was probably around 13 or 14 whenÂ  she was told she was about to carry the Lord’s childÂ  – did you know she was that young?Â  I didn’t!), and we talked about her pregnancy (of particular interest to me right now), her thoughts and feelings, her journey to see her cousin Elizabeth, and then we moved on to talking about Jesus himself.Â  We talked about him as a baby, a child, and about how he was led into the desert, all while relating it to our own lives.Â  Some of Beth Moore’s statements that stuck out to me in the workbook are:

*God seems to love little more than stunning the humble with His awesome intervention.*

*Seasons of intense temptation are not indications of God’s displeasure.*

*God emphasized that the road to redemption would be costly and confrontational.*

*Luke was the only Gentile God inspired to write a Gospel.*

*God allows circumstances to exist in our lives that drive us to dependency on Him.*

*God is far too faithful to let anyone make it through life without confronting seasons of utter helplessness.*

*The good news Christ may want to preach to you today is that you don’t have to subsist.Â  YouÂ  were meant to thrive.*

*I’m quite sure if my healing process had been painless, I would have relapsed.*

*Many people sincerely love God, but I don’t think anyone stands to appreciate the unfailing love of God like the believer finally set free from failure.*

### Comments

**derek**As far as I know, the Bible doesn't say anything about his age. Here is something from the ISBE, Bible encyclopedia: 2. Character: If a type is to be sought in the character of Joseph, it is that of a simple, honest, hard-working, God-fearing man, who was possessed of large sympathies and a warm heart. Strict in the observance of Jewish law and custom, he was yet ready when occasion arose to make these subservient to the greater law of the Spirit. Too practical to possess any deep insight into the Divine mysteries or eternal significance of events which came within his knowledge (compare Luk\_2:50), he was quick to make answer to what he perceived to be the direct call of God (compare Mat\_1:24). Originally a â€œjust manâ€ (the King James Version), the natural clemency within his heart prevailed over mere justice, and by the promptings of the Holy Spirit that clemency was transferred into a strong and enduring love (compare Mat\_1:24). Joseph is known to us only as a dim figure in the background of the Gospel narratives, yet his whole-hearted reconciliation to Mary, even in the face of possible slanderings by his neighbors, his complete self-sacrifice, when he left all and fled into Egypt to save the infant Jesus, are indicative that he was not unworthy to fulfill the great trust which was imposed upon him by the Eternal Father. 3. References in Apocryphal Literature: The Gospel of the Infancy according to James, a work composed originally in the 2nd century, but with later additions (compare Hennecke, Neutestamentliche Apokryphen, 47-63), gives a detailed account of the marriage of the aged Joseph with Mary, of their journey to Bethlehem, and of the birth of Jesus. A similar gospel, reputed to be by Thomas the philosopher, of later origin and Gnostic tendency (compare Hennecke, 63-73), narrates several fantastic, miraculous happenings in the domestic life of the Holy Family, and the dealings of Joseph with the teachers of the youthful Jesus. Other legends, from Syriac or Egyptian sources, also dealing with the Infancy, in which Joseph figures, are extant. The chief is The History of Joseph the Carpenter (compare Hennecke, Handbuch der neutestamentlichen Apokryphen, 95-105). This contains an account of the death and burial of Joseph at the age of 110, and of the entreaties of Mary to Christ to save him. Its aim was to show forth Christ as the Saviour, even at the last hour, and the rightful manner of Christian death. Joseph has received a high place in the Calendar of the Roman Catholic Saints, his feast being celebrated on March 19.  
**Taylhis**Interesting thought, Derek. Is there anything else that could give us clues about Joseph's age (things he did, festivals he attended, etc). I haven't read the New Testament yet.  
**derek**I did know what is said about Mary's age, and just for kicks I decided to look up Joseph since I never heard anything on his age. I expected he was probably somewhat older, but apparently a manuscript describes him as quite old. Well, since the Bible doesn't speak of it, I am not sure I will trust this extra-canonical source. By the way, the title of the series is also the title of a song we have sung at church before in choir: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OriHO21pBsE  
**jamiahsh**Very though-provoking! Glad you are enjoying the class. Your discussion of Mary took me back to high school when we had a bunch of students from other churches some and join us on a Wednesday night in order to "better understand" why Catholicism is so different than other branches of Christianity (small town drama) One of their questions was "Why do we worship Mary?" It's not that we "worship" her as much as we honor her. And yes, she was a young teenager when she was with child.

# I WAS Gonna Blog More This Summer, But...

I am enjoying some of the freedom that the summer affords me: no youth group on Wednesday nights, no teaching Sunday school, no having to drop the kids off or pick them up at school – well, the kids will be out of school in 2 days, so I haven’t had a taste of that yet, but I’m looking forward to trying for my afternoon nap without time constraints – if only Terrible-Two-Dude will stop yelling my name during these nap attempts.

Don’t get me wrong, I enjoy all of these activities, but there is something liberating about not being tied down to them for an entire summer.Â  As much as I absolutely loved teaching 1st graders on Sunday mornings, it was really great last Sunday to not have to get up at 8am and get 4 crabby kids ready for what amounted to a double church service for themÂ  – one while Mom and Dad teach and one while Mom and Dad go to worship.Â  Our family rolled out of bed by 10, got ready, and left the house around 10:40, getting to church in time to relax with friends before the service with plenty of time to spare.Â  I enjoyed Wednesday nights with my 6th grade girls, but there was a lot of emotionally exhausting drama there at the end, and I so needed a break.Â  Besides, it’s nice to have Wednesdays free.Â  But wait, I don’t have Wednesdays free!Â  Hubby and I signed up to organize and facilitate a class at church called Changing Hearts, Changing Lives – a personal ministry class that utilizes a DVD series by Paul Tripp and small group discussion to lead Christians to be able to effectively counsel others in a God-loving and caring way.Â  We’ve had two weeks of this class so far, and it’s going great!Â  So I can’t really say that I miss my free Wednesday nights.Â  IÂ  never got a taste of a free Wednesday night anyway; what’s that like?

I also signed up for a women’s Bible study series (Beth Moore for those of you that know her work) that meets on Monday mornings.Â  I hesitated with this one because it meets ALL summer – beginning today before school is out and going right through to August after the kids go back to school.Â  But there is child care there, so if my 4 kids haven’t killed each other by the time Mondays roll around, this will get us out of the house once a week.Â  Also, my oldest daughter gets to help with the child care with other ‘big kids’ her age,Â  so that will be good for her too.Â  I enjoyed my first class today, but I have to note the intensity of this class – 5 nights of homework per week!Â  Pre-Christian Taylhis 1.0Â  would have panicked and said ‘I don’t have time for this!!’, but Taylhis 2.0 feels pretty good about it.Â  I’m excited to immerse myself more fully in God’s word, and the structure of the class will have me getting to know better other women at my church.Â  I can find time for my homework; after all, isn’t more butt-time for the pregnant lady just what the doctor ordered?Â  I’m not sure about that, but it’s definitely on MY want-list because these days my feet (legs, thighs, etc) are killing me, and I have a lot more growing to do!!Â  Problem is, I’m going to spend that butt-time in front of my Bible and my class workbook rather than my blog, so there goes my plan of blogging more…Â  oh well, who said blogging more was a good plan for me anyway?

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/06/jesus-the-one1.jpg)

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/06/jesus-the-one.jpg)

### Comments

**taylhis**Thanks for your comments, but optimism on the homework front is more difficult today. I've done a few pages as I've had time, but I haven't even finished 'Day 1' in the workbook. If each day takes me 45 minutes and I have 5 days per week - ugh. And it's a lot of reading passages, reflecting, and writing about it, so it's not the kind of hw I can do while getting interrupted every 10 minutes or so to break up a fight between kids - which is what I'm about to go do now, coincidentally.... Or not so, really, since they are CONSTANTLY fighting!!!  
**derek**You should find something to keep you busy- you have way too much free time. ;) Well, busy as these summer things will keep you, I second jamiahsh's comment. :)  
**jamiahsh**Have fun with all your church activities. I'm sure that all of them will help you and, by extension, others develop your relationship with God even more fully.

# Evil Animals

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/06/see-no-evil.jpg)Every once in awhile, time.com has interesting countdown-style articles.Â  The other day, this one caught my eye:

[Top 10 Evil Animals](http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2074429_2074446,00.html" \t "_blank)

Beyond the expected varieties of insects, you’ll be surprised to learn which mammals are featured (I know I was shocked by a few of the species the authors felt worthy of being on the evil animal list), and it’s interesting to read about the characteristics of all the creatures included in this article.Â  I was going to include a shortened version of the list so you didn’t have to flip through the slide show, but some are so entertaining that I’m going to let you flip through for yourself – click the link above.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**#9... Is it just me or did my neck of the woods have issues with them not too long ago... hmmm. #1... Having a NY channel via our DISH network, it seems that you can turn it on the news and hear about more new and improved methods of dealing with the critters. Has cut tourism by quite a bit last I heard Fun and interesting article.  
**derek**Yes, #8 makes this seem more like a Cracked magazine list than that of a supposedly respected mainstream magazine. Mosquitoes = #11?  
**taylhis**That is funny and random, D. Written back in OJ's heyday, it seems? And when you said 'bloodsucker', it made me wonder, why the heck were mosquitoes not on this list? I HATE those little buggers!!!!! They cause illness, pain, itchiness, and even death - I find that much more evil than the so-called evilness of #8 (they only go so far as to say the animal's deceptive looks are what makes it evil? Or that it's mean to others of its species? Big deal).  
**derek**Well, only one on that list has the capability of truly being evil. Interesting that that animal was not number one. Of course, number one is a nightmarish bloodsucker. One of them made me think of this: http://www.glyphjockey.com/sequitur/juicedingo.jpg

# Still Here... Somewhere

Realizing I haven’t blogged in awhile, I’ve been trying to think of something to write about.Â  I have plenty of material; I just don’t feel like writing for some reason.Â  Plenty of material, not plenty of time is part of the reason.Â  I’ve even started a few drafts, but at least one ended up being a laundry list of complaint about my dogs’ behavior and other things that have been stressing me lately, and I don’t feel like publishing it.Â  After all, Walmart complaints are fun, tongue-in-cheek ways to vent about how I feel ripped off after shopping at Walmart, but when I write huge rants of real life complaints I annoy *myself*, so I can’t imagine my readers’ feelings.Â  Plus all the complaining doesn’t ease the stress, nor does it help me fulfil the main purpose of my blog – which is giving my family a virtual diary of our lives while the kids are growing up.Â  Sure, it shares the information, but I want their reading experience of our family blog when I’m gone to be a good one, not something like, “Hey – I DO remember when mom was stressed all the time!!”

So I wanted to drop a quick line to let it be known that I’m still here, still a part of blog world, still interested in posting blogs.Â  My kids are not any less cute these days, nor my life any less busy or exciting…Â  just much more stressful, which kind of puts a damper on my creative writing spirit I think.Â  I’m hoping maybe that will change here soon…Â  if not this summer, something tells me I might feelÂ  better in October or November with less of the negative pregnancy symptoms and more of the ‘new baby joys’ to focus upon.Â  Can’t wait!

### Comments

**derek**Harold Camping, yes. And it would appear that he is [somewhat less than repentant](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/23/harold-camping-to-speak-t_n_865746.html). Sigh.  
**jamiahsh**AMEn, Derek! Was that really the guy's name, mr. Camping? Guess I did not pay that close of attention.  
**derek**What must Mr. Camping and his followers be thinking now? I pray he repents his false teachings and leads his followers, including the one member of my men's small group, to the real Truth. The church age isn't over, people are still being saved in churches, and we still don't know the time and day of Christ's return.  
**justj**I guess I am still here. ;). Thanks Chris!  
**justj**But am I here? I'm not sure since I haven't been able to post or reply.  
**taylhis**Pastor gave us some fun at the expense of the "Rapture" this morning ;)  
**jamiahsh**A very creative, entertaining post to tell us all that you wer not part of yesterdays "Rapture" UGH!

# The Return of the Commodore 64?

It holds the Guinness World record for best-selling single computer model of all time, so who had a Commodore 64?

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/05/commodore.jpg)My family had one when I was growing up, and I enjoyed playing hours of games on it.Â  I remember how novel it was that we could create a sign, card, or banner on the computer and then print it out –Â  complete with pixel-riddled graphics and what-do-you-call those side strips on the paper with the holes in them that you tear off and either discard or twist them together and make art out of them.Â  My uncle had a subscription to Loadstar, which was a Commodore club of sorts – he would get magazines and new games monthly in the mail.Â  I used to love some of those Loadstar games, unfortunately, I can’t find them to play on emulators now.Â  I really enjoyed an Activision game called Toy Bizzarre, and my all time favorie game for the Commodore 64 was Maniac Mansion – I was addicted to it until I won it, and then I had to go back and win it withÂ  all the different character combinations.Â  They did make a version of Maniac Mansion for the original Nintendo, but I was biased toward my Commodore version.Â  I always thought that game would make a great movie (think Clue), and when I was younger, I tried to write the game into a novel but never finished it.

So what’s got me thinking back to the 80’s days of the Commodore today?Â  I came across an article on cnn.com about how advance orders are being taken for the resurrection of the Commodore here in 2011.Â  It’s being made to look just like the Commodores of the 80’s, but it will have today’s computer capacities since the ’64’ in Commodore 64 referred to the unit having 64 Kilobytes of memory – about the equivalent of one long email, according to the article.Â  If you’d like to read the article, [click here.](http://www.cnn.com/2011/TECH/gaming.gadgets/05/09/commodore.64.reborn/index.html" \t "_blank)

### Comments

**derek**I found another source- just the D64/D81 files, not a CD. I will download them and get them to you.  
**derek**Hmm. Daemon Tools won't mount it. Interesting.  
**derek**How can a software program destroy a CD writer? A fluke in any event. It runs without issues on both computers here.  
**Taylhis**Yep - sounds like an unrecognizable foreign language. So that lets you play the Loadstar games? Now I just have to remember the names of the ones I liked. Oops, C says Daemon Tools destroyed his CD writer.  
**derek**Just finished downloading. It's a CD image in a weird format (created with a program called BlindWrite). Just install Daemon Tools and mount it as a drive. I'm sure C can help you if this sounds [insert foreign language] to you. :)  
**derek**I haven't tried it yet, but I'm downloading this now: [Loadstar Compleat [sic] on Megaupload](http://www.megaupload.com/?d=NFAKLNMW) The computer seems more like a netbook shaped like a C64, what with the Atom processor. I'll just continue to use Gamebase 64 with an ordinary PC. I might be tempted by a new model Amiga however, if a decent one (there have been attempts) were to ever come out...  
**jamiahsh**I remember playing on one back in the day... at school, perhaps during study hall... when I had them which was not often? Must have been it.  
**justj**The nerd in me is going "I want it now.". The practical side is telling me that I have plenty of computers. So far the practical side is winning.

# Easter 2011

Easter is definitely a favorite holiday of mine.Â  Can’t be THE favorite because nothing beats Christmas, but it’s proven to be even better than Halloween these days.Â  No matter how you celebrate Easter, there is always lots to do this time of year, and I think our family found the perfect balance between celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the traditional kids’ stuff like Easter eggs and bunnies.

Every year, our community has an Easter egg hunt, and my kids always love it.Â  My oldest is now too old to participate, but I was proud that she chose to come along with us and that she was a HUGE help with the little ones.Â  Our community’s Easter egg hunt is more of a candy scramble now.Â  They used to have it in the park, and the volunteer teens from the high school would hide the candy all around the park, but they got tired of having to move the event indoors at the last minute because of inclement weather.Â  With Easter being in April, you just can’t guarantee a sunny, dry, Saturday morning without muddy ground in which to hide the Easter surprises.Â  So now they have it in the middle school gym, and while they can’t exactly hide the candy, the kids seem to love it all the same.Â  If the kids find a piece of candy with a colored dot on it, then they win an extra prize, and 2 of my 3 kids did just that – those of you who know our family can guess who was the one with the (as always) bad luckÂ  – poor kid.

At church the following day, we had two special guests join us – one friend who doesn’t go to church but began to come after falling on hard times in his life, and a new friend who is also going through tough times and looking to switch churches.Â  I’m so happy to report that New Friend now calls our church her church home – she and her kids really like it!Â  Also, Friend #1 has been coming to church every week since!Â  God is amazing!

Monday, we were invited by some friends to attend “The Living Last Supper”, a show near Fort Wayne Indiana staged solely for God’s glory – to depict the last days and the death and Resurrection of Jesus.Â  It was an **awesome, powerful** show; one I **strongly recommend**.Â  This will be an annual tradition for our family for sure!Â  Especially since all 4 of our children were moved by the performance, and we didn’t even need to use the child care!

Friday saw the annual kid-friendly tradition of egg coloring, and I think this was really the first year we’ve done egg coloring with a little BOY in the house.Â  Our son is 2, and what a difference there was between his rowdy excited way of dropping the eggs into the colors versus his sisters’ delicate quest for prettiness in their egg designs.Â  Our son barreled through his allotment of eggs so quickly that his sisters were still working on theirs when he was done, and this is what happened:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/05/Easter-weekend-4-222324-2011-009.jpg)After dinner, our family sat down in a circle to do another one of our favorite Easter traditions: [Resurrection Eggs](http://www.amazon.com/Resurrection-Eggs-Familylife/dp/1572297220" \t "_blank).Â  It’s a set that was given to us by my sister last year, and I have to remember to tell her how much we enjoy doing this every year.Â  We even lent our set to some friends this year for them to enjoy!Â  It comes with a booklet, and we take turns reading the little paragraphs that tell the story of Jesus’ death.Â  The booklet asks questions and gives you places to pause,Â  and you open each of the 12 eggs when prompted.Â  Each of the different colored eggs contains a little something that represents the part of the story that was just read, and we have kids take turns opening eggs.Â  It’s a wonderful way to combine the eggs aspect and the spiritual meaning of Easter into a fun-filled educational family activity, and we love it!

Saturday morning the kids got a nice surprise – the Easter Bunny had visited early and hidden their gorgeous eggs!Â  I think the Easter Bunny thought it would be too much for us to search for eggs while trying to get to church on time Sunday morning, and he was right Â  Oh, here’s a pic of the kids with their eggs; Dude is still recovering from his egg coloring tantrum:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/05/Easter-weekend-4-222324-2011-005.jpg)After the egg hunting , we attended a fun Easter event at the community theater up the street, and the weather actually cooperated.Â  There were Easter egg hunts, games, lunch, and plenty of prizes for everyone, and the kids had a blast.Â  We returned home and made a last minute decision to check out another Easter drama at a friends’ church.

It seems that the Easter Bunny made another visit to our house on Saturday night since Sunday morning the kids woke up to a laundry basket for each of them full of surprises.Â  We went to church, and I enjoyed a whopping class size of 13 first-graders to teach!Â  Problem was, all of their jacked-up-on-candy brains could only think about the other aspects of Easter, and we had difficulty doing some of our planned activities.Â  It’s often difficult to accomplish much when I have a class of that size anyhow, so I took it in stride and we went to the gym early to run around and burn off some of that sugar!Â  At adult worship, we were blessed to see enough friends join us so that our group filled up an entire row!Â  It’s not about quantity, but it was amazing to see some friends there who don’t regularly go to church and some whom we’ve been inviting for years and haven’t come until now.Â  I am so excited to see what God is doing in the lives of those I care about!!!

We went out to brunch, took a family nap, and then we took the kids to the movies.Â  No, we didn’t see Hop, which might have made sense for Easter, but our older kids have already seen it.Â  So we took in Rio, which is a cute family movie about a couple of rare parrots – fitting for our family since we reside with a jerky parrot of our own, and we had fun.

Overall, one of the best Easter seasons *ever*; actually, this season just keeps getting better and better every year, especially as I become aware of what the season is all about and how to really celebrate it.Â  I am truly blessed!

So a belated happy Easter to everyone!Â  I hope you all had a wonderful Easter and have many more to come!Â  Celebrate Easter, celebrate Jesus, celebrate love, celebrate family – Easter is great & we have God to thank!

### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**Wonderful post Lisa. Great family traditions you have established that I am sure your children will follow up with when they are older.  
**derek**I should post a short vid I shot from onstage Easter Sunday. It's not very good, but it definitely will give you an idea of how our church celebrates the resurrection. :D I keep waiting for an official video to be posted on their Vimeo account, but I guess they chose not to.  
**taylhis**Easter Sunday to me will always be Resurrection Day, but I used the term Easter Season for those who celebrate differently :)  
**jamiahsh**Easter lasts for 7 Sundays, I believe. Maybe that is the basis for the old adage that if it rains on Easter Sunday, you get seven Sundays of rain. But glad that you enjoyed all of your Easter blessings and events. Glad that the weather cooperated for all the hunting as wet as the month of April was :D Our school egg hunt has an Adult version (one that I have never participated in...this year especially). So glad that you all continue to share God's love with your friends and hopefully those who so rightfully deserve his grace come to accept it! Well done!

# Now What Do I Do?

The title of this blog post makes me think of the movie Forrest Gump – remember the part where Forrest runs and runs; pretty soon he has a pack of people following him, running with him, and then suddenly he stops and says, “I think I’ll go home now.”Â  The pack of followers is suddenly lost and without purpose.Â  “NOW what do we do!”

That’s kind of how I feel now that I’ve finished the masterpiece novel I was reading, Under the Dome by Stephen King.Â  This book was a page-turner from start to finish, all 1000+ pages of it, and it’s one of those books that’s so good it sends the reader into withdrawal once they’ve finished the story.Â  Not helping is the fact that I’m sick, and the only good part of being sick (if there is a good part of being sick) is curling up with a good book.Â  But now I’ve finished my good book.Â  I’m reading two others, but they’re not the same type of book.

One additional note about Under the Dome:Â  I learned before I had read too far into the novel that they were making it into a tv mini-series, and as the novel progressed, I kept wondering how that would work given the book’s adult themes and graphic violence.Â  Now that I’ve finished the book, I felt comfortable doing a google search on it since I didn’t have to worry about the ending being spoiled (don’t worry, I’m not going to do that to you – not when I recommend it so highly for you to read for yourself; it’s really very good!).Â  Here I learned that it is indeed being turned into a tv mini-series – for **cable** tv.Â  That makes more sense, and I will have to find a way to get my hands on it when it comes out; maybe that will help cure my withdrawal!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/04/under-the-dome.jpg)

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Agreed, there is a lot of language in there with the violence but like tay said the good really outweighs the not so good.  
**taylhis**@derek - There is A LOT of bad language, graphic violence, adult themes and other stuff that's not quite fun to read at times, but since it's a very long book, the good outweighs the bad and I dealt with it. Some of it was essential for the amazing character development and to portray realistically how these people would act in this kind of a stressful situation. I DO NOT recommend this book for those with a weak stomach or people who don't like obscene language or graphic content in books. And it reminds me of my idea of a book rating system like movies have - I would NOT want my kids reading this, it would need an "R" rating FOR SURE. @justj - I have a "to read" list a mile long, but there is never any guarantee as to which will be the page turner I'm looking for. I've gotten back into my "Caril" book pretty easily though, and once I'm done with that I think I'll re-read the last Potter in prep for the movie this summer. And I would love to catch up on my blogging, but it's not the same block of time that needs to be filled - I read in bed, blogging in bed would not be relaxing and would take at least twice the time it should to post!  
**derek**I admit I used to read Stephen King novels. After a few years break I attempted to read a Dark Tower book and was so put off by the F- this F- that, that I promptly returned the book to the library after having read only a chapter or so and haven't picked up one since. It's not as if I hadn't read any other Dark Tower books- I don't know what happened with this one. Maybe I was just in a mood.  
**justj**Hmmm. I wish I could think of another page turner for you. Maybe you could catch up with your blog posts. ;)  
**jamiahsh**Hmmm... what network..prolly HBO or something like that which I don't have. But it was an EXCELLENT book! Glad you enjoyed it, too! Maybe in a few years it will be on Netflix like some of the other King miniseries. I know The Stand (another highly recommended 1000 pager) is on my queue.

# Florida 2011 - Trip Diary - Part 3

Tuesday January 18 – We began the dayÂ  at Sizzler’s breakfast buffet, again.Â  If you are noticing a pattern, you won’t be surprised to see this in the diary for pretty much every day of the week.Â  The prices there were great ($3.99 per adult and kids were free!), the food wasn’t bad, and it left our group full enough to sustain us until mid-afternoon, which saved us a lot of money.Â  Today was Epcot day, and it was a great day – the sun finally came out, and the temp was in the low 70s.Â  We rode the usual favorites, and we got to take our daughter Disney on my favorite Epcot ride Soarin’ for the first time because she was finally tall enough – and she liked it!Â  Epcot has a World Showcase which is an area set up like different countries, so we took the ferry to Germany and walked to Japan for their delicious snow cones.Â  We walked around the lake through Morocco and Italy, and stopped in Norway and Mexico for their boat rides which are very cool.Â  Someday I would like to visit the countries in Epcot, sampling the ethnic foods as I go – but that’s more of a retirement plan since the kids would never go for that now!Â  Oh, and we ran into Stitch in America!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/03/025.jpg)After the day at Epcot, we sent the little ones home with Grandma, and Hubby, Jamy and I attempted to find a good place to eat dinner, but to our surprise, there weren’t many good dinner choices left at 10pm, even in Orlando.Â  We ended up at Perkins – famished – and they were out of most everything I asked for.Â  I stomached the sandwich I got, which wasn’t very good, and Hubby was not too happy with his salad.Â  We did end up with a box of Eclairs to go, and those were pretty goodÂ  – well, what little of them we had anyway once the kids got a hold of them.Â  Our friend Derek arrived that night while we were sleeping, so our next day would see one more joining our group…

Wednesday January 19 – Breakfast at Sizzler (did you think I was exaggerating about eating there every day?), then on to the Magic Kingdom where we spent a fun-filled day.Â  We learned that there is an expansion planned and under construction to double the size of Fantasyland, so we are looking forward to seeing that on a future visit.Â  Splashwater Falls was undergoing maintenance (usually does in January when we go, but this is a small price to pay for ideal weather and low crowdsÂ  – BEST time to visit Orlando!!), but we enjoyed the classics like Big Thunder Mountain Railroad (and little Disney liked this one, even though it is a roller coaster!), Jungle Cruise, Haunted Mansion, Pirates of the Caribbean, and Hubby’s and my personal favorite that many others find to be lame,Â  The Carousel of Progress.Â  We skipped out on Space Mountain this time, mainly because the kids wouldn’t have liked it, and we don’t find that its long wait it worth it for a herky-jerky outdated roller coaster.Â  If you are into indoor roller coasters in the dark, I’ve always liked the Aerosmith one at Disney’s MGM, er, Hollywood Studios, althoughÂ  we never find that park worth the time for a visit since there isn’t much there.Â  And [King’s Island](http://www.visitkingsisland.com/" \t "_blank) in Mason Ohio outside of Cincinnati has a SUPER dark coaster called Flight of Fear.Â  But back in Orlando, the People Mover ride in the Magic Kingdom, an elevated train-type ride that goes all around Tomorrowland, treated us to a one-of-a-kind glimpse inside Space Mountain – *with the lights on*!!Â  The People Mover travels into the Space Mountain building, but usually you can only see the glowing streaks of the ride trains as they zip past.Â  Because of a ride malfunction, the lights in the building were on, so we got an insider’s view of all the tracks and trains which was pretty cool!!Â  After the Magic Kingdom, Derek, Chris and I took the two oldest kids to Fun Spot to try the extreme go-karts, but it didn’t go over so well.Â  The oldest hated them, and she made me go putt-putt-putt all the way up the spiral and around the track – that was not fun; I’m more pedal-to-the-metal!Â  But we all took a spin on the bumper cars, and that was some great old-fashioned family fun that everyone was able to enjoy.

Thursday January 20 – Breakfast at Sizzler (every day – told ya!), then on to our second day at Universal, this time with Derek, although we lost one because by now, Jamy’s back pain was so bad that he had to stay in the rental house and relax all day.Â Â  Thankfully it did not rain this time, and we had a wonderful day.Â  It was a bit chilly, but we couldn’t resist the urge to ride Bluto’s Barges 3 (or was it 4?Â  I can’t remember) times in a row –Â  we were drenched!Â  Smarter ones in our group (Derek and Grandma) opted to stay out and stay dry, but those of us who got off soaked (and shivered) had a blast.Â  It’s a large round boat that’s propelled down a raging river of rapids; every time it dips, the riders on that side get drenched by a wave that cascades over the wall of the boat.Â  Then there are waterfalls and waterspouts – it’s so much fun to bond with the strangers in your boat as you take turns laughing over who gets soaked and who dodges the torrents of water – whether everyone speaks English or not, there is bonding in the boat!Â  Next it was on to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, and I think I talked about this earlier in this diary – it’s amazing; that’s all I need to repeat.Â  We went on the ForbiddenÂ  Journey ride again, this time with Derek, and he really liked it.Â  Unfortunately, they decided that Sammie had shrunk an inch or two since Monday, and she no longer met the height requirement, so she had to wait in the child swap room – which is actually quite entertaining because theyÂ  have the old Harry Potter movies playing, and I had forgotten how young Harry Potter (actor Daniel Radcliffe) was when the movies began.  
After Universal, we went to the McDonald’s largest Playplace where the kids had a blast.Â  Grandma stayed with them while Hubby, Derek and I went to the Titanic attraction I’ve always wanted to see.Â  Unfortunately, our adventure was a bit marred when Hubby was pulled over and ticketed for U-turn in a No U-turn intersection.Â  In our opinion, it should have been a warningÂ  – clearly we were tourists, it was an honest mistake, he didn’t doÂ  it when there was oncoming traffic present so no one was in direct danger, and of the 3 people in the car, not one of us saw the (supposed) no U-turn sign.Â  Personally, I thinkÂ  Orlando should treat their tourists a little more like the guests that they are, especially considering how much moneyÂ  the average tourist brings into their local economy.Â  Also, they seemed to milk us for every penny – the ticket itself was very expensive, and because we were from out of town, we couldn’t even show up to traffic court and contest the ticket, not to mention that when we returned home, we were bombarded with offers of traffic school via mail, which showed that they were looking for even more money by selling our info to these traffic schools so they could bombard us with ads.Â  A frustrating episode in our otherwise super vacation, but that’s enough – traffic ticket tangent over!  
So back to the Titanic exhibit…Â  I’ve always wanted to see it, but it’s quite pricey, and we were always nervous about spending so much on trying something new that we didn’t even know would be worth the cost or not.Â  So enter Groupon – before we left, there was a Groupon for Titanic, and we got it.Â  It kind of obligated us to fitting this in since we already had tickets, but with the money we saved on Groupon, it was worth it.Â  And, we even made it on time, getting pulled over and all!Â  Upon entry, each visitor gets a little card with the name and info of a Titanic passenger, and one of the rooms at the end of the tour has a wall with all the names of the passengers on it.Â  The lights go down, and the names of the passengers who survived stay bold while the names of those who perished are hollow, so you can see if “your” passenger made it.Â  Mine survived, which I had guessed correctly because she had been a first class passenger.Â  Our tour guide (portraying the famous Titanic personality “Unsinkable” Molly Brown) was very knowledgeable about all things Titanic, but our friend Derek’s passenger card stumped her – the name on his card was half-solid, half-hollowed, so we don’t know if he made it through the ill-fated voyage or not.Â  But overall, it was a lot of fun, and a well spent hour or two.Â  I’ve always beenÂ  a Titanic buff (excluding the movie which I feel really commercialized, cheapened, and capitalized on the tragedy and the great loss of life involved – enough about that), so this museum was right up my alley.Â  There were re-creations to see and explore (a first class cabin, the deck, which they had even chilled to provide an example of the actual temperature that night, and the grand staircase, see picture below), as well as actual artifacts recovered from the bottom of the ocean, like dishes.Â  There was room after room of signs to read and pictures to look at, and as much as I don’t like the movie, they even had a few costumes and props from it which were interesting to see.Â  Among my favorite parts of the exhibit:Â  the hall of newspapers, which had newspaper editions reporting the disaster in 1912 from all over the country, complete with early 20th century advertisements and other news articles.  
I also found this quite remarkable:Â  it was an ordinary cooler, and the exploration staff autographed it and put it down at the bottom of the ocean where the Titanic now lies.Â  I forgot how long it was there, but it’s not nearly as long as the remains of the ship have been there, and this is what the ocean pressure did to it:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/04/Florida-Jan-14-23-2011-033.jpg)Interesting as it may be, it is a sad representation of what will happen to the remains of the luxury liner itself.Â  Scientists estimate that it won’t last more than 50 additional years if people don’t find a way to salvage it and bring it up for study.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/04/Florida-Jan-14-23-2011-032.jpg)

Hubby and I in front of the actual sized re-creation of the Titanic's Grand Staircase

After Titanic, we stopped at Dippin’ Dots, but it was our only taste of the delicious ice creamish treat for this trip, and I was SO disappointed to find out they discontinued my favorite flavor of Dippin’ Dots:Â  Root Beer Float.Â  

### Comments

**taylhis**We went back to Sizzlers for lunch one day (or was it the first day, can't remember it's been so long now), and the food wasn't that great. But for breakfast, there really isn't a way to make food too bad, and it filled us up for much of the day so at that price, we couldn't go wrong! One of these years Justj, I really hope to see you and maybe a daughter or two down there with us :)  
**justj**I don't think I've ever been to a Sizzlers. Or most of the other places mentioned. Sounds like a good time.  
**Phyllis Beyer**Minor correction - Grandma rode the water ride once and did get very wet but was smart enought not to ride again.  
**derek**@jamiahsh: Hmm- where indeed..? (looks innocent) @taylhis: Check your email :)  
**taylhis**And yes, this post took forever. I've had the draft sitting there since part 2 was published what, a month ago? But I didn't have a chance to work on it much. It's all worth it when I print out the trip diary and store them with the photos in a memory book for the kids :) Even if it's not done til 6 months later...  
**taylhis**Yes Derek, email it! I'd like to see it. We should have taken your Grand Staircase pic on our camera, nuts...  
**jamiahsh**POTTERVILLE... HEHEHEHE!! Where have I heard that name before. Memories. And another memorable trip with amazing friends. Might not have all been good but cherish each and every moment spent with you all.  
**derek**Most of the rest of the days in one post- that must have taken awhile. Ah, the memories. I just wish we had had a little more time at Universal- I felt a little rushed toward the end and would have liked to explore Potterville- err, Hogwarts a little more. Ah, well. Maybe next year. My grand staircase photo didn't turn out so nice. With my Android phone it would have been much better since it has a flash. I can email it if you'd like.

# BookWorm

I was always an avid reader, but then I took an almost decade hiatus from reading books.Â  Because I did (and do) my reading before bed, I think the hiatus was due to the combination of getting used to parenting and also being fresh out of college which meant that I wasn’t used to getting to read what I wanted rather than what was assigned to me.Â  But a few years ago, I took up the hobby once again, and I’ve been thoroughly enjoying it.Â  I began by reading non-fiction because I liked the idea of learning something while I was reading.Â  I read biographies and stories that ranged from fun to inspirational, and my favorite reading was centered on true crime.

I read *[In the Presence of My Enemies](http://www.graciaburnham.org/index.asp?sec=2_1" \t "_blank)*, the inspiring true story of the Burnham couple who, after years of missionary work in the Philippines, were taken hostage during a vacation there and held for a year.Â  I read *[My Lobotomy](http://www.amazon.com/My-Lobotomy-Howard-Dully/dp/0307381269" \t "_blank)*, the biography of a man named Howard Dully who underwent a forced frontal lobotomy at the age of 12.Â  I read *[How Many Hills to Hillsboro](http://www.paperbackswap.com/How-Hills-Hillsboro-Fred-Bauer/book/142684/" \t "_blank)*, an account of a family of 5 who attempted and almost made a cross country trip together in the ’60s – on their bicycles.Â  I delved into fiction, reading the entire Harry Potter series and loving it.Â  And now I call myself an avid reader with a “to read” book list a mile long – and by the way, all of the above mentioned books I enjoyed immensely, and I highly recommend them.

I think that’s how I ended up reading 3 books at the same time.Â  It began when I was looking for something to read that would compare to Harry Potter, so I tried C.S. Lewis’ Narnia series and began with The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe.Â  While enjoyable, it wasn’t quite the can’t-put-it-down book that I was looking for, so I consulted my “to read” list and decided to try a Stephen King book that had been recommended by a local newspaper columnist – *[Under the Dome](http://www.amazon.com/Under-Dome-Novel-Stephen-King/dp/1439148503" \t "_blank)*.Â  With the exception of some short stories, I haven’t read Stephen King before, but I’ve enjoyed a few of his movies.Â  So far, Under the Dome has been exactly what I’m looking for – page-turning excitement that is hard to put down!Â  The novel is about a small town in Maine that is suddenly and inexplicably cut off from the rest ofÂ  the world by a mysterious,Â  invisible – yet very real barrier.Â  Between trying to draft and enforce their own laws, keeping lawless individuals under control and townspeople from going crazy – literally –Â  and attempting to figure out what the dome is and how to get rid of it, the little town has more than its fair share of strife.

A few weeks before my request for Under the Dome came in at the library, I had decided I wanted to read the Bible, and so I find myself switching between two 1000+ page books in bed at night – I am so grateful we found a great sale on that e-book reader, which makes switching between these two books easy on my arms and my bed partner.Â  I know a lot of people are intimidated by the complex language of the Bible, but the NIV version is fairly easy reading, and I really enjoy reading it and especially learning more about the chapters I’ve read when I go to church on Sunday.

As if reading two 1000+ page books at the same time weren’t enough (though on the plus side, it’s not like I can possibly get the characters in the Bible and those in Under the Dome mixed up – a complication I used to run into in my heavier reading days when I would try to read a book for pleasure and a book for school at the same time), another one of my requests came in at the library – Caril by Ninette Beaver.Â  Being a more obscure book, I don’t know that I will get the opportunity to get it from the library again, so I’m attempting the book-reading tri-fecta.Â  Caril is the unauthorized biography of Caril Fugate, the alleged accomplice to [Charles Starkweather](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Starkweather" \t "_blank) who went on an infamous murder spree centered in Lincoln Nebraska in 1958.Â  Although Caril was tried and convicted in a court of law, there has been much debate about her actual role in the murders because of her age at the time – 14.Â  The book follows the cases and Caril’s incarceration and is written from the media’s point of view in the 1970’s before Caril was released from prison.Â  It’s been interesting to read about other news items of the day (breaking news items in 1958 included: Liz Taylor’s husband killed in a plane crash and Elvis being drafted into the Army) and also how differently people reacted to news reporters taking interviews for the brand-new medium of the day: television.Â  Family members of suspects, law enforcement, and attorneys were all much more willing and able to talk to reporters and share details for the camera than they are today.Â  You may have seen one of a number of movies made about the Starkweather cases; the most famous is NaturalÂ  Born Killers, although that movie DOES NOT follow the cases accurately and is, in my opinion, a terrible movie.Â  IÂ  guess the reason I’m so interested in these cases is because Charles Starkweather was a different type of serial killer and one who has escaped the major notoriety of say, Ted Bundy and John Wayne Gacy.Â  I also lived in the lovely city of Lincoln Nebraska for a year, and I’ve seen many of the places where the crimes took place for myself – including the penitentiary where Starkweather was electrocuted and the cemetery where he is buried.

I’m really enjoying all 3 of my books right now, but reaching my goal of re-reading the last installment of the Harry Potter series before the final movie comes out mid-July is going to prove to be quite challenging!!

And one more note – further encouragement to read Under the Dome is the movie being made due to come out this year – looks like a made-for-tv movie, which is difficult for me to imagine based upon the violence involved and intensity of the story.Â  But if Stephen King’s other tv mini-series are any indication, Under the Dome the movie version will not disappoint and is an excellent reason toÂ  pick up this great book for some perfect summer reading!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**THREE TIMES! I knew about the two. And yes, part 2 is going to be in 3D. Hope it is good. Yes, seems that Hollywood likes to take liberties when saying that a movie is based on other material.  
**taylhis**It was seeing Deathly Hallows in the theater 3 times that made me WANT to re-read the book :) Natural Born Killers is terrible; that's worth reiterating. One of the worst movies I've ever seen. I checked the synopsis just now, and I don't see any similarities between the movie and the Starkweather case, just murder. Don't know why they say it was loosely based, but I guess a vague one word subject is all you need to be considered loosely based anyway.  
**jamiahsh**And I have never seen Natural Born Killers so thanks for warning me away from it ;)  
**jamiahsh**LOVED Under the Dome. I like the Nook's ease of going from one book to another as well. I'm just doing two at a time... reading a 1000+page turner and working on the last Percy Jackson book. I wonder why Hollywood has not jumped on that series more... they have only made the first book a movie. Don't think I'll reread Deathly Hollows before July. Think part 1 will be enough to satisfy now that it is on DVD.

# ACM Awards - 2011 Edition

Was it really 11 years ago already that we got to attend the 2000 Academy of Country Music Awards in Los Angeles?Â  Newcomer Brad Paisley won that year for Best New Male Vocalist, and he’s now a country music veteran who took the Top Male Vocalist prize in 2011.Â  Someday, I’d like to attend the recording of another live awards show.Â  Nothing beats the excitement in the air and participating in a live tv show taping where anything goes.Â  And never in one place will you see so many super performances by a variety of outstanding performers – both from country music and also outside the genre.Â  But my 4.5 kids keep me grounded, and I don’t travel as much as I would or as much as I used to.Â  So until the day when I can get back to a live country music awards show taping (and I will be in no hurry to go to the ACMs until they move it out of Vegas!), I will enjoy watching and voting along at home.

This year was a super show; I had a nice time watching it last night.Â  And a surprise awaited me at the end…

Some highlights:

– Brad Paisley opens with a performance, and then he’s joined by none other than –Â  ALABAMA!!Â  They were so awesome; this number really got my country blood pumping!

– Some unlikely duos performing this year:  
Unlikely duet #1 – Jennifer Nettles from Sugarland and pop star Rihanna. Â  Their duet made for an interesting performance.Â  Not my favorite kind of music, but they sounded good.  
Unlikely duet #2 – Country music sweetheart Carrie Underwood screaming alongside Aerosmith frontman turned American Idol judge Steven Tyler.Â  The first song wasn’t great; it was more for Tyler than Underwood, in fact, I thought it a waste of her lovely voice.Â  But their “Walk This Way” duet was toe-tappin’ fun!  
Unlikely duet #3 – Zac Brown Band and James Taylor.Â  I’m really starting to enjoy the harmonies of the Zac Brown Band, and their performance with James Taylor tonight was thoroughly enjoyable!

– Probably the first time I’ve cried while watching the ACM awards – Darius Rucker’s song backed by a chorus from the Lifting Lives music camp was incredibly uplifting and awe-inspiring!Â  I loved every minute of it!

Overall, a wonderful show!Â  Except one thing – where the heck was Rascall Flatts?!?

And oh yeah, that surprise at the end – Taylor Swift won Entertainer of the Year.Â  No surprise there; if I had paid attention when I filled out my fan ballot and realized that the Entertainer award was fan-chosen, I would have picked Swift in a heartbeat.Â  But I spaced and chose Miranda Lambert (still beat Hubby on the ballot 7-3, just sayin’) for some reason.Â  The real surprise came when they announced the nominees for Entertainer of the Year, and I actually found myself rooting for Taylor Swift – what was going on?Â  I’ve never been a fan of Swift’s music, and I hadn’t voted for her, so what gives?Â  My 6-year-old daughter was enjoying the show with me, and every time Taylor Swift came on or her name was mentioned, Sammie got SO excited.Â  So I told her I would let her know when “the big award” was coming on, and you should have seen her face when Taylor Swift won – she cheered!Â  It was adorable, and I cried.Â  I cried at the ACM awards twice last night, what is wrong with me?Â  Oh yeah – pregnancy will do that to you.Â  Probably a good thing that I was watching from the safety of my own home.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Glad you were able to catch it and that it was so much fun! Hopefully, one day you will get to attend another big live awards event!

# At Least I Have No Regrets

Spring break is over, and for me it flew by- and it was wonderful.Â  I had my concerns about being so tired and keeping 4 kids from getting bored and restless, and those fears mounted last week when I saw the weather forecast – 40s all week, scarce sunshine, and maybe even a little snow.Â  I was especially concerned that spring break would be my own personal forecast to what summer break will be like because hard as I try not to, I have times where I dread the summer a little bit.

For one thing, there is a wonderful Christian camp that we’ve been hearing about from a friend, and we’ve been trying to let our kids go for years now, but it hasn’t worked out for one reason or another.Â  This year, it seems that the dates will work, but the fees are a little steep, and the 45-minute trip to the camp x4 (there-back-there-back for two kids) might hurt the wallet a little bit with the price of gas the way it is.Â  Add to that a trip to Nashville Indiana with extended family – SO fun, but 8 more hours of driving, plus groceries and supplies to buy, plus 4 round-trips to South Bend Indiana, and I calculated my mileage from July 4-23 at 1388 – That’s one thousand eighty-eight miles in 20 days.Â  Factor in our van’s crummy gas mileage and all the pregnant lady bathroom stops, and OUCH.Â  But then I got to thinking about it, and I think I’d rather spend my July driving around the tri-state area than locked away in my air-conditioning with 4 rambunctious kiddos.Â  As I said, the trip to Nashville will be lots of fun, and most expenses have been paid thanks to a generous Christmas gift.Â  So what if I have to miss the 4th of July fireworks for one year (next year we do have to pick a different date though guys if you are reading this 4th of July is one of my favorite holidays!).Â  And the trips to South Bend mean that Grandma is taking the kids – so that means fun for them, and a break for us.Â  So what if it’s not all 4 kids gone at the same time anymore – that’s just one of the small trade-offs for having such a large (wonderful) family.Â  And I’m STOKED that the kids finally get to go to this camp – they are so excited too!Â  So what if we have toÂ  leave Nashville at 5am just to drive the 4 hours to get Sammie there on time?Â  But the main reason for optimism for summer vacation was spring break – it was awesome, and it flew by.

For me, the month of March dragged on and on, and I think much of it had to do with my prenatal dr. appointment on the 31st.Â  I just could not wait.Â  Part of it was excitement – this stage of pregnancy is toughÂ  in a different way than the rest of it because many of the changes are internal, and you have nothing to show for it.Â  I spend my time looking up sketches of what my baby might look like these days, but unless you count fatigue, nausea, moodiness, or tears, there aren’t any outward signs to get excited about – and no, leftover baggage from previous kids does not count as a “baby bump”.Â  Also, I’ve been extra worried about this pregnancy – I can’t put my finger on it, maybe it’s that stupid stat I heard somewhere that keeps sticking in my brain –Â  “1 out of 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage”.Â  This is my 5th pregnancy, so that panics me.Â  I wish I didn’t read the news so much.Â  Maybe the worry is because of how incredibly difficult this pregnancy has been on me (and my family) compared to the others.Â  Whatever it is, I’ve been especially panicked, but I’ve been building a great relationship with my new doctor – she is very understanding and so much more of a problem solver than my previous doctor.Â  But either way, spring break saw me at my prenatal, and everything looks great!Â  Baby is measuring at exactly 12 weeks, right where s(he) should be.Â  AND…Â  I got to see her (him) dance!!Â  The baby keeps sneaking us ultrasounds – I wasn’t scheduled for one, but the heartbeat couldn’t be detected (my understanding doctor warned me of this ahead of time, or I would have panicked.Â  Again.), so she took me into the ultrasound room.Â  There, we saw baby on the screen, and my little 2-inch miracle was *dancing* – I saw her legs moving and everything!Â  I keep thinking and saying “she” and “her”, but don’t place any bets – I’ve been known to be wrong about my children’s genders in the past –Â  *before* they’re born, of course, sheesh.

So I took the kids to the zoo on Monday of this spring break, and last night I’m still on cloud nine from seeing my baby dance, and the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I could not resist going back to the zoo on the last day of our season’s pass.Â  We aren’t going to renew because as much as I love the zoo, it feels like a waste to renew right before summer, especially when I’m pregnant and (probably?) won’t feel like going as much.Â  And I know I won’t be able to go after my surgery for a month or so…Â  So I took the kids to the zoo not once, but twice this spring break, and I didn’t even feel like I was going to keel over by the end of today, which means that my first trimester fatigue *might* be fading (afraid to get too excited).Â  I evenÂ  took an extra kid with me to the zoo both days, a gamble that paid off both times since we all had a blast – even if I was late getting Ellyn home today (that’s why I didn’t stop to chat Justj – I’ve been kicking myself ever since.Â  I really wanted to see your daughters!Â  But I was late, and you just don’t expect to run into a friend 60 miles from home so I was caught off-guard).

So yes, I missed the Chicago Cubs opening day game taking my kids to the zoo, and I’m proud of it!Â  Nevermind that I was looking forward to that game for months.Â  Hubby recorded it for me, and I watched it as soon as I got home anyway.Â  And I’m telling you what, the Cubs did not play badly (except for Dempster – if I still cussed he would be on my you-know-what-list), but they lost.Â  But as I said, they did not play badly, so there is MUCH hope for the season – you can’t tell anything decisive on opening day.Â  Well, except for last year but we’ll leave that out of it.Â  But the best part is, I have no regrets.Â  I can’t imagine how I would have felt had I missed my last chance to take my kids to the zoo in order to watch a game where the Cubs lost.

Super decision on my part, and if this spring break was any kind of predictor for summer vacation, BRING IT ON!

### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**Sorry about your missing your favorite holiday. Perhaps the town of Nashville will have fireworks you can go to. Actually, we always have to plan around Tim's days off and as you know, that is difficult to do. Plus the fact that I only have the month of July off. But 1 more year and when I retire we can go in June or August.  
**jamiahsh**So glad the break was enjoyable. Your Hubby warned me not to post any spoilers about the Cubbies since you would not be able to watch... but I was not around when the game was finished so you were safe. Glad to hear about the baby dancing! Sounds healthy to me. Are there any other kids going to the camp this summer... perhaps you could arrange a carpool and alternate drivers? But love the optimistic tone of the post!

# A Language All Their Own

WOW – two posts in a row from me, what’s that about?Â  My kids are on spring break, and the older ones are playing with the younger ones, giving me some unexpected spare time.Â  I wouldn’t dare schedule a household project; everyone knows the magic would end and I would suddenly find myself in the middle of an undone project.Â  Don’t worry, I already know it’s a fluke, and I don’t expect it to last long.Â  In the meantime, I enjoyed this video and wanted to share it.Â  Almost makes me want twins someday.Â  Almost.

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

I think the one twin got an idea about climbing on the kitchen appliances, and the other twin is telling him how he’d fall, get hurt, and how much mommy would yell at both of them.Â  Whatever they’re saying, they are adorable!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**They were on GMA this morning. The interviewers were nervous that they would not "perform" but were just as adorably talkative ;)

# I Want To Be A Glass Is Half-Full Kind Of Person

…so I’ll start with the Cubs.Â  Because goodness knows in my own life, being an optimist is too exhausting.Â  I wake up feeling crummy, determined to make the best of my day, only to have had to step in to referree not less than 10 fights before I even make it to lunch.Â  And I’m not talking about MY lunch – that comes much later (if I’m lucky)Â  after I’ve served up umpteen helpings, cleaned up infinite messes, and responded to various other distress calls.Â  But the point is that at a time where I could really use my time and energy to focus on me and growing a healthy baby, much ofÂ  said time and energy is wasted on what feels like mundane, pointless referring and the like.

But withÂ  the Chicago Cubs opening day mere HOURS away (ok, dozens of hours, but still countable by hours!), I came across the following article which did indeed fill me with cautious optimismÂ  – not for my own summer, no, for there is no doubtÂ  I’m going to feel like a huge pregnant balloon, warm beyond reason, lazy beyond doubt.Â  I know that I will have 4 little kids to chase around, and I will have to pry myself out of my chair a little earlier in the chase if I’m going to have any hope of catching them to stop the trouble or keep them out of danger.Â  The optimism isn’t for meÂ  – it’s for the Chicago Cubs.Â  If you’re a Cubs fan, read the following, and tell me if you agree.Â  I especially like the line that says, “…allow me to put on the ol’ rose-colored glasses and search out reasons to be hopeful that 2011 will be a better year than 2010 for us Cubs fans.Â  For one, it can’t be much worse.”

Excellent point, that.Â  After all, I had to write off my Cubbies after watching what was the debacle they called opening day last year.Â  Not that I ever tend to give up on the team, I am a Cubs fan affter all, but well, if you saw them play, er um, “play” baseball on opening day of 2010, then you would agree.Â  Check out the rest of the reasons for optimism here as written by Bob Warja for the Bleacher Report @ bleacherreport.com:

**[10 Reasons for Cautious Optimism for the Chicago Cubs in 2011](http://bleacherreport.com/articles/646314-chicago-cubs-10-reasons-for-cautious-optimism-in-2011?utm_source=newsletter" \l "page/1" \t "_blank)**

And GO CUBS!!!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/03/cubs.jpg)

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Good luck to your Cubbies this season. Prayers and blessings on a healthy summer for you and the little one. If you need any help, you know where I am. Might be kind of fun to watch me handle 4. By the heat of the summer, prayerfully I will be up to the challenge ;)

# Looking Forward To The Next One

Well, here we are only 2 months out from our last trip to Disney World, and I’m already wanting to go back.Â  That’s nothing new, it’s an awesome place, but I’m also reading about many changes taking place.Â  Ok, so I’m not exactly planning the next trip (step one would be how to fit our family of soon-to-be 7 into the minivan along with a week’s worth of luggage for a 20 hour drive), but articles like the following tempt me.Â  EspeciallyÂ  interesting: Disney’s $1 billion Next Generation project, which includes interactive line queues – they’re adding things like an interactive mystery experience to the line of the Haunted Mansion attraction.Â  And apparently they’ve already added interactive video games to Soarin’ and Space Mountain, none of which I had noticed on our last visit!Â  Maybe because we did the Fast Pass?Â  That reminds me, Disney is going to try a new concept as part of the Next Gen project: guests will be able to book their ride times for various attractions from their hotels or from home ahead of time, drastically reducing or even eliminating the need to wait in line (and to see all these brand spanking new queue attractions?).Â  Also something I missed this last time around: the new playground and interactive video games in the line for the Winnie the Pooh ride.Â  Now where would they have room for that, I wonder?Â  But no wonder that we didn’t notice these enhancements; that ride normally has an over 40 minute wait even in the down season, so we don’t usually indulge in it.

Lots of interesting changes and enhancements on the horizon,[check them out for yourself](http://www.orlandosentinel.com/the-daily-disney/os-disney-haunted-mansion-lines-20110326,0,3104381.story?page=1" \t "_blank).

### Comments

**jamiahsh**The Hunted Mansion queue sounds fantastic. Not only do we get to read the headstones but see the graves as well.  
**Jamiahsh**Wow! Next time! The map for the new Fantasyland looks great! I was planning my next clot free trip to one of my favorite places even before we left ;)

# I Would SO Try This!!

In pastÂ  summers, Hubby and I have been lucky enough to have all 4 kids watched by Grandma for an entire week.Â  This gave us time for some kid-free fun together with just us, as well as time to catch up on necessities like work and sleep.Â  For the past two summers, we’ve made a trekÂ  down to Cincinnati for some FUN.Â  We’ve been going to [King’s Island](http://www.visitkingsisland.com/" \t "_blank), an amusement park in the suburb of Mason.Â  Their VIP tours are quite reasonable, considering all the benefits you get (your own personal park guide for the day, all you can eat for lunch, and front of the line ride access, to name just a few!).Â  We’ve been making a weekend of it, going to the world-class Cincy Zoo one day, followed by a VIP tour at King’s Island the next.

I was on their site today, and I saw this cute little teaser video starring Don Helbig, the public relations manager at King’s Island: the same guy who meets us by the awesome 5-minute long wooden coaster The Beast for our backstage tour, which is also included in the VIP ticket.Â  Having ridden King’s Island’s wooden coaster The Racer over a whopping 12,000 times and holding the Guinness record for coaster riding, Don is fascinating to talk to.Â  He made this video to unveil King’s Island’s new 2011 attraction – or so I thought.

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

So after seeing the video, I did a bit of internet searching, and it didn’t take me long to find the attraction being unveiled on March 18; here is [your sneak peak](http://www.b105.com/blog/2010/08/new-attraction-coming-to-kings-island/" \t "_blank):

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/03/WindSeeker11.jpg)The Windseeker is a swing ride, but it’s going to suspend riders 301 feet above the ground, swinging at speeds over 30 mph!!Â  Even though I have not been enjoying the height of the coasters in the past few years, I would try this!!Â  Thing is, we won’t be making it to King’s Island this summer because buying a ticket to enter the park would be a waste of money for me this year – I am due with my 5th child in the fall!Â  I’m not too broken up about missing the new ride or any of my old favorites; after all, I’d rather have a baby than a trip to King’s Island a million times over, but for the record, I would try this ride!!

We’re going to have to find something equally fun and pregnant-lady-in-the-summer-friendly to do this summer, but it might be a challenge – everything I can think of involves being outdoors and also lots of walking.Â  Not only that, but since there are now 4 kids, Grandma wants to split their vacations with her into shifts during the Grandma week, meaning Hubby and I are down to zero kidless days.Â  Oh well, there is plenty of time for that in about 20 years, right?!?

### Comments

**derek**It does look interesting- like one of those super thrill rides in Florida. Well, maybe not so, but bound to be cheaper, nothing more than the normal admission price, right? But it won't be the event that brings me to visit you as you mentioned above. I don't think I would horn in on your couple time anyway even if you were going. Not that I won't visit- I realize this post makes it sound that way, sorry.  
**taylhis**Just clicked on Cedar Fair and started visited the sites of their parks and found that Canada's Wonderland is building one too. Didn't see anything about it on Michigan's Adventure.  
**taylhis**Having the same ride at different parks, not so unusual. 3 opening the same year, more rare... They are all owned by the same company, so that makes a little more sense, but from a business standpoint, I wonder if it is a helpful marketing tool or a hindrance that they are all named the same (Windseeker)?  
**jamiahsh**BTGO, maybe? Add Knott's Berry Farm in California to the list. I THINK those are the only three parks ;)  
**taylhis**BOGO, maybe? :)  
**jamiahsh**Funny thing... KI's sister park, Cedar Point is unveiling the same attraction. Don't think this has been done before. Wonder if it is going to happen more that they are owned by the same company. But it does look fun. Wonder if the doc would allow for this. I might have to get used to the no coaster rule. But we will not think about that until the time comes.

# Jack Hanna, David Cassidy, Goats, Camels, And Live TV

I saw a link to this on Facebook, and it’s hilarious – gave me my smile for the day!Â  Watch chaos erupt on live TV in the 70s when Jack Hanna brings a gaggle of goats into the tv studio, and they run amok.Â  The host, Bob Braun, has a great sense of humor about all of it, although the same can’t be said for all of the audience members, especially those who end up with rogue goats in their laps!Â  David Cassidy even has a hand rounding up the herd, and by the time the camel puts in his two cents, the host is practically rolling on the floor with laughter!

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I'm sure that the lady in the red suit was really thrilled with the old goat. :D Hilarious on so many levels! 70s live tv... love it! Liked how the host tried to keep things flowing by giving a plug to David's concert. Imagine this happening in a Letterman audience :D  
**Phyllis Beyer**This was hilarious. I would have loved to be in this audience.

# Why I Dislike Time Change

Just a few of the reasons why I dislike the time change, especially the “Spring Ahead” version:

1. Â  LOSING AN HOUR OF SLEEP

2.Â  Mechanical clocks can be reset, kids’ internal clocks cannot.Â  I will lose an hour of sleep, and my kids will still wake up at the same time, which doesn’t bode well for the “fall back” version of the clock change.Â  In the spring, the kids will still want to go to bed at the same time, no matter what the clock says –Â  see #2.

3.Â  Normally I would like having the sun out later into the evening, but with 4 kids who don’t want to go to bed until it’s dark, the old go-to-bed reply, “but it’s not dark out yet” can actually make sense until 10pm where we live.Â  I both like having daylight until 10pm in the summer and dislike it at the same time – a conundrum for now, maybe something I’ll like better when my kids get older.

4.Â  LOSING AN HOUR OF SLEEP (that hour is so precious, it’s on here twice)

5.Â  There is a HUGE difference between 9:45pm and 10:45pm that I wouldn’t have noticed if not for the time change tonight.Â  At 9:45, the night was young, I had time for my shower, some laundry, and maybe a quick tv show or two to watch with Hubby before bed.Â  But before getting into the shower, I changed the clocks, and suddenly it was 10:45.Â  Suddenly there is only time for the shower and maybe a quick load of laundry before getting to bed too late to really feel good tomorrow anyway.Â  And no kid-free time with Hubby because (see #2).Â  

6.Â  LOSING THAT HOUR OF SLEEP (so important, it needs to end the list)

**Don’t forget to set your clocks ahead one hour everyone, and forgive me if I chuckle at those of you who show up late to church tomorrow – maybe it will help me feel better about my tiredness!!Â  **

### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**I, too, hated the time change when my kids were small. Now I have to deal with a dog who still gets up early but actually that's my husband's problem since I get to sleep in on the weekend. I also don't like getting up when it's still dark outside. But I do like it staying light longer. I feel like I have more of an evening.  
**justj**I would prefer the time to stay the same. I don't care which, just so we don't have to change twice a year.  
**derek**But what about losing the hour of sleep? :lol: I almost can't afford to lose the hour with the way I don't sleep well. But we'll all get used to it, leaving just #3. Eventually. And yes, I made it to church at the right time this morning. :)  
**jamiahsh**Oh, YES the Spring ahead. I worked 12-9 yesterday and had to be there at 7:30 this morning to open. By the time my head hit the pillow, the alarm went off :( But bring on the warmth! I do remember using #3 back in the day ;)

# Florida 2011 - Trip Diary - Part 2

Sunday January 16 – We drove over to Congo River mini golf to try to feed the gators they have there, which never works out because it’s usually too cold in January for the cold-blooded gators to care much about eating, and this time was no exception.Â  But we spent a long time just watching the gators and their habitat-mate turtles climbing around and over each other, getting in and out of the water – kind of like a free little zoo exhibit.Â  My kids are too little to enjoy or let us enjoy playing mini-golf, so we went to Sizzler for an all-you-can eat lunch buffet.Â  We spent the afternoon relaxing at the house so Hubby could watch the Chicago Bears game and the kids could swim, and we even took a dip ourselves at half-time.Â  For dinner, we went to Medieval Times, which is a dinner show – it is SO fun!!!Â  Everyone is seated around an arena, and the audience eats a Medieval-style feast while watching a show complete with horse, knights, and jousting.Â  You are assigned a seat in a certain color section (we were green – note the crown in the picture below), and you cheer on your color knight in the jousting and gamesÂ  – it’s a blast!!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/03/012.jpg)After watching the knights duke it out, Grandma took the kids back to the house and we took Jamy on the extreme go-karts at Fun Spot.Â  The track called The Vortex is wicked; you wind up and around 3 or 4 times until you reach the top, and it’s strange to be up so high in a go-kart.Â  But you don’t really have time to think about that, because there is a steep drop down, followed by a couple of hairpin /Â  bowl-like turns that you have toÂ  navigate as driver of the kart!Â  Super fun, though not for everyone.Â  We thought this is what caused Jamy’s back injury that ended up plaguing his trip, but turns out it was something else.Â  And we took our daughters on these go-karts later in the week – with helmets of course –Â  and our oldest hated them and wouldn’t let me use the accelerator; it was SO frustrating!!Â  Our daredevil 6-year-old Sammie loved it though, and I found her to be a passenger more willing to go my speed – pedal to the metal!!

Monday January 17 – We ate breakfast at Sizzler at their breakfast buffet, and then headed out to Universal Studios as planned despite the dire forecast of rain all day, and the weathermen were not mistaken.Â  It was like a monsoon when we arrived, and scarcely let up all day.Â  Many of the rides at Universal are indoor, but Hubby and I did take a bit of a gamble (and lost) when we got in line for the new Rip Ride Rockit coaster.Â  They had to shut the ride down when they saw lightning, and wouldn’t you know it, we were first in line!Â  After investing that much time waiting, we really didn’t want to get out of line, but the kids were waiting with Grandma and Jamy, so we called them to see if they were ok and able to stay dry.Â  We waited probably about 20 minutes, and it was fun to try to read the different hand signals and procedures the staff was doing to see if we would get to ride soon or not.Â  Finally, they opened the coaster, and we were first –Â  test rats.Â  This coaster looks more intimidating than it is, mostly because the first lift is straight up, face pointed at the sky, your back is parallel to the ground.Â  Other than that, it’s a pretty lame coaster; the best thing about it is that you get to choose a song to listen to while you’re on it, and your song choice plays in the speakers behind your head.Â  I chose “Devil Went Down to Georgia” which made a very good coaster theme song, but the coaster was so tame that I was able to do some air-fiddling along to the song.Â  I heard Hubby beside me rocking out to Gloria Gaynor’s I Will Survive, and that seemed like fun too, but I wasn’t about to wait in line again for this ride.Â  The other thing that stank about the Rip Rockit is the rain – riding a coaster in the rain is not a lot of fun.Â  The rain pelts your face; it hurts and you can’t see anything, so it takes a lot of the fun out of it.Â  And oh yeah, this is how soggy we looked when we were done riding:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/03/016.jpg)Most of us made the best of the rain; after all, where we were from in Ohio the weather was sub-zero, so rainy 50’s still felt good to us.Â  Our oldest was not a happy camper, however, and she soon grew tired of walking around in the rain, even though Grandma splurged and bought the kids ponchos – I didn’t think to bring any, but maybe I will next time.Â  It never does the all-day-rain thing in Florida!Â  It usually rains or storms for less than an hour and then the sun comes back out so we were unprepared for the all day down-pour.Â  But seriously, how could Universal be anything but fun?Â  Even though the rain slowed us down a bit, we were still able to catch our first glimpse of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter – it was very cool!!

Hogwarts castle was amazing, and I guess I must have misplaced the picture I made Hubby take of me in Hogsmeade, which was beautiful at night.Â  We got some Butterbeer, and it was yummier than the version we attempted at one of our game nights here in Ohio.Â  The Wizarding World has 3 rides, and we only had time to get on The Forbidden Journey on this day – that’s the one inside the castle.Â  While you wait in line, there is plenty to see – it looks like you are on the movie set except better because it doesn’t look like a set – it looks real!Â  The portraits move and talk, and there are 3D projections of Harry, Ron, and Hermione that look like real people.Â  As you wind around the corridors of the castle, you get to explore many scenes straight from the books and movies: Dumbledore’s office, Gryffindor common room – even the Sorting Hat makes an appearance!Â  And the ride itself is *amazing*!!Â  If you are a Harry Potter fan, this area is a **must-see**!!Â  Though we did have a slight oopsie – while trying to rush over to the Harry Potter World before the park closed, we skipped lunch, so now we were cold, wet, and hungry.Â  It would have been ok, except that once we snaked throughout the corridors of the Hogwarts castle, we learned that the Forbidden Journey ride was down.Â  After waiting in the dark hallway listening to the Sorting Hat give his spiel over and over and on empty stomachs, we had had it – especially grumpy oldest who, if you remember, was not happy withÂ  the day at Universal in the rain to begin with.Â  Our torturous wait in the hallway of Hogwarts became so irritating that I wished my husband had bought the flaming wallet we had seen at the magic show – so we could throw it at the Sorting Hat, flames and all!Â  ðŸ˜‰

We did finally get on the ride, and it was awesome, but my oldest neglected to try it –Â  she doesn’t like anything faster or more thrilling than the Scrambler.Â  As I said, the ride was amazing, so now we were all famished after a day at Universal.Â  But being budget-conscious we wanted to leave the parks before finding dinner, though I must confess: I was so hungry that the idea of the ‘whopper bar’ on Universal’s City Walk that had turned my stomach that very morning was actually sounding quite good after a day walking around in the rain!Â  We ended up at Denny’s, which is a place I hadn’t been to in probably over a decade, and while the food wasn’t great, it sufficed.

*(to be continued in part 3)*

### Comments

**derek**Oh! I remember you telling me about the sorting hat- having to listen to it over and over- whoops. What else did you tell me that I forgot about I wonder... :/  
**Taylhis**D, I think a lot of my keen observation skills had to do with the fact that we were stuck in the castle while the ride was broken. I forgot to mention that being stuck in there was so bad that I briefly wished I had bought one of the flaming wallets at the magic show because I was tempted to throw it at the Sorting Hat! Funny, I didn't remember the floating candles until you mentioned it... Also about the Hogwarts ride, a lot of things you see on the ride depend upon which seat you get.  
**derek**Clearly I missed most of the things you mention at the Hogwarts ride. I do remember the floating candles, and of course the general ambiance. Not too upset I missed out on the rain or the Denny's. ;)  
**jamiahsh**I loved Hogwarts Castle! For never having eaten at Denny's... well.. as you said, it sufficed ;) Everything is better with great friends!

# Florida 2011 - Trip Diary - Part 1

Friday January 14 – We left our hometown about 4:40pm after loading the car, getting kids’ school stuff stashed for the week off, the gas tank filled up, and some snacks from the drive-thru for the kids.Â  I noted the dashboard temp at 20Â°F.Â  Around 8pm, we found a Goldstar Chili to stop at in Westchester, a suburb of Cincinnati – we love to stop for Cincy chili and coneys!Â  We took about an hour there, giving the little ones some time to run off some steam since there weren’t many people there that time of night.Â  Luckily we asked first and that’s how we learned that the McDonald’s Playland across the street had been removed – otherwise we would have taken 4 kids into the Playplace-shaped McDonald’s and had much disappointment to contend with.Â  Dinner went well, despite the waitress’ well-meaning attempt to reward our cute kids with balloons – *helium balloons*.Â  Really, lady?Â  4 helium balloons to add to the 6 people and the 6 people’s week’s worth of luggage in the mini-van about to trek 1000 miles?Â  So we managed to sneak out of the restaurant with only 2 balloons, and one popped right after we got on the expressway – thankfully it wasn’t too distracting to driver Hubby or we would have all been in trouble.Â  That last balloon made it all the way down to Florida with us, and it bopped around our rental house for the rest of the week until I “forgot” to pack it for the trip home.Â  After the Goldstar stop, the kids bedded down for the night, and they were all out by 10:30 – not bad, not bad at all!!Â  I had such a great time talking with Hubby and keeping him company as we drove down the country together that I didn’t want to go to bed, but I made myself try for some shut-eye around 2:30am.Â  I do really like the schedule we’ve made for these long drives to Florida, but there is just one downside – the most beautiful part of our trip, the winding drives through the breathtaking Tennessee mountains, is always done during the night when we cannot see anything outside but the lights of the towns in the valleys far below.Â  Hubby (and me) arrive in Florida tired, but the kids are well rested, and this is a way to break up the monotony of a 20+ hour car ride for those kids.

Saturday January 15 – We all woke up around 6:30am when we stopped for gas; I can’t remember where we were.Â  But the kids were in good moods, and the sunrise was beautiful.Â  Since the south was just coming out of a cold snap at this time, the air had an odd smell to it – a hard-to-describe tropical-climate-frozen-over kind of smell.Â  The kids awoke in wonderful moods, and we ate up all the miles we could until we began to get hungry for breakfast.Â  We decided to stop first for breakfast and then head to the beach since we had made the extra 90 minute jaunt over to the coast to visit while we were in the area.Â  We chose St. Augustine Florida since it’s coastal, and I had been there as a kid and kind of wanted to see it again.Â  But when we got off the expressway, there was no place for a family breakfast.Â  The Shoney’s that was on the roadside attraction sign had turned into a Chinese buffet, and even if we decided to stomach Chinese food for breakfast, they were not open at 8 in the morning.Â  So we headed east to the coast, and we found St. Augustine to be somewhat of a ghost town.Â  There were shuttered buildings and for lease signs everywhere; it was sad.Â  There seemed to be 2 sections to the city, however, and while the one section was full of shuttered attractions, empty storefronts and loiterers, the ‘original’ part of St. Augustine was bustling and beautiful.Â  Hoards of people were walking around the streets near the quaint shops, and we found our first glimpse of the ocean beyond the [Castillo de San Marcos](http://www.nps.gov/casa/index.htm" \t "_blank).Â  We weren’t able to stay long since everyone was starving and St. Augustine does not seem to have any family-type restaurants (mostly seafood and steak here), but we did get to glimpse some of the oldest city in the United States and marvel at the narrow streets as we tried to find our way out.Â  We got back on I-95 and exited miles south; near Palm Bay, I think – everyone was SO hungry at this point I wasn’t paying much attention to where we were, just that there was food nearby.Â  The Golden Corral here was excellent and satisfied our hunger pangs quite well.Â  And I have toÂ  note how incredibly amazing those hungry, tired kid behaved!!!Â  All they wanted was to get to the beach, and they were SO hungry, but they were SO patient while we looked for foodÂ  – unbelievable!!Â  Next it was time to find a beach, so we drove east and found a nice place where we had been before.Â  It’s a minimal $2 toll to get over a bridge and to the coast, but well worth it since there is ample parking and shelters with bathrooms and showerheads to get the sand off.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/03/Florida-Jan-14-23-2011-007.jpg)

We had a great time at the beach, even if it was cold (I think in the 50s – I’m writing this so long after it’s hard to remember!) and the locals were walking along the coastline wearing hats and gloves while we were wading.Â  The kids LOVED the beach, but we got cold and very tired since we were on minimal sleep, so we threw everyone into the car; most of the kids were half-dressed.Â  At this point, all we wanted to do was get to our rental house in Orlando, and we were so excited when we spotted Orlando’s familiar landmarks along the I-4 corridor.Â  But we had one stop to make – Downtown Disney to check how many Disney World tickets we had left – you can’t do this over the phone anymore.Â  Downtown Disney was MOBBED and we were a bit discouraged, but then again, we go through this every time we take a trip to Florida- we think it’s crowded down there, but everything ends up ok.Â  This year was quite crowded comparatively, so we asked a Disney cast member, and they summedÂ  it up in one word, “Brazilians.”Â  After she said that, looking around, there were a lot of Brazilians, I guess because in January it’s their summer vacation since they are in the southern hemisphere.Â  But anyway, my husband was walking around Downtown Disney, trying to find our ticket info, and things had been so crazy when we dropped him off, that he got out of the car without his shoes (remember he was on 0 hours of sleep!).Â  So he’s walking around Downtown Disney, confused, shoeless, and smelling like the ocean – people are staring, some are laughing.Â  Then he realizes – his toenails are painted!!Â  He had promised our 6 year old a week before that if she was good about getting up and going to school in the morning for a whole week, she could paint Daddy’s toenails.Â  We and some random strangers had a good laugh about that.

We left Downtown Disney, and we were SO anxious to get to the house we made a beeline straight for it except for one problemÂ  – we were an hour early for check-in.Â  So we headed back to the tourist area (Irlo Bronson Highway), and we looked for some timeshare presentations to sign up for.Â  Don’t get me wrong, it’s not that weÂ  like to do timeshare presentations, but we’ve gotten great at saying no, and Hubby and I used to make little games we’d play (insert funny random word in the conversation, things like that) that would make the 2-3 hours fly by.Â  Plus they would feed you and pay you for your time, so we recovered some of our vacation expenses that way.Â  Little did we know that the Orlando vacation scene is changing – timeshare presentations are no longer a dime a dozen;Â  in fact, we never found one that paid enough to be worth our time.

So we’re trying to kill an hour before we could get to the house, and we make a stop at the gift shop when we realize that most of the kids are not even dressed.Â  So I open the back of the van, and everything that we had just haphazardly thrown in the back when we left the beach tumbles out – including our bag of collected seashells.Â  So I’m picking up the seashells from the parking lot, one by one, and since I was half asleep, I didn’t really notice what I was doing until I heard, “Uh, Mom…”Â  I look in my hand, and I had picked up a couple of someone’s old discarded cigarette butts!!Â  Having had barely any sleep, I lost it then, and I laughed with the kids until I cried.

We pulled ourselves together and made it back to the house, which was finally ready – YAY!!!Â  Hubby took the kids in the pool while I unloaded and unpacked – I was happy to do this chore without little ones underfoot, and their behavior on the long drive was so incredibly stellar that they deserved a swim.Â  In a couple of hours, some of our fellow vacationers arrived (my mom and our friend Jamiahsh), and we headed out for some stuffed Chicago style pizza at Giordano’s.Â  We have had the question, why go all the way to Florida to get Chicago-style pizza, but it was YUMMY and we had gotten a Groupon for it which saved us money.

After that, Hubby and I went out together while the kids stayed with Grandma and Jamy, but we didn’t do muchÂ  – we were still looking (in vain) for timeshare presentations to attend.Â  We went toÂ  Old Town, which is an area in Orlando set up like an old-fashioned midway.Â  There are blocks of little shops – and bars, which were overflowing this Saturday night with intoxicated people- and carnival and thrill rides at either end of the strip of shops.Â  We normally have fun at Old Town, but I don’t think we will be going back on a Saturday night- definitely wasn’t for kids.

*(continued in part 2, a more abbreviated version!)*

### Comments

**derek**And where was I during all of this? Oh yes, the usual-sitting around on the weekend, slaving away Monday and Tuesday. :P But I'll show up in this eventually, in part 3 or 4. :)

# Drifter

I really like this song our church worship band has been playing lately.Â  Enjoy Drifter:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

### Comments

**derek**Good song, thanks for sharing.

# Right Out Of Flipper

Came across this inspiring animal story, and since I haven’t had the time to blog about any of the (mostly yucky) personal issues going on right now, I thought this would make a nice feel-good post.Â  I’m still working on that Florida trip diary, really, I am!!Â  But in the meantime, here is a story about some dolphins who saved a dog’s life.Â  This happened in Marco Island Florida, where we took our wonderful honeymoon almost 12 years ago.

[Dolphins Save Dog](http://www.nbc-2.com/Global/story.asp?S=14088636&hpt=T2" \t "_blank)

### Comments

**derek**Wonderful creation, those dolphins. Thanks for the story!

# Monkey, Er, Ape See - Ape Do

To take a break from the vacation unpacking, I took the little ones to the zoo a few weeks ago.Â  We had a great time – oh how I love winter zoo visits!Â  There aren’t many people around, and the animals can act like the animals they are instead of worrying about the hoards of visiting humans.Â  Well, most of the time it’s cool to see the animals acting like animals, unless they are doing disgusting things like the gorillas last week – don’t watch this if you are squeamish, but I have to publish it because of how embarrassed the gorilla seems about her behavior.Â  I felt so badly for filming her after she tried to hide that I turned off the camera, and that’s when she got up and went and sat behind a post – out of my view.Â  Why would she do something so gross if she is embarrassed by it?Â  WARNING: it’s VERY gross!!!

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

The chimp was another story!Â  His name is Harvey, and he is a senior citizen chimp – he just had his 52nd birthday, which is quite a milestone for a chimpanzee.Â Â  Despite his age, Harvey is quite playful and has a penchant for young kids.Â  When we walked over in front of Harvey’s window, he was sitting in the corner wearing a sparkly lei, presumably from his birthday party which had just taken place days before.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/02/zoo-jan-28-2011-011.jpg)

When he saw us, he pulled off his lei and came over to his window to see the kids and play:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

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These videos were takenÂ  almost a month ago, and I’ve been trying to get back to the zoo, but my oldest child has decided that the zoo is “boring” – her words, *NEVER* mine.Â  In fact, I’m wondering if I need a DNA test – how could someone with my DNA find the zoo boring???

During the week, I’m so tired and have so much to do that just writing this blog post is quite a challenge – I’m having a towelÂ  thrown over my head by my 2-year-old as I write!Â  I think I fell in love with Harvey that January day, and I miss him!

### Comments

**taylhis**Ok, so now she is a tweenager, then a teenager... how many more years does she get excuses to not act like a human being? ;)  
**derek**Blah. Misplaced apostrophe. Oh, well.  
**derek**Agreed w/Phyllis. Pretty soon your oldest will be demanding a phone with unlimited texting if she isn't already... The chimp: "I have a comfy rock to lay on and yo-ou do-o'nt!" :lol:  
**Phyllis Beyer**OMG - how adorable. I mean the videos of the chimp and Disney not the gorilla. They were very fun to watch. Don't worry about Taylor not liking the zoo - it's called being a tweenager.

# Hambone Award Contender

Have you ever heard of the Hambone Award?Â  It’s a prize given out by Veterinary Pet Insurance, the nation’s largest and oldest pet insurance company.Â  Each month, the company selects the most unusual claims and chooses a monthly winner to vie for the yearly prize – the Hambone Award.Â  Don’t worry, all the contenders are pets who survived their ordeals.Â  Last year’s winner Ellie, a Labrador retriever from California, went to the emergency room after eating an entire beehive.Â  She vomited large piles containing hundreds of dead bees, but Ellie was not harmed by the dead bees nor by the pesticide that killed them.

When reading suburban Chicago newspaper The Daily Herald’s online headlines, the following caught my eye, “Owl Vs. Chihuahua”, and that’s where I read about Chico the Chihuahua’s brave fight against a Great Horned Owl.Â  Chico’s owner was taking him for a walk in the wee hours of the morning, when a Great Horned Owl swooped out of nowhere (owls are silent flight birds) and picked up poor Chico, intending him for his late night snack.Â  Chico and his owner won the tug-of-war, and Chico won the VPI ‘most unusual’ story for the month of January, beating out such claims as a Labrador retriever that ate a marijuana cookie, a Golden retriever that swallowed a 5-inch barbecue skewer, a mutt that got wedged between banister bars and a Boston terrier who collided with a skier.Â  If you’d like to read the other entries and be part of the public voting in September, you can go to the [VPI Hambone Award’s website](http://www.VPIHamboneAward.com" \t "_blank).

Oh, and how did the Hambone Award get its name?Â  There was a dog insured by VPI who got himself trapped in a refrigerator and ate an entire Thanksgiving ham before he was discovered.Â  He was treated for a mild case of hypothermia whereupon he fully recovered.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Fascinating stories. Stuck in the refrigerator and ate the Thanksgiving ham, eh?  
**taylhis**Thanks for the feedback, D. Link fixed!  
**derek**Yes, I remember reading about these in the paper. Interesting stories. BTW, your link doesn't work. I was able to get the real url from your link though, so no ham, no fowl. Err- no harm, no foul. :mrgreen:

# A Different Sort Of Homecoming

Before I publish my vacation diary, I would like to say a few words about some unexpected feelings I encountered upon returning home.Â  Ending a vacation is always a chore, and for an in-the-process-of-being-reformed-worrywart like me, it’s easy to get caught up in dreading the negatives that accompany getting back to normal life; ie, returning to a cold climate, laundry, unpacking, etc.Â  Thanks to my growing relationship with God, I’ve been learning to embrace positives more easily, and I could not be more grateful for the opportunity for such a wonderful vacation and for the fact that we made it there and back safely.

But when we did return home, the welcome committee seemed a bit small.Â  The greetings of family members left behind (read: pets) seemed to be missing something, and the house seemed more empty than I had remembered it.Â  Then it hit me:Â  this was the first homecoming we’ve had since our family dog passed away last year.

I had noticed it on vacation, and in Florida it was actually an unexpectedly freeing feeling to not worry about a loved one left behind.Â  Don’t get me wrong; I love the pets we still have, but no one will ever take Charity’s place.Â  I used to feel such a hole in my heart when we went on vacation and left her behind that it gave me an extra motivation to hurry home.Â  But this time, our homecoming celebration was short-lived: we greeted pets and they greeted us, and there was no one around to hold a grudge like Charity used to do when we left her behind.Â  No one was miffed about getting left behind, in fact, I wonder if the dogs even really noticed…

It’s been over a year since the last time I saw her, and I still miss her a lot.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I would have surprised if you did not feel the absence of Charity. She was your first family pet and was a HUGE part of your family being through so many memories with you all. A real part of your family is never forgotten :)  
**derek**I haven't thought about losing pets for a long time, since it has been quite a while since we've had any. I don't think I can come up with the right words for you at the moment- a dog really is a close part of any family and losing one... I'll stop there.

# Cutest Bunny Ever!!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/02/New-bunny-2-2-11-004.jpg)

Our kids had two snow days off school this week, so what better activity for a family full of animal lovers than to visit the pet store?Â  You can see where this is going…Â  we went looking for 1 baby rat, and we came home with 2 baby rats and a bunny.Â  One ridiculously cute bunny as yet without a name!Â  There have been a lot of contenders, but we just haven’t found any perfect ones yet.Â  The leading ones so far are Tigger, Snow Bunny, and Arcy.Â  Arcy is like a feminine version of R.C. which stands for Ridiculously Cute.Â  I really like Tigger even though we THINK she’s a girl bunny, but when I tried calling her Tigger it didn’t click.Â  Here’s a video, and more suggestions are welcome in the comment box below:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

And the new rats:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/02/Feb-3-2011-005.jpg)[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/02/Feb-3-2011-001.jpg)

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I've always liked Droopy!  
**jamiahsh**WOW... The black one is almost camouflaged by t's top and the couch. Adorable!  
**derek**Of course Droopy is MGM (like Tom & Jerry) rather than Disney. Just thought I'd mention that since from the comments it might make a difference.  
**taylhis**That's hilarious D! And I like Droopy. Next time I have her out, I will test names and see if any stick.  
**derek**With those ears, how about Droopy? :D In the video I kept seeing a puppy instead of a rabbit. Then she would turn her head and it would be quite clear what she really was!  
**taylhis**And oh yeah - forgot to add pictures of the new rats. Adding them now...  
**taylhis**Good point Mom, although Tigger is also a Disney name! Though like I said, it just didn't click. Maybe I will try calling her Thumper because I like that name too.  
**Taylhis**Each of the older girls chose a rat and a name for that rat. Taylor's is Alex and Sammie's is Squirmy. :)  
**jamiahsh**Arcy IS cute ;) how about the other new additions?  
**Phyllis Beyer**I like Thumper. A Disney bunny name for a family who loves "Disney".

# Florida 2011

Well, I’ve been back in town from a glorious family vacation to Florida for a few days now, and realistically, I guess I could say that I’m getting back onÂ  track.Â  But catching up is going so slowly, and it’s easy to feel overwhelmed and like I’ll never be done.Â  But you know what?Â  With 4 small children in the house, I NEVER feel caught up on the to-dos, even when I don’t leave town, so what does it matter if I took a week and a half off?Â  It was great!Â  Eventually I’ll get around to posting an in-depth trip diary – these have come in such handy when I go back to find the name of a restaurant we visited or certain info about the trip; it’s fun for reminiscence purposes too.Â  For now, I will just post a small run-down of the 20-hour drive from Florida to Ohio which illustrates the dramatic temperature decrease we endured between the south and the north.Â  There will be more to come later, I promise, so please don’t forget about me and my little blog.

Sat Jan 22:  
Orlando FL = 58 degrees at noon  
GA / FL state line = 48 degrees at 5:20pm  
Atlanta GA = 34 degrees at 10:15pm

Sun Jan 23:  
Chattanooga, TN = 24 degrees at 12:30am  
TN/KY border = 18 degrees at 2:45am  
Van Wert/Paulding County borders, nw Ohio = NEGATIVE 8 degrees at 7:45am

BRRRrrrrrr!!!!!

### Comments

**derek**It really didn't seem so bad getting home- I suppose I just ended up bracing for the worst so I was ready for it. At least I didn't have to work in it- just made up for that today though!  
**taylhis**Ok, Mom, you win. But my journey was probably more fun. :)  
**Phyllis Beyer**Mine was a faster temp change. Left Florida in the rain and about 65 deg.. The temp on the plane was a perfect 70 deg. Stepping outside in Chicago was sunny - but only 10 deg.

# The Dude Is Growing!

My son had his 30-month (2Â½ years for you laypeople) check-up at the doctor today.Â  All is well, though he wasn’t very cooperative for the student doctor in training when it came to getting his nose and ears checked.Â  And he had to get a shot, which of course was sad to witness.Â  Unlike his 3 brave older sisters, he did cry, but he got over it quickly and proudlyÂ  showed off his “owie” for the rest of the day.Â  The little dude weighs 29.2 lbs. and is 2 feet and 10.5 inches tall.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/01/12-12-10-008.jpg)

### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**What an adorable picture. Looking forward to spending 6 whole days with him and the girls (and of course, you and Chris also).  
**Jamiahsh**What a hAndsome little dude! Love ya buddy!  
**justj**How do they grow up so fast when I haven't aged any. (At least not mentally)

# A God Story

I love coming across God stories.Â  Real life anecdotes which display the way God works in our lives, God stories can be experienced by Christians and non-Christians alike; it’s just a matter of recognizing them and taking the time to be thankful and appreciate them.

I was at our babysitter’s house last week picking up my kids, and there was a little girl cuddling a dog.Â  BeingÂ  an animal lover, I had to say hello to the cute little furball and find out her name and age.Â  The little girl’s father said he didn’t know the pup’s age because they had found her, and then he said, “I have to tell you the whole story.”Â  So he begins his story, not knowing me or that I am a Christian who appreciates God stories.Â  His story went something like this:

*“My wife left me; she left me and the kids and even took our dogs, so these poor kids lost their mother and their dogs.Â  I kept telling them I would get them a dog, but I had lots of other things to work out too.Â  So for Halloween, we went to one of those ‘trunk or treat’ things at a church, and there was a little girl walking around inside the church with a puppy in her arms.Â  I thought, something doesn’t seemÂ  right there – why is this little girl walking around a church with a puppy, so I asked her about the dog.Â  “We’re not even sure what we’re going to do withÂ  her – we just found her outside.” the little girl told him.Â  “Well,” I told her, “my kids have been looking for a dog.”Â  We took home the little puppy, and she was mangy and starving, just skin and bones.Â  We didn’t estimate her to be more than 10 weeks old at that time, and she has beenÂ  a part of the family for the last few months.Â  She is thriving physically, and she has helped provide some of the healing the kids needed as they spent Christmas without their mom.”*

After hearing the story, it was magical to see the little girl cuddle her puppy.Â  It warmed my heart to see them together, knowing that God brought this little puppy into the lives of a family who needed her – and brought a family into the life of an ailing little puppy who needed them as well.Â  God works in wonderful ways, and being a witness to it is awesome – you just have to stop and look around; He is always there!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Love that story!

# FIVE MORE DAYS!!

Only FIVE more days until we leave for a family vacation to warm sunny Florida!!Â  Making this one even better than most are extended family and friends that are able to meet us down there.Â  The kids (and us!!) could not be more excited!!!

I just have to figure out how to get 6 people and all the stuff that goes along with 2 adults and 4 kids into a mini-van and keep us sane for aÂ  20+ hour car trip and one again on the way back…Â  Every time we take a big vacation I worry about it, every time it goes better than I could have imagined.Â  Not going to make that mistake this time; I am just SO appreciative and happy to be going!Â  Thank you God for blessing my family with such a fun opportunity for some togetherness!!!

Much work ahead of me this week, but the most fun kind of work: preparing-for-a-vacation work!!!

CAN’T WAIT!!!

### Comments

**Jamiahsh**DONALD DUCK!!! Who cares if my comment is too short?! :D  
**Phyllis Beyer**Grandma can't wait either. I just love Disney World and spending a week with my "kids" are icing on the cake. Mickey Mouse, here I come!!!!!  
**jamiahsh**WOO HOO!!! I can't wait, either! It will be a hoot to see the Beebs on his first trip where he will know what is going on and will remember and all the fun we will all have!

# Sharing My Daily Bread

I’ve written before about [Our Daily Bread](http://odb.org/" \t "_blank) –Â  it’s a little pamphlet of daily devotionals that I find very helpful in remembering to take time to think about God and His many gifts everyday – even when time is short.Â  Yesterday’s devotional was a good one that I think can help and/or speak to many people.Â  Enjoy:

***Trouble by Dennis J. De Haan***

***Does it surprise you that trouble is a part of life? Probably not. We all know trouble close-up and personalâ€”bad health, empty bank account, blighted love, grief, loss of job, and the list goes on.***

***It shouldnâ€™t surprise us, therefore, that God permits the added trials of being ridiculed and hated because we follow Christ (1 Peter 4:12). But trouble, whether it is common to man or unique to Christians, can reveal to us the moral fiber of our soul.***

***I have never seen a golf course without hazards. They are part of the game. Golfers speak of the courses with the most hazards as the most challenging, and they will travel a long way to test their skill against the most demanding 18 holes.***

***Oliver Wendell Holmes said, â€œIf I had a formula for bypassing trouble, I wouldnâ€™t pass it around. I wouldnâ€™t be doing anyone a favor. Trouble creates a capacity to handle it . . . . Meet it as a friend, for youâ€™ll see a lot of it and you had better be on speaking terms with it.â€***

***Letâ€™s not think it strange when trouble comes, for God is using it to test the stamina of our souls. The best way to handle trouble is to commit our â€œsouls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creatorâ€ (v.19).***

***The troubles that we face each day  
Reveal how much we need the Lord;  
They test our faith and strength of will  
And help us then to trust Godâ€™s Word. â€”D. De Haan***

***Great triumphs are born out of great troubles.***

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Great-ER triumphs are born out of great troubles.

# Crazy Cat Lady = Me?

Seems like it’s been a long time since my last griping-about-Walmart blog post.Â  Either I’m getting used to their secretive price-gauging ways, or I’m too busy in my personal life to spend as much time feeling wronged by the corporate giant.Â  Maybe it’s a little of both.Â  But a few weeks ago, a couple of Walmart employees made themselves worth mentioning on my blog for their roles in turning a normally hectic pre-Christmas nighttime shopping trip with 4 little kids into quite an irritating adventure.

After wandering past empty shelf upon empty shelf and compromising my shopping list due to all of the out-of-stock items there were (and I’m talking everyday items, nothing gourmet nor exotic), my frustrations were growing.Â  But finally I was finished in the grocery section, so I split off from my family and headed for the garden center.Â  It might seem like a strange time of year to get those cement garden-border-blocks, but they are just over $1 at Walmart, so I use them as a cost effective way to keep my puppy from digging holes under our fence.Â  He digs a hole, I stick in a Walmart cement brick and solve the problem for under $1.50 – done.Â  It won’t be long until I have a pretty little brick fence bordering my chain link fence.Â  Except that my puppy dug a hole the other day, and just because it was December in Ohio (never mind the thunderstorms and rain we’ve been having), Walmart decided that they are going to lock up their cement bricks in the outdoor garden section and not let customers back there to get them.Â  I get back there and find the door to the outside blocked with a bench (so THAT’S where they’re putting the benches they removed from the entire store.Â  Why Walmart decided to make seating scarce in their store is beyond me.Â  Don’t shoppers stay longer and spend more money if there is a place to rest their feet?Â  Don’t they want to come back to a store that lets them rest while their shopping companion goes at it?Â  But that’s a whole ‘nother post, I guess, even if I entertained the tangent).Â  So anyway, I hunt downÂ  an employee and ask her about the cement bricks, and she tells me that the garden center is closed for the night and to come back another day.Â  And this is AFTER I’ve already spent almost 2 hours in the store, wandering amongst empty shelves that it seems they don’t know how to stock.Â  It was difficult to explain to her that I had come there that night with all my kids and that this would not be happening again any time soon.Â  Take a bunch of kids into a store that sells toys that time of year if you want to know how draining it can be – go on, I dare you to borrow some kids and do it next year.Â  But the bottom line is, Ms. Walmart employee was not nice when she told me to come back another time, and she didn’t offer to go back there or have someone else get me a brick or two or anything.Â  She acted like we were both just stuck there in Walmart, and if she could deal with it, so could I.Â  But guess what?Â  She is GETTING paid to be there, while I have to PAY to be there – see the difference?Â  She did not.

So what’s with the Walmart policy of selling an item but not letting customers buy it?Â  Are they hoarding cement bricks to build a top-secret Walmart price-gouging planning party fortress or something?Â  Well, I was crabby that night, but I was not going to cause a scene; I don’t like to be the scene-causing type.Â  I had some good advice from a fellow tangenteer floating around in my head, “Walmart employees are people too”, so I got over it and moved on.Â  But by the time the second Walmart employee wronged me that night, I was *really* mad…Â  The woman at the check-out did not want to take our coupon, even though it was clearly for the item we purchased.Â  Not even worth writing about now; I might as well move on to the incident that inspired the title of this post – thought I would throw an amusing Walmart story into my grab bag of gripes…

I had to run to Walmart on New Year’s Eve.Â  Yes, New Year’s Eve, the day when even our normally not-so-full rural Walmart is filled to the brim with people who can’t wait to get where they’re going to stuff themselves, get drunk or do both at the same time.Â  The mood in Walmart was festive, but I couldn’t find a parking spot.Â  I opted for one a mile away, especially because the weather decided it wanted to be more like May than December; it was in the 50s.Â  I’m picking up some last minute New Year’s goodies, and I notice that the mixed shelled nuts are on sale for only $1 /pound.Â  Cracking fresh nuts is one of my favorite ways toÂ  snack – hold comments on this please, this isn’t Facebook, it’s a mostly family-friendly blog Â  – nuts are nutritious, one of the natural foods I believe the human body is meant to consume, plus I have a monster parrot that loves them.Â  So I called Hubby, and he told me to buy 30 pounds.Â  By the time I got done putting 30 pounds of nuts into sacks (still holding on the comments), my little boy had bitten through an orange I was going to buy (I put it back instead –Â  haha, just kidding, I had to buy the dehydrated orange at the end of the trip), and I had fielded the same exact question from at least two different people: “What are you going to do with all those nuts?”Â  I had some conversations about my parrot and my 4 kids, and then I had had enough and wanted out.Â  Here’s the funny part.

We returned to our friendly local Walmart on January 2, and my husband runs in and finds the same nuts for now only a quarter a pound!!Â  I’m not going to think about how much money I could have saved, not going to do that; it’s not the funny part.Â  At a quarter a pound, they were out of the nuts, so my husband asked an employee if they had any more (wait, the 30 pounds I bought weren’t enough?) to which he replied, “No, some lady came in here on New Year’s Eve and bought most of them for all of her cats.”Â  My husband thinks that somehow my stories of us having a nut-eating pet parrot turned into Crazy Cat Lady Buys Nuts among our local Walmart employees, and that’s ok with me – I could be crazy cat lady.Â  If only I weren’t allergic to cats…

Happy holidays from me and Walmart!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2011/01/crazy-cat-lady.jpg)

### Comments

**taylhis**Interesting justj, thanks for the info!! Might have to check it out; I could probably use some more patching bricks before spring!  
**justj**They may have been locked up because a sale started in Lawn and Garden. I think yesterday or today.  
**taylhis**Don't apologize for chuckling - I like that someone can find amusement from things that might have been aggravating to me at the time, makes it worth it in a way. Thanks for reading my rambling... been awhile since I've gone on and on and on about something so meaningless :)  
**jamiahsh**30 lbs of shelled nuts?! That IS nuts (crazy, type). I do remember when said WM first opened and the benches were strategically placed to allow for shoppers to rest while on shopping sprees. Wonder what happened there. And it seems to me that it would create more hassle to lock up the blocks than to keep them out. What are they afraid of... someone stealing a gaggle of cinder blocks at $1.50 a pop? Thanks for the post. I always get a good chuckle... sorry. I do know what it is like to have a child (not my own) with you around the toy dept. during the holidays... perhaps not as close to the day.

# Too Close To Home

Crazy night here last night!!

Our 6-year-old, Samantha was up late, and since she was the only one of our 4 kids still awake, we decided to spend some ‘just parents with Sammie’ time and play a game.Â  Dad had sunk one of our ships in Battleship when we heard a series of pops from outside.Â  Following our instincts to take cover, we went into the interior of the house away from windows, where we discussed what we heard.Â  Had we spaced on the date, was it New Year’s already and someone was lighting off fireworks in celebration?Â  No, my husband said, there is only one thing that sounds like that, and when he put it that way, I had to agree – it was gunfire.Â  After we decided that it couldn’t really have been anything else, we called the police, who told us there were already officers on scene.Â  We got our police scanner hooked up (who said I don’t need a police scanner to keep tabs on small town action?), and we continued to sit in the hallway and listen to it.Â  Soon we heard the unmistakable churning of the LifeFlight helicopter (we live blocks from the hospital), and we wondered if it was related – we would have more info in the morning.Â  The police scanner just had mild chatter about officers responding and trying to find the “suspect’s ID”.Â  They found his cell phone, and an officer was told to see who the suspect had called.Â  Not getting any useful info, we went to bed, and my husband woke me this morning with the info that he had heard on the big city Toledo news – a shootout had occurred in our small town, only blocks from our house, mere feet from our friends’ house.

Turns out, a man had shot at the police station and then drove down to the park, where he shot at the police who chased him.Â  The police returned fire, which explains the series of 6-8 pops we heard.Â  The man was then LifeFlighted to a bigger hospital with life-threatening injuries.Â  That was all the info in the newspaper, but when I did a google search this morning on the man’s name, something interesting came up: a memory page for his daughter who died in a motorcycle accident in our town (this family was from a town 25 miles away) last spring.Â  I remember that case: a man was driving a speeding motorcycle, and when police tried to pull him over,Â  he gave chase.Â  He eventually lost control of the motorcycle, and it crashed, killing his passenger when she was ejected from the motorcycle.Â  From the research I did on the internet this morning, it seems that the suspect from last night’s shooting incident was the father of the victim in the motorcycle chase case.Â  Perhaps he was upset with the way police handled things last spring, so he shot up the police station and led them back to where his daughter was killed –Â  the shootout took place at the same scene.

Tragic case all around, and we are reeling from yet another so-called ‘big city’ incident that seems quite out of place here in our small Utopian town.Â  I went to the shooting suspect’s Facebook page, and there are severalÂ  Christian activities on it.Â  Perhaps in his grief for his daughter, the man lost faith in letting God handle things, and that is another aspect of the tragedy.Â  Thank God that no officers or bystanders were injured, and I’m going to pray for the recovery and physical and emotional healing of the man and his family.

[Here’s a link to the news story](http://www.wtol.com/Global/story.asp?S=13764065" \t "_blank).

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Until we know the full details we are open to speculate. Perhaps the suspect had not had enough time (of course how much time is debatable) to grieve or was incapable of doing so. Thanks for the update. It sure beat the headline being repeated over the news this morning of Man Shoots at Bryan PD. Thank Heaven indeed that no one else was hurt.  
**Phyllis Beyer**WOW! Who would have thought something like that would happen in your quaint small town. Thank goodness no one else was hurt.

# It's A Myth That You Can't Get A Speeding Ticket On Christmas Day

Finding out that it’s only a myth that cops are nice and forgiving on Christmas Day was not pleasant, and that’s all I’m going to say about that – except to disclaim that the lead foot did not belong to me.

Other than ‘the incident’ , Christmas day was a fun day full of blessings and family cheer.Â  We drove the 200+ miles to Chicago and back to spend the day with family, and despite promising ourselves this will be the last year we attempt that sort of craziness, it was fun –Â  although we returned more tired than ever with less time to recuperate than ever, and it really might be time to sit back and relax at home on Christmas Day one of these years.

Hope your holiday season was blessed and happy!!Â  And oh yeah, watch out for those Indiana State Troopers!Â  ðŸ˜‰

### Comments

**jamiahsh**It's only in Ohio where it is unlawful to be given a speeding ticket on Christmas Day! :D

# A Christmas Blessing

Speaking of family outings, we found a fun place weekends ago in Fort Wayne IndianaÂ  – it’s an indoor ice skating place, and they have THREE ice rinks!Â  But we didn’t have time to try ice skating; our family was more interested in the bouncy castles.Â  At $5 /Â  head from 1-4pm, it wasn’t a bad deal.Â  The only problem was that they had the bouncy castles in the ice arena area, and it was freezing in there!Â  The kids were ok, but we weren’t able to stay as long as we wanted, plus they were all frozen by the time we left.Â  If they had just noted their arrangement on their website, we could have dressed for the occasion, but that’s ok, it was still fun.Â  After that, we had a delicious dinner at Golden Corral – YUM!

But something strange happened there – I was waiting for a man to finish at the buffet, and he apologized for taking so long (he wasn’t) and then handed me a “Christmas blessing” on a folded up piece of paper.Â  He was vague in the details; just mentioning ‘Christmas Blessing’, so I opened up the paper, and it was a copy of a newspaper article about the man’s family – mainly his elderly mother.Â  Looking at the picture in the article told me that the man who gave it to me was Raymond, whom you’ll read about below.Â  Although the article was from 1996, he mentioned that he was with his mother that day at the restaurant – she is doing well here in 2010, 14 years later!Â  I find the family’s story inspirational, and I thought I’d help the man spread his family’s touching story – the story featuring his mother’s boundless faith and he and his father finding Christ.Â  Below is a copy of the article he gave me; I hope you find it inspirational reading on this very special holiday.Â  Merry Christmas!

*‘She taught us by what she did’*

*Thanksgiving this year had a special glow for Arlene Berger, 74, and her family.  
They gathered for the holiday meal in the new house the Flushing Township resident, severely brain-damaged in a 1994 traffic accident, shares with one of her sons, his wife, and two children.  
Her house was built with funds from her accident settlement and her family is determined life will be as meaningful as possible for the woman left with physical as well as mental impairment.  
Her progress has been awesome, as has been the help she’s received from others, according to two of her five children.*

*Raymond, 47, the eldest of her four sons, and David, 32, the youngest, this week recounted details of their mother’s accident and her life of righteousness.*

*With 15 years separating them, they hold different views of how their mother’s faith affected them.*

*“I used to mock her; my other brothers did,” Raymond said of his youth in Flint.*

*David said, “She was the most giving person, many of us thought to a fault.Â  I remember a couple of times she didn’t know how she was going to pay her bills, and when I asked her about how she had spent her money, she had given some to this person, some to that one.”*

*Raymond concurred, “We thought she was being used.Â  We told her there ain’t no God and to quit giving everything away.Â  But we weren’t thinking like she was.”*

*Their Bible-reading Baptist mother was living up to the passage:”Give, and it shall be given toÂ  you.” (Luke 6:38)*

*“Now she’s on the receiving end.” said David.Â  “Because of the way she was before the accident, people want to do for her.”*

*Church members are showing up to care for her toÂ  a degreeÂ  the family never could have imagined.*

*“She gave everything away her whole life, and now her kids all want her to have an enjoyable life,” David said.*

*It was not just her older sons who derided her faith.*

*Raymond, a Flint truck plant employee, recalls his late father chasing ministers away from the door.*

*“He had been anti-religious.Â  He worked and he drank.Â  I didn’t really know him until I was old enough to drink, old enough to go to the bars,” Raymond said.*

*In 1981, their father had a massive heart attack.Â  His wife’s church prayed for him, and he survived to embrace salvation.*

*He lived the last two years of his life a Christian.*

*Raymond said he also has been saved, and has seen the difference faith has made in his life.”That was a miracle,” he said.Â  “I never thought I’d see my dad in a church.Â  I never thought I’d see myself in a church.”*

*David, on the other hand, attended John R. Rice Baptist Academy in Davison and went on to graduate from a bible college.Â  He teaches at Bridgeport Baptist Academy during the day and works at Delphi Saginaw Steering Systems at night.*

*He was the assistant pastor at Landmark Baptist Church, where his mother was headed Feb.24, 1994, when her car was hit in the driver’s side by a Jeep Cherokee whose driver had run a red light, he said.Â  He was notified that his mother had been taken to Hurley Medical Center, where she was in critical condition.*

*She underwent two emergency surgeries in short order.*

*A CAT scan showed 11 brain hemorrhages and blood on her brain stem, he said.*

*“She was in a coma the whole time,” David said.Â  “After three months, the doctors told us she might not ever come out of it because of her age and the length of time since the accident.”*

*Her children were told of the probability that she would never be able to walk, talk, or feed herself.*

*“Well, you ain’t God,” Raymond told them.*

*After three-and-a-half months at Hurley, she was moved to Riverbend Nursing Center in Grand Blanc, where she stunned David by allowing nurses to walk her in ” baby steps” the first day.*

*She progressed out of the coma.Â  Raymond rememberedd first noticing her fingers tapping to the inspirational music tapes her family supplied.*

*Raymond and David recall the times she responded with an “I love you, too” to each of them.*

*Arlene Berger received three months of therapy at Riverbend before transferring to McLaren Regional Medical Center to build skills she would need for living at home.*

*His brothers and sister back David up in caring for their mother, who lost her left eye and use of her left hand in the accident and now has an erratically functioning mind with an IQ of 90.*

*“A lot of people live for themselves, don’t do for their kids.Â  And then the kids don’t do for them,” David said.Â  “She taught us by what she did.”*

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Wonderful story! Thanks for sharing.  
**Carol**Very awesome story - one of those Christmas miracles!

# Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas! Happy holidays! Happy New Year!

Whatever you are celebrating this year, here’s to hoping that it is safe, fun, and happy!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/12/Santa-came-12-18-10-015.jpg)

Merry Christmas from our family to yours!

*8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, â€œDo not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.â€*

*13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,*

*14 â€œGlory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.â€*

*15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, â€œLetâ€™s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.â€*

*16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*

*– Luke 2:8-20 NIV*

### Comments

**Mysmichelle**Merry Christmas to you and yours, haven't been here in a while but thought of you and your family today. Michelle  
**jamiahsh**Beautiful! Nice of Santa to pose with the kids! Thanks for sharing The Christmas Story.

# 10 Years, 1 Year

December 18 marks two anniversaries of immense personal loss – 10 years ago today, my father-in-law passed away from ALS.Â  Though some memories are still painful, a decade of time has numbed the pain of his loss a little, and it’s easier to focus on the good times we shared and the countless wonderful things he did for people during his lifetime.Â  Albeit selfishly, I sometimes wish that Vince was here to meet his 7 wonderful grandchildren, to realize our family’s growing relationship with God and our spiritual journey, and to see how far his son has come in life.Â  I think he would be so proud.Â  [More about December 18, 2000 was written here](http://taylhis.tangents.org/2009/04/20/als-is-an-awful-disease/" \t "_blank).

December 18, 2009 – Last year, on the day that was 9 years to the day after Vince’s passing, our family dog Charity passed away unexpectedly.Â  She was almost 12 years old but in seemingly good health.Â  She was fine in the morning, gone by dinnertime.Â  Not enough time has passed to heal the pain of her loss since she was like a child to us, but there is no reason to dwell on such melancholy topics here in the blog.

I’m thankful that I have a busy December 18 this year, that it’s on a Saturday and that I don’t have to spend it alone.Â  I’m writing this ahead of time and scheduling it to post itself on December 18 automatically in hopes of maybe not realizing this day of personal infamy until it’s over.Â  Will the entire day pass without me thinking about Vince or Charity?Â  Probably not, they and other loved ones lost hold a special place in my heart, and I think about them most every day, especiallyÂ  in December.Â  But December 18 this year will have joy of its own as family comes from far away to celebrate the season.Â  I look forward to making happy memories for December, especially for the 18th, which just happens to be exactly one week before Christmas, a day I’m really looking forward to celebrating this year more than ever.Â  Losing Charity last year was an awful thing to happen just before Christmas time, just as it was even more terrible to lose a parent / grandparent in our family just before Christmas 10 years ago.Â  But when I lost Charity, and I realized that I was more curious about God’s plan for me than I was looking to be angry with Him, I knew that I was on my way to having a wonderful spiritual relationship with Him.

For that, I am very thankful, and it makes me want to celebrate this Christmas season for what it truly is: a celebration of the birth of Jesus and an acknowledgment of the glorious love that God has for us.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Beautiful! I hope that any thoughts you have of Vince and Charity today are happy ones. I know for certain how proud Cs' father would be of his amazing son.

# Go See... Oh Wait, It's Much Too Late And So Am I

Big surprise, time got away from me.Â  How did that happen?Â  Couldn’t be that it’s Christmas time and I have a million things to do.Â  Honestly, I always try to refrain from sending Christmas cards, but sometimes I feel so badly when we get cards from others and I’m not sending any back.Â  So then I start sending some – just to my MOPs (Mothers of Preschoolers) group, I’ll say.Â  But next thing I know, I’ve decided to send Christmas cards to “a few” select groups of people, and that’s when I realize that I’m just sending Christmas cards anyway even though I wasn’t going to!Â  Well, this that and the other stuff; Christmas cards are just one extra check on my holiday time to-do list, but that’s a tangent…

My point was busyness.Â  I was so busy that a few weeks ago when I wrote another newspaper review for one of our community theater groups, I forgot to post it on my blog.Â  I usually like to post my reviews in my blog – since I’m doing the work to write them anyway, I might as well post them here to try to remind some friends and readers to go see the show.Â  But now it’s too late, for the show I saw and reviewed has finished its run.Â  Oh well, such things happen; hopefully my review as it was printed in the paper made some people want to come see the cute show.Â  For fun, here is a copy of the review:

**Pageant Shines This Season**

**Early December finds many people preoccupied with the hustle and bustle of the approaching holiday season, so what better way to unwind from holiday stress than to see a live show?**

**A play guaranteed to inspire Yuletide spirit, The Best Christmas Pageant Ever is being performed by The Williams County Community Theatre in the playhouse at 501 S. East Avenue in Montpelier during these chilly December weekends between Thanksgiving and Christmas.**

**This festive show provides fun for the entire family. The audience can spend a wintery evening or an afternoon matinee getting to know the Bradley clan (cohesively played by Jake McAfee, Mary Valdez, Allie Boyer, and Logan Psurny) as their normally normal life erupts into chaos. Thoughtfully narrated by young Beth Bradley (a cute and concise Allie Boyer), a heartwarming story unfolds, and the audience is a captive witness to the events leading up to what everyone hopes will be The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.**

**When Bradley mom Grace (a funny, flustered Mary Valdez) is chosen to replace Mrs. Armstrong (an amusing character played by Nicki Bassett) as director of the church’s annual Christmas Pageant, all seems well until the Herdman family (outrageously played by Lance Day, Jessica Valdez / Sunny Bowman, Mason Bassett, Elliot Bowman, Isaiah Valdez, Jamison Grime, and Katie Taylor / Zara McNalley) slips into the scene. The Bradleys’ seemingly picture-perfect world is turned upside-down when the six trouble-maker Herdman kids come to Sunday school. Even the reason why they began attending in the first place is hilarious (Logan Psurny takes the heat as Charlie Bradley). Poor Grace just wants to tell the story of Mary and Baby Jesus in the Pageant, but rehearsals are tough with a zany assortment of characters (brought to life by Amy Boyer, Jenna Bowman, Kyla Huband, Jake McAfee, Abby Ledyard, Makayah Long / Alisa Parsons, Kayden Long, Anna Valdez / Carolyn Rychener, Brook Ward / Bailey Ward, Taylor Brown, Amari Blanco, Tatum Grime, Savanah Kleinhen, Ethan Psurny, Hailey Tressler, Hannah Tressler) who just don’t seem to like the idea of giving the Herdman kids a chance. Will it all come together in time to be The Best Christmas Pageant Ever?**

**It’s the perfect time of year for this touching show, and WCCT’s The Best Christmas Pageant Ever will have you flooded with Christmas spirit. Whether you simply come for the holiday fun, to see the joyously decorated theatre, or to watch the adorable children in the cast put on their Pageant, this show will tug at your heartstrings, chase away holiday blues, and leave you humming Christmas carols with a glow and a grin!**

**â€œAfter all, It’s almost Christmas!â€, so come out to the theater and join the fun!**

**The Best Christmas Pageant Ever can be seen on the Montpelier stage on Friday and Saturday nights at 8 pm on December 3,4, 10, and 11 and Thursday night December 9, and Sunday afternoon December 12 at 2:30 pm. Some of the roles are split between multiple actors, which is just one reason to see this show more than once. Reservations are recommended, but not required. Please call the WCCT Office for reservations and more info: 1-888-569-9228.**

*Taylhis has experience in community theatre that spans multiple decades. Ms. Taylhis has been on the stage as an actor, as well as behind-the-scenes doing production work like assistant-directing, producing, and stage-managing. As an enthusiastic supporter of the arts in Northwest Ohio, she has also enjoyed serving administratively on the boards of various local community theatre groups.*

### Comments

**Taylhis**Exactly what is extra motivation to publish some things, Jamiahsh. ;)  
**Jamiahsh**And a reminder for the future to look back upon! :)

# I Needed To Smile Today

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/12/flat.jpg)

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Yes, and you shared it! The best kind of smile!

# low fat and delicious lunches

Tomatoes and SW chkn pasta

### Comments

# Nothing Worse...

Than having to care for sick kids when you are a sick parent.Â  Ok, so there are plenty of worse things, but this is one of my least favorite things about daily life, getting sick at the same time as my kids.Â  The hits just keep on coming – is it December or what?Â  (in case you aren’t aware, this is in reference to my family’s annual dose of uncanny bad luck that seems to show its ugly face every December)

This time around, it’s a nasty stomach virus, which means loads of extra laundry and some very crabby kids.Â  The two little ones were up all night last night, and even though Hubby was the one who got up with them, I was still awakened all night, so neither of us got much sleep.Â  Today was a take-it-easy day, and somehow I found the energy to get through it while being sick and on little sleep.Â  I’m slightly concerned about the little ones being kept up all night again because it’s the night of our oldest daughter’s birthday party, and we have 8 screaming, shrieking 5th graders running around the house.Â  But they seem to be having a blast (while us sickies keep our distance), and that’s what matters.Â  Now I just have to figure out how to talk them out of wanting to watch Twilight Eclipse, which in my opinion, does not seem appropriate for a bunch of 10 and 11 and one 6-year-old.

In a way it stinks getting sick on the weekend- there goes any chance we have of a fun family outing tomorrow, and I’m going to be really upset if I have to miss teaching my Sunday school class onÂ  Sunday morning – those 1st graders are adorable, and we have so much fun together every week; I really look forward to seeing them.Â  But on the other hand, getting sick on the weekend means that Hubbydoesn’t have to worry about missing work, so that’s a positive.

Well, here’s to hoping that we are well soon and that there is some way that the rest of the family (2 left standing) does not come down with this.Â  I guess if there was a weekend in December for the whole family to come down sick, this was the best one.Â  We have my daughter’s birthday party, but nothing that involves travel like the weekends in the rest of the month.

Take care of yourself and your family in this, the lovely month of December!!

### Comments

**Phyllis Beyer**Happy Birthday party to Taylor! I survived many tween and teen slumber parties and so will you. Sorry to hear about your illnesses. Hope everyone is on the mend soon. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone next weekend.  
**Jamiahsh**Loverly! Just keeps getting better and better ;) Hang in there, pal. I don't think Twilight is appropriate for ANY age group but that is just me. Good luck with the rest of the weekend.

# An Afternoon With The FBI

It seemed like something out of a movie, our visit to the localÂ  FBI office yesterday.Â  Except that it wasn’t a movie, and the office wasn’t exactly local…

Let me back up.Â  It’s December, and don’t you know, that seems to signal a yearly torrent of bad luck thrown our way.Â  Shortly after turning the page on our calendar this month, we found out (among other things) that my husband’s website (and our family’s livelihood) had been attacked.Â  And I don’t mean a little harmless virus or an annoying spam attack – it’s a DDoS – simply put, someone targeted this website, and essentially used thousands of computers around the world to overload this website and crash the server.Â  It’s enough of an incident to capture both the interest of the local media and the FBI, both of whom politely requested interviews yesterday.Â  So we drove out to the city, found the government building that houses the FBI offices, walked inside and checked with the doorman who wanted to know who we were there to see.

“I have an appointment with Mr. X at the FBI (*name changed for privacy*).” said my husband, and once it was confirmed that he was on the list, the doorman stated that he “would get us up.”Â  He led us to the elevator and punched in a special code – can’t just push the floor number for the FBI these days it seems.Â  We got off the elevator and waited around for a few minutes, entertained by the FBI’s 10 Most Wanted posters.Â  One in particular caught my husband’s eye.Â  “Doesn’t that look like our neighbor?”Â  He asked me, and I had to agree.Â  I began to read the description and was surprised to see that it did seem to describe our neighbor – he’s into sports like golf and dirt-biking, and it’s strange because my husband and I would often notice the neighbor packing up his car for weekend trips and coming back, unloading things like helmets, golf clubs, and lots of other sporting equipment.Â  Such is life when you don’t have kids, we thought, and I guess you should know that the reason we pay so much attention to this neighbor’s activities is because he happens to have a nasty cat that terrorizes our neighborhood.Â  So while keeping tabs on [that darn cat](http://taylhis.tangents.org/2008/08/27/that-darn-cat/" \t "_blank), we’ve observed some of our ~~most wanted~~ neighbor’s behavior.Â  The kicker of this whole coincidence is that the Wanted-by-the-FBI guy was listed as possibly having bi-sexual tendencies, and that fits in with what we’ve seen about our neighbor as well.Â  Don’t get me wrong, I don’t think it’s him, but it was an entertaining wait, to say the least.

So then an agent comes out of a door and asks if we’ve been helped.Â  We said not yet and repeated the name of the agent we were there to see.Â  We were led to a door, and there was a sophisticated series of security measures that the man went through to enter (not going to repeat them here on the internet out of respect for the security of the FBI – not that I even knew what he was doing anyway).Â  In this small waiting area, there was a metal detector, which began to go crazy every time this guy went near it – I forgot to mention that he’s carrying 2 or 3 very large bags.Â  He disappears behind a door, and the man we were supposed to meet with appears and introduces his assistant – a lady carrying a notepad, a pen, and oh yeah, I shouldn’t forget to mention the large gun she was packing tucked into the back of her skirt.Â  What kind of assistant is that?!?

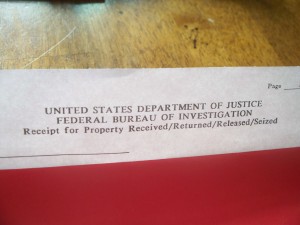
[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/12/mulder-and-scully.jpg)*Two of the most famous fictional FBI agents in pop culture history: Agents Mulder and Scully from the X-Files.Â  Ok, so our agents were not Mulder and Scully, but I couldn’t resist making the comparison.*

So we go into a conference room of sorts, and the interview begins.Â  The agent and his assistant are not unfriendly, and they want to know the facts of the case.Â  They are both taking notes, but probably most surprising to us is the absence of laptop computers –Â  these FBI guys (from the cyber crimes division) are taking notes with pens on Steno pads, and that’s not even a joke.Â  But it is hilarious.

The entire day had a Men in Black-like feel…Â  If you’ve seen the movie, then you remember the part where Will Smith is recruited to be a man in black – he goes to this bland looking government building that turns out to be very sci-fi on the inside with all the security measures and things like that.Â  Such was the case here – lots of doors, signs about authorization, keypads, things like that, very sci-fi, and my husband told the agent so at the end of the interview.Â  Mr. X seemed to chuckle (we wondered on the way home, are FBI agents trained to drain themselves of personality?), and he told us that we could just take the elevator back downstairs, no special code needed – thanks for the advice.

All in all, a very interesting trip.Â  Made me want to do things like see Salt (a movie about the FBI) or read *[Special Agent: My Life on the Front Lines as a Woman in the FBI](http://www.amazon.com/Special-Agent-Front-Lines-Woman/dp/0786867078" \t "_blank)* again.Â  Did the FBI interview do any good for my husband’s business?Â  We don’t know yet.Â  It depends if they catch the people who are doing it.Â  The FBI disclaimed several times that it doesn’t seem as if the damages the business has incurred will be recovered, and we of course are praying otherwise.Â  Whatever happens, this is part of learning to trust God’s plan for us, isn’t it?Â  Easier said than done.Â  I’m really hoping that the stress on my husband dissipates soon…

And oh yeah, a little souvenir from the FBI (the property we gave them was received and not seized, in case you are wondering):

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/12/FBI-doc-12-8-10.jpg)

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I adore the lightheartedness you are creating! But I hope and pray that everything works out in a positive way. "The Truth is Out There." Too bad your reason for going to the Bureau were serious... sounded like it would have been a great field trip! Continued love, thoughts, and prayers. I am positive that you will all come through great!

# Mars, Venus, Whatever You Call It

It seems like men and women can be from different planets at times. During a series at youth group called “Lovesick”, we were shown the following videos, and they illustrate the differences between the opposite sexes hilariously – Enjoy!

[cartoonconversation-outtoeat.mp4](http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/media/previews/s/mm/slf/sf/cartoonconversation-outtoeat.mp4)

[cartoonconversation-pant.mp4](http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/media/previews/s/mm/slf/sf/cartoonconversation-pant.mp4)

### Comments

**derek**Hmm. Doesn't like caps on the smilies. I meant :lol:  
**derek**I thought the first one was the funniest. :LOL:  
**jamiahsh**HAHAHAHAAHAHAHA! Love it!

# Retro Movies

It’s always fun (for me anyway) to search online and find pictures of toys or clips of old movies from my youth.Â  I’ve found dozens of fun nostalgic images, but one movie is alluding me.Â  The problem is, I don’t remember the title of the movie; I only recall a vague synopsis that has had my husband and I searching for the movie without success.

tort and hare – http://www.metacafe.com/watch/1793588/the\_hare\_and\_the\_tortoise\_in\_live\_action\_vintage\_kid\_s\_film/

haunted

the small one

### Comments

# Goodbye To Ron Santo

People who don’t pay much attention to baseball and the MLB, particularly the Chicago Cubs, might not realize who Ron Santo is or that he is gone.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/12/ronsanto.jpg)

Ron Santo, legendary Chicago Cubs supporter, has passed away at the age of 70.Â  Gaining popularity first as a player then as an outspoken sportscaster, Ron Santo became the voice and face of the Chicago Cubs in recent years.Â  Always saying what was on his mind, Santo’s gravelly voice was the easiest way to find that Cubs game on WGN radio 720 in a hurry.Â  As a Cubs fan, I will miss it.

Sadly, Ron Santo did not live to see himself inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, nor did he see his beloved Cubbies win the World Series.Â  If you’d like to read more about Ron Santo or about his crusade against juvenile diabetes, [here is an article](http://dailyherald.com/article/20101203/sports/101209870/" \t "_blank) in the suburban Chicago newspaper, The Daily Herald.

Condolences and prayers to the Santo family.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Indeed... Cubbie fans everywhere are in mourning.

# Thanksgiving Traditions

Another holiday, come and gone…Â  seems like yesterday when IÂ  told my husband that I would be on board to put up the Christmas decorations early.Â  Had we not done it then, they would be late now; how fast time flies.Â  Our Thanksgiving holiday was great, as always, and in this glorious season, I’m making sure to take the time to truly appreciate our blessings, thank God for everything, and to savor the family traditionsÂ  and memories we’ve been creating.

From the **delicious** spread on Thanksgiving Day (thank you to Hubby!) shared with great friends to the joyous ‘Welcome Santa!” parade we enjoy annually in our small town the day after Thanksgiving (though a tad bit nippy at the parade this year, but fun as ever!); with Black Friday bargains (Hubby took a few kids Black Friday shopping early in the morning this year while I slept in – always fun!) and a long, lazy vacation with the kids while they enjoy a break from school, our Thanksgiving weekend was happy, prayerful, relaxing, and full of traditions that I hope will last for years to come.

Hope your Thanksgiving was happy, safe, wondrous, and that you were able to have some time to relax and reflect upon your blessings…Â  may the rest of your 2010 holidays hold the same.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Glad it was Wonderful! Hopefully the rest of this season of wonder, peace, and love will be just as great!

# JJ

My little parakeet JJ passed away some time during the night last night.Â  Not much of a surprise there; he has been sick for a while, and even though he began looking well again a few weeks ago, he took a turn for the worse in the last few days.Â  He looked so awful yesterday that I knew he wouldn’t make it through the night.Â  But there was always hope that I was wrong.Â  He had been on what I called “death watch” before and made it through the night, so the hope was there.

I don’t really know what happened – he was only about a year old, and I had had him since January, not even a year.Â  He started showing signs of illness about 2 months ago.Â  I gave him medicine and TLC, and he began to do better, but like I said, I guess it just wasn’t enough.

He was “just a parakeet”, but I loved his company.Â  I was so excited to see what kind of bird he would become; how he would look and act as an adult and who he would be when he felt healthy, but now I won’t know.Â  Honestly, taking care of animals is one of my favorite things in the whole world, so why do I have to be so bad at it?Â  A few months ago, JJ was so happy when we moved his cage intoÂ  the living room so he had company all day rather than living in the solitude (or was it protection?) of our bedroom upstairs.Â  We kept him right near the Halogen lamp, could there have been a smell or the heat or something that made him sick?Â  On the rare occasion that a bug would fly into the Halogen, yuck, what a smell that made.Â  We tried to get rid of Teflon pans and things like that, but JJ’s new home in the living room wasn’t too far from the kitchen – maybe cooking smells did him in?Â  He was a fraidy-bird, so I couldn’t really take apart his cage to clean it out; maybe it got too dirty?Â  A dozen why’s and what-if’s, but no more parakeet.Â  At least he is not suffering anymore – it was getting really difficult to see him in his cage looking so miserable and worse for the wear.Â  Poor JJ.Â  Even if he was just a caged bird, I miss him already.Â  Ugh, and the cold weather is back today…Â  fitting somehow, just feels like a miserable day all around – time to make the best of it.

### Comments

**Derek**A moment of silence for JJ. :|  
**Phyllis Beyer**I am sure it was nothing you did not do that did JJ in. You take very good care of your animals. Parakeets are fairly fragil.  
**jamiahsh**AWWW... REALLY sorry. We all know what a fan of animals in general you are so of course he was much much more than "just a parakeet."  
**justj**so very sorry to read this,

# how baseballs are made

http://www.reliableplant.com/view/25724/how-baseballs-are-manufactured

### Comments

# If Cats Ran The World

Because my family and friends know that I’m an animal lover, they’re always sending me emails with pictures and articles about cute animal-related topics.Â  All of them are adorable, but this one stands out as something to share – a man built an entire feline-sized village for homeless cats!Â  Kind of sounds like something I’d like to do with some extra free time, money, and if only I didn’t have the darn cat allergy that’s always getting in the way…

Below are some pictures of his creation.Â  For the entire story, [click here](http://green.yahoo.com/blog/guest_bloggers/69/man-builds-cat-sized-village-for-homeless-cats.html" \t "_blank).Â  And to visit the cat village online, The Caboodle Ranch, [click here](http://caboodleranch.com/" \t "_blank).

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/cat-village.jpg)

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/cat-village2.jpg)

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/cat-village1.jpg)

### Comments

**derek**He spends 14 hours a day at this? And provides expenses out of pocket (alongside donations)? What's his secret? Agreed with J#1- cool!  
**justj**Ok, I can see that. I know of someone who would have loved that for her chinchillas.  
**jamiahsh**That is uncategorically cool! What a catastrophe it would be if a cataclysmic storm came through and blew down the kitty Wal-Mart.

# Poor Paul The Psychic Octopus

No play on words necessaryÂ  for this blog post – there really was a Psychic Octopus named Paul who lived in Germany, and he recently passed away at the ripe old age (for an octopus) of 2Â½ years.

In his lifetime, however short is seems to us humans, [Paul made himself famous](http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20436926,00.html" \t "_blank) with his uncanny ability to predict World Cup game winners correctly!Â  Before games, Paul would receive 2 boxes of mussels, one each with a flag of the countries of the two teams who would be facing off in the World Cup.Â  The country whose box was eaten out of by [Paul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Octopus" \t "_blank) first was declared Paul’s pick as the winner of that match, and he predicted correctly an astounding 100% of the time (8/8) for his World Cup predictions, and 86% (12/14) overall.

RIP â€¢ Paul the Octopus â€¢ 2008-2010

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/paul.jpg)

### Comments

**justj**I never realized the shorter life span of octopi. Even the largest only has a life span of 4 to 5 years. Interesting.  
**Taylhis**Octopuses are fascinating animals (then again, show me an animal that is NOT fascinating... bet you can't). I never realized that their lifespan is so short - probably makes it more difficult to study their intelligence as related to long-term memory and things like that.  
**jamiahsh**Yes, I remember hearing of the octopus' passing

# Preschool or Politics? Bonus Episode

November Election Day 2010 – it’s come and gone; everyone is ecstatic to be freed from being forced to absorb those scathing campaign ads.Â  In the wake of Election Day, one Chicago ‘burb emerged with a history-making result.Â  Buffalo Grove, Illinois citizens voted upon and passed a successful recall vote of a village trustee for the first time ever.Â  You might have [read my previous post](http://taylhis.tangents.org/2010/07/21/are-we-playing-politics-or-preschool/" \t "_blank) about Lisa Stone, the *tenacious* (polite word) village trustee who helped make Buffalo Grove village council meetings look like too-good-to-be-real-for-reality-tv.Â  She would do things like nit-pick, interrupt, refuse to take order; many times single-handedly being responsible for meetings lasting into the following morning!Â  Lisa Stone and the Village President Elliott Hartstein would butt heads at every meeting until he was so frustrated he looked ready to burst.Â  Well, the votes were counted, and Ms. Stone has to leave office.Â  And if you think that Village President Hartstein was happy about this, check out this little video of him impersonating (complete with wig) the thorn, uh, Stone in his side:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

Yes, it was a horrible political decision, and a public apology was issued promptly.Â  A guy’s gotta vent, but he should have known better.Â  Just when we thought the reality show was canceled, a bonus episode appears.Â  [For the whole story, click here](http://dailyherald.com/article/20101103/news/711049991/" \t "_blank).

\*\*\*It’s come to my attention that the video is no longer available – bummmer!!Â  It was too funny!Â  Well, there’s nothing I can do about that, so here’s the next best thing: pictures.

Ms. Lisa Stone herself:  
[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/lisa-stone.jpg)And Village President Elliott Hartstein dressed as Lisa Stone:  
[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/bg.jpg)

### Comments

**taylhis**Thanks Jamiahsh for bringing the broken video to my attention - pictures added instead.  
**justj**I think that the politicians behave the same way all over the place. I'm beginning to wonder if politics is the career choice of those that do not mature.  
**jamiahsh**WOW! I read the article and ALMOST wish that the video was not removed. Must have been quick! I thought we already had Halloween.

# Halloween Fun (Was Had)

It’s officially mid-November already, and Halloween is over.Â  Because Halloween is one of our family’s favorite holidays, we try to take advantage of doing every Halloween-related activity we can, which often stretches the season.Â  We began on the Tuesday before Halloween at the mall.Â  They held a weather-proof (good thing too, the weather on Tuesday was so awful our tornado sirens were activated) trick-or-treat event in the mall, with costumed kids going from store to store receiving candy.Â  Our kids had a blast, and our little guy got the hang of trick-or-treating REALLY quickly!Â  He would receive his candy, and his way of saying ‘thank you’ was to give a little wave – it was adorable – see for yourself!Â  He’s the one in the Blue’s Clues costume:

If you can see this, then you might need a Flash Player upgrade or you need to install Flash Player if it's missing. Get [Flash Player](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank) from Adobe.

At first he was afraid of some of the scary masks, but he was quickly over that too.Â  The rest of the week stayed relatively Halloween-free, until Friday, when we had planned a Halloween-themed game night.Â  We requested guests to wear costumes (any excuse to dress up in a costume for Halloween – I really like to participate as much as I can!!), and we had quite a variety: from an escaped inmate (Hubby) to Flo the Progressive Insurance nurse, a nerd, a couple of hippies, a professor, a zookeeper on safari (me) – even a few members of the “real” Mafia made an appearance (we frequently play a game called ‘Mafia’ at game night and it’s tons of fun!Â  A few of the regular game nighters decided to dress up as Mafia as a shout-out to the game).Â  Fun was had, and we were able to rest up for Saturday, which was the annual community Halloween party.Â  My kids loved the hayride, complete with monsters that jump out of the brush and chase the wagon, and we rode 3 times.Â  There are all kinds of things to do at the community party, and it’s all free: from gourmet slushes (best wild berry slush ever!), cotton candy, hot dogs, and popcorn to carnival games, bouncy castles, and a maze for the kids, it’s all so much fun!

After that was time for Trick or Treating, and we had fun even if Hubby wasn’t feeling so well (he is better now – thanks for your thoughts and prayers!).Â  Let’s see…Â  don’t think I mentioned the kids’ costumes: my oldest (almost 11 already!) was a cowgirl, 6-year-old Sammie was a princess, 4-year-old Disney was a witch at the mall who switched to Dora for Saturdays’ events, and 2-year-old Christopher was Blue from Blue’s Clues.Â  We had fun Trick or Treating, and Hubby and I chose an old favorite movie of ours to watch afterward: The Uninvited – not totally scary (we usually try to watch a scary movie together on Halloween), but we both felt like a great thriller more than a horror movie this year.Â  Here is my little boy dressed as Blue:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/Halloween-mall-10-26-10-001.jpg)Sunday saw church, and we had a blast in Sunday school as usual – except that poor Hubby had to stay home.Â  Also, we were very tired on Saturday after trick or treating, so we didn’t get a chance to get our annual picture of the kids in their costumes sitting on the couch.Â  But we got one of all 4 of them in the mall, so here it is:

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/Halloween-mall-10-26-10-11.jpg)Overall, a very fun 2010 Halloween, one that I can’t believe came and went so quickly – SO quickly in fact, that it’s already been over for weeks!Â  Unbelievable!!Â  Hope your Halloween was safe, fun, and happy, and that your Thanksgiving will be the same!!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I suppose that two weeks qualifies as weeks... I think that is all it has been. But it did go fast. I can't believe that it has been nearly a month since the last theatrical extravaganza ended. :( It's gonna be a long winter, but I do have plenty to beat those non-theatre blues.

# CMA Time Already!!

It’s that time of year again!Â  Dust off your cowboy hat, put it on, and get ready for a rootin’ tootin’ time watching the 44th annual Country Music Association Awards!!

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/Sammies-barn-dance10-27-10-251.jpg)I’m going to try something different this year – I’m not going to watch it.

Not that I don’t want to, because I really do, especially when I [go to the website](http://www.cmaawards.com/" \t "_blank) and see all the stuff about live streaming comments and things like that.Â  It wasn’t too many years ago when I made my own blog of live streaming comments, and I had fun doing it.Â  But I won’t be able to watch the CMAs this year because I have something much more important to do:Â  I lead a small group of 6th grade girls at our church’s youth group on Wednesday nights.Â  I’m not about to put a tv show above those girls, and I certainly wouldn’t be prepared to tell them the reason for my absence was because of the CMA awards – that would not be acceptable.Â  If one of my own kids was sick and I stayed home for that reason (as it happened last year on CMA night), that would be a different story, but it’s a great thing that everyone is healthy enough for me to have to miss one of my two most favorite tv events of the year (not including a year the Chicago Cubs would make it into MLB playoffs, but that hasn’t been anything I need to concern myself with in quite some time, Grrrr – my other favorite tv event is the other big country music awards show, the ACMs in the spring).

If you watch the CMA awards, HAVE FUN!!Â  I’m hoping that whatever recording device my husband has in mind to record these will work – we often have bad luck with recording devices.Â  Part of me will miss being a part of the event, reading the live commentary and providing my own, and part of me was ready to move on anyway – seems I’ve become increasingly disconnected with today’s country music scene (now I just sound old).Â  I’ll still give my picks, but they are guesses at best because I really haven’t been following the genre lately.Â  I didn’t even know until I looked last night to find out what time the awards came on that Gwyneth Paltrow, the movie star, has a hit song on country radio right now.Â  I’m actually more into Christian music than ever before; there is some pretty good stuff out there.Â  And listening to Christian music gives me a chance to practice my dances I have on Sunday mornings with the 1st graders Â  But all of that leaves less time to listen and keep up with country music.

But what the hey, I’ve had fun trying to pick the winners every year so here goes.Â  My picks are in green with random thoughts in *itallics*:

â™¦â™¦Entertainer of the Year – Brad Paisley, Lady Antebellum, Keith Urban, Miranda Lambert, Zac Brown Band *(What?!?Â  No Kenny Chesney??Â  That’s great news for those of us who aren’t big fans…Â  now, who to choose to take his place?)*

Female Vocalist – Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Reba McEntire, Taylor Swift, Carrie Underwood *(So great to see 2 of my favorites (Martina and Reba) back in the game!Â  I don’t think Martina will win, but I SO WANTED to choose her!!Â  Carrie Underwood is great too – I’m not a big fan of Taylor Swift, but unfortunately, I think she will win this one)*

â™¦â™¦Male Vocalist –Â  Dierks Bentley, Brad Paisley, Blake Shelton, George Strait, Keith Urban

New Artist – Luke Bryan, Easton Corbin, Jerrod Nieman, Chris Young, Zac Brown Band *(Explain to me how Zac Brown Band is still considered “new”?Â  They have some great music and have proven themselves, as I would think being a nominee for Entertainer of the Year would prove!)*

Vocal Group – Lady Antebellum, Little Big Town, Rascall Flatts, The Band Perry, Zac Brown Band *(Let’s be honest, I think Lady Antebellum will take it.Â  But I just love the music of Rascall Flatts, and can’t bear to vote against them. I’m not trying to get 2 votes in – officially, my pick is Rascall Flatts)*

Vocal Duo – Brooks and Dunn, Joey + Rory, Montgomery Gentry, Steel Magnolia, Sugarland *(The last year for Brooks and Dunn, and I don’t think they’ll pull a GARTH Brooks and pull out of retirement, so this powerful duo gets my vote – they are so talented, so they deserve it anyway.Â  I was lucky enough to see them in concert 3 times, and they did not disappoint once!)*

â™¦â™¦Single – A Little More Country Than That by Easton Corbin, Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton featuring Trace Adkins, Need You Now by Lady Antebellum, The House That Built Me by Miranda Lambert, White Liar by Miranda Lambert

â™¦â™¦Song – A Little More Country Than That, Need You Now, The House That Built Me, Toes, White Liar

â™¦â™¦Musical Event – Bad Angel by Dierks Bentley feat. Miranda Lambert & Jamey Johnson, Canâ€™t You See by Zac Brown Band feat. Kid Rock, Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton feat. Trace Adkins, Iâ€™m Alive by Kenny Chesney with Dave Matthews, Till The End by Alan Jackson with Lee Ann Womack

Music Video – Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton feat. Trace Adkins, Need You Now Lady Antebellum, The House That Built Me by Miranda Lambert, Water by Brad Paisley, White Liar by Miranda Lambert

Musician – Paul Franklin â€“ Steel Guitar, Dann Huff – Guitar, Brent Mason – Guitar, Mac McAnally – Guitar, Randy Scruggs â€“ Guitar

**Hmm, 5 correct of the 11 I guessed…Â  not too great.Â  Oh well, it was a good show and fun to watch!**

### Comments

**derek**I'll take Christian music over country any day too. Heck, I'd take just about anything over country. :lol: Okay, it's not \*that\* bad to these ears- I have caught myself listening to it from time to time when others have it on.  
**jamiahsh**I may not follow the C.M. scene as closely as you, but I do enjoy the commentary ;)

# Back To Blogging

It seems like I haven’t had the time to blog as much as I’d like to lately.Â  Put it this way –Â  Halloween ended over a week ago now, and I still have a draft sitting here detailing how my family spent what’s probably our 2nd favorite holiday.Â  I think I will quickly summarize and get it churned out next, hopefully.

One thing that’s been taking up my blogging time is laundry.Â  When the seasons change, my laundry responsibilities increase from about 3 loads per week to 6 or 7.Â  That’s because my family of 6 is now wearing pants instead of shorts or sundresses, many of us dress in layers in the fall which adds sweatshirts to the mix, and then there are the added number of blankies that the kids use when it turns cold outside.Â  The good news of all this is that when spring turns to summer, I find myself with about half the laundry I’ve gotten used to doing in the winter – kind of a fall back, spring ahead-type thing for laundry, I guess.Â  But more laundry folding and less blogging for me in the mean time.

And that reminds me, a funny thing happened at church yesterday.Â  When my class got back to our classroom after large group, there were 2 new kids sitting there.Â  I introduced myself, and we were just getting started when their dad came to the door, seemingly embarrassed and very apologetic as he asked for his kids back – turns out their family had forgotten to set their clocks backÂ  an hour, so they were actually there for the next service 

Our family remembered to change our clocks, but we didn’t get to appreciate the extra hour of sleep it was supposed to bring – kids have biological clocks, they wake up at the same time every day regardless of what the clock says or what time zone they are in.Â  This is especially good advice if you’re going to travel with kids across time zones – don’t fool yourself into thinking that your kids will adjust to the local time when you travel, or you could be in for a not-so-pleasant surprise.Â  My wonderful, thoughtful husband is always the one who gets up early with the kids, but I had to be at church at 8:30 yesterday.Â  Also, I was up all night with a killer headache – now that was strange.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/headache.jpg)I am very lucky to be able to say that I very rarely get headaches.Â  If I don’t get enough sleep, I will have a dull ringing in my head, but nothing like Saturday night’s doozy that was actually waking me up throughout the night.Â  Luckily it went away (with help) before I arrived in my classroom full of 1st graders.Â  But I have to wonder about the cause of this colossal headache – could it perhaps be some kind of weird virus that had me laid up all weekend?Â  Saturday I was knocked flat on my back by a sudden and severe mysterious back pain.Â  It began on Friday, when I decided to take my kids to the zoo since they had a day off school.Â  By the time we were ready to leave, I couldn’t bend over and had to ask for help to tie my shoes.Â  I thought maybe it was a pulled muscle or something, maybe a cramp that would work itself out – I couldn’t remember injuring it.Â  But I did not enjoy myself nearly as much as I usually do at the zoo Â  And thank goodness Hubby decided toÂ  come with or I don’t know how I would have been able to handle 5 kids (my daughter’s friend came along) by myself without hardly being able to bend or move right.Â  When we got home, Hubby had some work to catch up on, and I fell asleep on the couch while waiting for him – something I haven’t done for ages which makes me realize that I didn’t feel too well on Friday.Â  Then Saturday dawns, and I can’t get out of bed because of the extreme pain every time I tried to bend.Â  So I stayed in bed until 1:30 – played my cards right and got lunch in bed too – when we absolutely had to leave to meet our youth group kids for a service project.Â  I got the easy job – waiting for the kids who were late – while the others raked leaves and picked up litter, and while I took it easy, my back started to feel better.Â  But then came the headache which was to plague me all night.Â  What makes me think this is a virus is because of all the stuff going around lately, plus the fact that my sister had this same exact sudden backache a few weeks ago – could it be a contagious ‘backache virus’?Â  I owed my parents an email, but I couldn’t get in front of the computer with my sore back, so I called them from bed Saturday morning, and that’s how I found out about my sister.Â  Anyway, my point is, it was a busy weekend, but also one where I couldn’t get to my computer even if I had had the time, hence the slow pace of the blogging.

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/11/headachedog.jpg)And speaking of things going around…Â  my parakeet JJ is feeling much better.Â  He’s even chirping again!!Â  He hasn’t lost his balance while sitting on his perch in days, and his physical appearance is starting to look healthier.Â  The lady at the pet store said that if a little bird is fluffed up and at the bottom of his cage like JJ was that it’s almost always too late to save them, so I feel really great that my little guy seems to have another chance.Â  I guess I should have bought this really cool looking toy I saw the other day, but my husband and I have a policy that we try not to buy anything unless we have an immediate use for it.Â  This thing was a $10 cabinet – you install it in your living room or somewhere; it’s a nice looking wood cabinet, and it opens into a little play yard for small birds.Â  Ugh, just writing about it makes me want it, but the store was an hour away, and JJ is a cage bird – I don’t know that he would come out to play in a play yard.Â  I think of him as so fragile, so it would be difficult for me to make him come out; I sure wouldn’t want him to get sick again.

Well, anyway, I’ve rambled enough – guess I just wanted to share my relief at getting well and of being able to blog again.Â  Until that overdue Halloween post…

### Comments

**taylhis**Oops - I really meant to put C in there... he's doing much better. Cold is still lingering, but he was never in as bad a shape as JJ, thank God for that. Thanks for asking!  
**derek**Happy to read things are going better for the bird (how about C?). Here's a prayer for your back pain!  
**jamiahsh**Hope you get over your "back virus" soon! Super glad to hear that JJ is on the mend ;)

# My Poor Little Bird

JJ, my parakeet, is very sick.Â  I had parakeets when I was younger, and I know enough about them to know that we are lucky that he’s still alive.Â  His chirping and squawking gradually decreased until I realized the other day that he doesn’t vocalize at all anymore.Â  He is very lathargic, and sits puffed up on his perch where he loses his balance every few minutes.Â  His tail is bobbing when he breathes, which is a sign of respiratory distress, and he has some discoloring around his cere (nose), which indicates discharge.Â  The other day, I noticed that he was sitting on the bottom of his cage, which is a sign of imminent death in parakeets.Â  Based upon my research (past experience, the internet, and bothering the heck out of the local pet store), JJ seems to have a respiratory infection – something that is often fatal for small birds.

But he’s hung on a few days now from when I first believed his death was imminent when he was at the bottom of his cage.Â  After all, parakeets’ instincts are to hide their illnesses.Â  If they show any sign of being sick, wild birds will be cast out by their flock, so if captive birds allow signs of illness to show, it’s often too late to save them.Â  I got some birdie antibiotics, and I’m hoping that he is drinking his water where the meds are.Â  He is still eating, and that’s a great sign.Â  We put a blanket over the cage, and are trying to keep him warm and calm so he can rest and get well.Â  It’s just touch and go at this point, so I’m praying for my little bird.Â  I got so attached to the little guy!Â  I got him right after my beloved dog passed away, and seeing my happy little bird helped me feel at least a tiny bit better.Â  And now I’m watching him suffer; it’s hard.Â  I want to move him back upstairs where it’s a little warmer and quieter, but I’m afraid of stressing him out too much, which is basically the same reason I don’t want to take him to the vet.Â  I guess I’ll wait for him to improve a little more before moving him upstairs; that’s the only plan I have right now.

Like I said, he does seem to be improving – the loss of balance on his perch seems to have subsided anyway.Â  But he still does not look well, and he is not vocalizing.Â  He is less than a year old, so maybe his youth is keeping him strong and resilient.Â  Poor JJ!Â  He is just a little parakeet, but he means a lot to me.Â  If you could send out a little prayer for JJ, we’d appreciate it.Â  And pray for my husband while you’re at it; he’s fighting a nasty cold.Â  Obviously, Hubby’s health is a billion times more important than JJ’s, but if I wrote a blog post every time Hubby got sick…Â Â  well, I wouldn’t have time for that!Â  Besides, Hubby’s illness is not life-threatening.Â  I wonder if Hubby and JJ have the same thing?Â  That’s one thing that stinks about this time of year – all the illness!Â  Wish I could transfer some of my super-immune system over to Hubby, who seems to get EVERY single thing that comes our way…

### Comments

**derek**And the season is just beginning... Prayers lifted. :)  
**justj**It sounds like respiratory illnesses are going around. I'm just getting over a doosy myself. Best to JJ and C.  
**jamiahsh**I really do enjoy all of your animal insight. Ver intriguing if not the best time at the moment. Hopefully, both guys get better soon. ;)

# There Was A WHAT In The Front Seat?

Just in time for Halloween, I came across a macabre news story the other day involving a woman whose actions had even veteran police officers scratching their heads.

***Woman Drove with Corpse for 10 Months****‘It was very shocking’*COSTA MESA, Calif. (CNN/KTLA) – It’s hard to shock a seasoned police officer, but cops in the Los Angeles area say they were shocked by what they found in a woman’s car this week. They say a woman was driving around for months with a dead mummified body in the front passenger’s seat.

“It was surprising even to myself. I’ve been a police officer for 15 years. To find a mummy in a vehicle, it was very shocking,” said Det. Sgt. Ed Everett.

Police say a corpse was propped up in the passenger seat of a Mercury Marquis for the last ten months. A woman was driving it around town during that time. Apparently, conditions inside the vehicle allowed for mummification.

But how did this happen?

“Initially the driver of the vehicle had indicated that she was unaware that this person was in the vehicle and didn’t indicate that there was anything wrong with the vehicle,” Sgt. Everett explained.

But later, the driver came clean. The 57-year-old woman says she met a homeless woman at a local park and allowed her to sleep in the car. One day, the driver discovered her friend was dead, panicked, and the left the corpse in the passenger’s seat. But she continued to dress the body and drive around with it.

“Due to the condition of the body, the coroner’s office was not able to determine the cause of death. There was no obvious signs of foul play at this point or trauma to the body that we know of,” said Sgt. Everett.

Police have few details on the deceased woman’s identity. The driver only had a first name for the lady and the poor condition of her remains will make identifying her difficult.

First my sympathies to the deceased and her family, and I hope they can identify her and then let her rest in peace.Â  But how does this happen?Â Â  Was the woman lonely?Â  Afraid of getting into trouble?Â  Lazy?Â  Crazy?Â  Wanted into the carpool lane?Â  Here’s to hoping she gets the help she needs, whatever that might be.

### Comments

**jamiahsh**Ten months seems like an awful long time to drive around with a passenger of that nature.  
**jamiahsh**How long until the corpse started to reek? But I'm also thinking the driver needs a little help. Great seasonal post ;) Unintentional perhaps, but great!

# RIP Oreo

This post is a few weeks in the making – my daughter Sammie’s favorite rat died on October 11.Â  She took it pretty well; I was dreading having to tell her when she got off the bus that day.Â  She got off the bus and promptly handed her younger brother and sister each a piece of her candy.Â  ‘Oh great’, I’m thinking – she gets off the bus and immediately does something really nice for her siblings, and I have to tell her that her favorite rat died.Â  But I didn’t have to tell her – she asked me first if he had died.Â  I said yes and asked her how she knew – turns out that big sis had taken it upon herself to tell Sammie on the way to the bus stop that morning.Â  What are big sisters for?Â  ðŸ˜‰Â  But like I said, Sammie was ok with it, but now that just leaves us one pet rat: Buckeye.Â  We began with 2 rats, Bobby Jack and Oreo, and then we took in 2 more from a friend who was unprepared for pets, Mater and Buckeye – 4 rats at once was a bit much, but we didn’t want to see them wind up as snake food, so that gave us 4 pet rats.

Bobby was the first to pass away in June of this year, followed by Mater in August, then Oreo in October – every 2 months we lose a rat, I guess.Â  That’s the only downside to these otherwise great pets – they only have a lifespan of 1-3 years.Â  Otherwise, they are like mini dogs: affectionate as can be and very trainable.Â  My girls love their rats and do very well at feeding them and giving them water every day, cleaning their cage, giving them baths, and taking them for walks.Â  The rats would always seem depressed when my girls spend their week with Grandma in the summer, and they get really excited when the girls return.Â  The only thing that keeps ME from getting too close to the rats is my allergy – what a bummer.Â  I found out I am allergic to rats right after we got them as cute little babies.Â  I would play with them and wonder why I broke out into hives on my forearms and sneezed like crazy and had itchy eyes for hours afterward.Â  In a way, it’s a good thing, otherwise I would be more sad than the girls when theyÂ  die, and at this rate, we are poised to have to say goodbye to a long line of pet rats!

### Comments

**justj**So sorry to read this. I like rats myself. The short lifespan is a downside.  
**taylhis**Well, if you got the right kind of bat, you wouldn't have to worry about mosquitoes :) If I didn't have to worry about real-world responsible things like feeding the pet, cleaning up after it, it hurting someone or destroying my house, I can't think of any animal I wouldn't have as a pet, even perhaps the one of which you are thinking. Hypothetically, of course. :)  
**jamiahsh**BATS?! really. I can think of one pet that you would at least hesitate to own. Any others?  
**taylhis**Yes, Jamiahsh, I'm allergic to rats, cats, and probably bats, which I always thought would make a cool pet. All the cool -at pets make me sneeze! :) Well, if they didn't, I think I would have at least 20 cats :0 Watching rats swim is fun; they like it too! A random rat swimming video (not one of ours): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycOeghLp83Y&feature=related  
**jamiahsh**Rats AND cats? RIP, Oreo. Sammie is growing up. Or maybe it was the length of time she had to think about it. My big brother told me that my poodle had been taken to be put under when I was 9 or 10. But they do look like great pets and they have been well taken care of. I always liked to watch them swim.

# Last Call For Haunted Houses!!

This weekend sees the last of the Halloween season of 2010.Â  I always try my best to do as much Halloween and fall-related things as possible; I just love the season.Â  This year I’ve been lucky enough to have gotten to try THREE haunted houses, and I will rate them here in case anyone has time to check any of them out.Â  I would really like to fit in a few more or even a repeat visit to one I’ve already been to, but I have a jam-packed weekend planned with other fun stuff like Halloween parties and Trick-or-Treating.

A few weekends ago, we visited the Chicago area and were able to get to two haunted houses, both in the area where we were staying – Aurora.Â  We would have liked to check out some other of the MANY haunted houses in the suburbs (as well as other entertainment offerings), but alas, we quickly ran out of time.Â  So the haunted houses visited were:

[BASEMENT OF THE DEAD](http://www.42fear.com/main.htm" \t "_blank) – 42 W. New York St. Aurora IL 60502 -This is by far the best haunted house that I’ve ever been to.Â  I’ve been able to visit here 2 years in a row, and it’s gotten better with time.Â  The makeup on the creatures is incredible – horror movie caliber –Â  and the characters waiting to scare people waiting in line are great.Â  They ALWAYS stay in character, which is very important, and they are creative in their scariness – much more than the typicalÂ  monster or “BOO!” yelling psychopath.Â  I tried to get video of the ultra-impressive 7+ foot tall monsters that hang around outside, but Basement of the Dead is located in downtown Aurora, so I had to help my husband navigate around the tricky one-way streets instead.Â  A MUST SEE for any haunted house enthusiast!Â  We will probably be making the trip next year, if not just for this haunted house alone; it’s that good!Â  4!’s for fright out of 4.

[MIDNIGHT MASSACRE](www.odysseyfunworld.com" \t "_blank) – 3440 Odyssey Court Naperville IL 60540 – Well, there really isn’t much to say about this lame attempt at a haunted house.Â  I don’t even think it was made less scary by our visit to Basement of the Dead before this one – it wouldn’t have been any better even if we hadn’t just visited aÂ  spectacular haunted house first.Â  The scariest thing about Midnight Massacre was the hour and a half we waited in line, which was hidden from view when you buy your tickets.Â  We got a bad clue when we saw a snack stand in line – you know they won’t want you taking food or drink into their haunted house, so if they let you buy food and drink in line, you know you’re going to have a long wait.Â  And in this case, a long wait for what?Â  The haunted house was not scary.Â  This one did consist of actors (?) yelling cheesy things like “BOO!”Â  There was a guy dressed like Freddy from Nightmare on Elm Street, and his “scare” was jumping up from a bed and yelling “Freddy!”Â  We even had one actor apologize to us and say, “Hey, I tried.”Â  Talk about breaking character!Â  But in a haunted house as bad as this one, it didn’t really matter that he broke character, that wasn’t the only thing wrong with it.Â  The first part of if was a black light maze that was so obviously part of a lazer tag course – they didn’t even try to hide it.Â  But there weren’t any monsters in it or anything.Â  They had a couple of cool robots and animatronics, especially this one large dinosaur thing, but it was just a head, and they didn’t do anything to cover up the robotic looking body.Â  And the actors were terrible.Â  Enough said about this one, not recommended – well, maybe for a kid’s first haunted house.Â  One ! (for effort Iguess) out of 4!’s

[Leader’s Family Farms](http://leadersfamilyfarms.com/" \t "_blank) – near the intersection of Ohio State Route 24 and Henry County Rd. 16 near Napoleon, Ohio – I got to go into this haunted attraction with one of my youth group girls, and she was a screamer.Â  It was a lot of fun, especially since the ghouls and monsters focused their attention on the screamer and left me alone!Â  We did not have the time to check out their new haunted attraction, PanDEMONium, but Screamacres was a nice haunted attraction as always.Â  3! out of 4! – Lots of the same old haunted house effects, but being outside and in the middle of nowhere certainly adds to the effect.Â  I should also note that Leader’s has activities for the entire family, every age group.Â  Great fall fun to be had here.

Well, there you have it – those are the 3 I’ve gottenÂ  to this year.Â  If you have the time and are looking for a good scare, I highly recommend Basement of the Dead in Aurora Illinois or Leader’s Family Farm’s Screamacres in Napoleon Ohio.Â  I wish I had more time to visit more and get some reviews.Â  Maybe some day I’ll be able to get down to Columbus Ohio to go to [Dead Acres Haunted Hoochie](http://www.deadacres.com/" \t "_blank); it looks very scary and really cool!

Anyone else think haunted houses should extend their seasons into November for those of us who are very busy in October taking kids trick or treating and to fall parties, etc??Â  I sure wish they would!!!Â  Have a GREAT Halloween!!

### Comments

**jamiahsh**I wish they would, too! Are there any still going on the actual DAY... which is Sunday! Yes... we need to check out the Haunted Hoochie. Just the name sends chills up and down my spine. Also in the mood for a GOOD and SCAAAAAARY movie!

# Soul Mates

I just love it when our pastor’s sermons speak to me, which is actually quite often as he is a powerful speaker.Â  A few weeks ago, he was speaking of the relationship between Paul and Timothy, and the discussion that followed was of kindred spirits and soul mates.

This sermon made me think of my husband – we’ve always known we were made for each other.Â  And that leads to a funny story: just a few days before we heard this sermon in church, I was at the library looking for a movie to pick out for Hubby and I to watch that night.Â  My eyes fell upon UHF, a goofy late 80s comedy starring Weird Al Yankovic.Â  IÂ  thought to myself, “He won’t want to watch that.” and I passed it up.Â  Later that night as we were picking a movie to watch, my husband says, “I feel like watching UHF, but we don’t have it.”Â  I could not stop laughing as I told him about how I thought of him in the library that day, and we had a good laugh together.Â  He had seen UHF years ago but not since and never with me (I had never seen it).Â  It’s not like it was one of his favorite movies or one he often felt like watching, and we had probably never even discussed it together.Â  Yet of all the movies just to randomly pop into our heads that day, we shared a random thought that was UHF.Â  

Love You Honey

[](http://taylhis.tangents.org/files/2010/10/heart.jpg)

### Comments

**Taylhis**Nope hadn't heard that before. Had to listen to it while I'm typing though - couldn't handle that picture staring at me! And I'm surprised to hear it was a Wmart - I usually hear country there (no complaints outta me!)  
**jamiahsh**THAT"S RIGHT! He was at the amphitheatre this past summer, I believe. Anyone remember his last parody: "You're Pitiful." It played it seemed ad nauseum at my former place of employment and the OLD store to boot. So that was MORE han a few years ago. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uD\_viEMgk5o&feature=related  
**Taylhis**We did end up watching UHF that night :) Weird Al seems to be around still. I know he was part of the Toledo Zoo's concert series - was it this year or last, I can't remember. He is also one of the many celebrities (guess you would call him a celebrity) that has written a children's book, he's been on the kid's (annoying) show Yo Gabba Gabba, and I think he has a new album due out soon... UHF was a silly kind of funny - something I could use in a movie every once and a while :)  
**jamiahsh**HAHA! That post is hilariously sweet. Who woulda thunk? What is up with the Weird one nowadays?  
**derek**Ah, Weird Al. I would probably buy one of his collections if I had a chance his parodies are so enjoyable. So did you go back to check it out? :)

# Cute Things From Kids

I get all these email forwards quoting kids and the cute things they say.Â  With 4 kids of my own (ages 10, 6, 4, and 2), I have fodder almost daily for such emails.Â  If only I could remember to write down all the cute things they say…

Here are a few that have stuck in my mind from recent months:

end of april 2010:  
5-year-old Sammie –Â  We’re in the drive-thru at the ice cream place, and we ask Sammie what she would like.Â  She says “I don’t know; I think I have gastritis.”

seperate incident:  
3-year-old Disney – “Does Santa work at the gas station”

10-13-10 – Disney (a week before her 4th birthday) holds up the snow brush that was in the garage. “Mom, why did you pack a giant toothbrush?”  
I’m still smiling about that one!

### Comments

**derek**The middle one didn't seem funny, but random. But the other ones... :lol: Giant toothbrush indeed!  
**Phyllis Beyer**What cute sayings. You are smart writing them down because I always talked about doing it but never did.  
**jamiahsh**A giant toothbrush! HEHE! Gastritis! HAHAHA!!! When I was in high school... one of the father of one of my fellow choir members really did look like Santa!