

Furry Babies Sucks!!!

We began our trip to Chicago last Saturday, and the 3-state, 4-kid, mini-van trip went pretty smoothly. At some point, we achieved the quadruple-kid-pass-out which is never anything short of a great thing!

We arrived at our hotel in Naperville, Illinois on Saturday afternoon, and we decided to take the girls swimming in the outdoor pool which was really refreshing on an 80°+ day. It's been a long time since I've been swimming outdoors, and it was nice of my mom to meet us there for a swim instead of us driving the girls to her house for their week of fun with Grandma. After the girls left with her, we wanted to meet with a friend, but we were staying in the west 'burbs rather than the north 'burbs this time. Both parties had just endured long car rides, so we settled on a halfway point – a mall in the west 'burbs. Not really knowing what to plan on doing, we ended up finding such a great parking space at the mall that we just ended up going in to bumble. And it was fun! Partly because I haven't been in a real mall for years, so it was really interesting to see the different techniques that have evolved to try and entice shoppers to buy and visit... But I also enjoyed my mall visit because of the company we were keeping; it was nice to chat and catch up. And as you might have read in [derek's blog](#), we happened upon a glow-in-the-dark indoor mini-golf course that was less than a week old! It had 56 holes, but I don't think I could ever play that much mini-golf at once, so we stuck with the traditional 18 holes. I guess I should add in that I won the round and also had a lucky day with two holes-in-1 ☐ And I must comment on how good the baby was – he just sat in the shopping cart and watched the glow-in-the-dark golf balls throughout ALL 18 holes! There were these small contraptions sprinkled throughout the golfing space – you put your ball in, and it rolls around and comes out glowing brighter – those

were fun! And it was fun to see the mall again. It wasn't the same mall I hung out in all the time as a teenager, but I had still been to this one a lot growing up, and it was neat to see how much (or how little, compared to most things in the area) it had changed over the past decade and a half. That reminds me, speaking of change... when we arrived in Chicago, err Naperville on Saturday, we took the Naperville Road exit off of I-88 which is an area with which I am used to be very familiar. Back in the day (did I really just say that?), I would commute through that same intersection to work and back every single day, yuck... but apparently they've completely redone the entire area in the past few years because the intersection was unrecognizable. I mean, they added new roads and everything – it was the most bizarre feeling, it felt like I had gotten dropped into the middle of the twilight zone. We exited I-88, and all of a sudden, we were on Freedom Drive. Where now? Freedom Drive? I had literally never heard of Freedom Drive, they created the street from scratch and plopped it down into this area where I worked and played so many years ago. As much as I thought I knew where we were going, Jill the GPS was actually quite helpful during this twilight zone adventure, and she got us to our hotel, even though I knew where it was – WAS being the key word here. But back to the mall... we bumbled around some more after getting some pretzel dogs (yummier in Chicagoland, of course, what isn't?) at the food court. I heard some lady talking on a cell phone about the “puppy store”, and sure enough, we happened across it. I'm an animal lover, so I love to see and visit with animals, but I think a side effect of my tenderness toward animals is my loathing of pet stores. And the pet store in the Stratford Mall in Bloomingdale Illinois is just about the worst I've ever seen. It's no secret that many of the major chains of pet stores get their “wares” from puppy mills; ie dog breeding facilities with cramped quarters, little food, and animal abuse. The huge chain famous for bad press, Petland, just closed a bunch of stores, which I believe is a good thing for dogs and dog lovers everywhere. I

strongly believe that people should adopt animals, namely dogs and cats, from humane societies and other animal shelters. There are so many homeless pets, so how can it be justified to buy a puppy who is bred for selling when there are so many others bred accidentally who are also looking for love? I strongly support spay/neuter programs as well, fyi...

So anyway, the new pet store at the mall is called "Furry Babies". Their website calls it an "upscale puppy boutique, not just a pet store", but I call it disgusting. The puppies were in cribs, for goodness sakes, and along the walls they had a large variety of dog clothes for sale, no doubt at prices that I wouldn't pay to clothe my human kids. We inquired about one particular puppy, who was cute but looked to be slightly cross-eyed. We found out that she was a "designer dog" – they pretend like they meant to mix two breeds together (in this case a golden retriever and a poodle, thus giving us a "Goldendoodle"), but where I come from (the reality land of logic), we would call it a "mutt". And mutts tend to be better with kids, live longer, and are cheaper than purebreds – at least they were until a few years ago. Now mutts are these "designer dogs" and they cost **a lot** of money – in the case of the furry baby Goldendoodle – a cool \$1600. I cannot denounce this place loud enough! I also don't want to spend a ton of time going off about animal welfare nor lose readers by getting political. This just happens to be an issue I feel strongly about, and I plead that if you are in the market for a family pet, you consider adopting your animal companion from a shelter and also realize that you are entering into a life-long commitment! That being said, Furry Babies sucks, but the good news is that I can't see them lasting that long. Oh yeah, I forgot to mention that the employees wear mock scrubs, in order to imitate delivery room nurses, I guess, which to me is even more sickening. But there I go again... get me going and I will never stop... so if you want to read more, [here is a link](#) to the forums about Furry Babies on the bestfriends.org website, which is an awesome organization – the country's largest animal sanctuary

for homeless pets of all kinds! I hope to visit them someday in Utah, but until I get over my fear of flying I will just persue their website and I suggest you do the same...

Now that I'm actually leaving the homeless pet tangent behind... we left the mall at a decent hour since we wanted a good night's sleep to rest up for the Cubs / Sox game the following day – the entire reason we were in town to begin with. Poor us – that did not happen! We got back to the hotel (which was pretty crappy for a Naperville Hampton Inn – see my [Small Separate Side Post](#)), and the baby decided he was going to go nuts and stay up until midnight. Then the little booger awoke at 6 the next morning, and he crawled around and caused mischief like dipping my drying bathing suit into the toilet, thanks for THAT. My husband was nice enough to take him in the bath for awhile and do other various quiet activities with him in the small room so that I could get a little more sleep, and then we all went down to breakfast – my poor husband was a zombie. I decided for us (he could not make decisions at that point) that he would go back up to the room while I drove our son over to my mom's for the day while we went to the Cubs game. We did that, and it took me about an hour to get all the way out to Aurora (not much traffic on a Sunday morning, but S000 many stoplights!) and back. I thought we had plenty of time, but if you read my "A Patch of Blue In A Sea Of Black And White" post, you'll see why I should have stepped on the gas a little...