

He Is A-Ok!

Our little guy had his 15-month check-up with the pediatric nurse the other day. Yes, this is the same nurse who can be a harsh critic when it comes to things like sippie cups, bottles, and anything else she perceives as leading to bad oral habits in adults; namely smoking and drinking alcohol.

She gave our little Beeber a few age-appropriate skill tests, such as stacking blocks (he stacked them ALL, which is very impressive, even to the experienced nurse – might I consider sharing my Lego collection with a certain little builder in a few years?), following a flashlight with his eyes, and throwing and catching a tennis ball. He did really well with all of them, but I felt badly for the little guy because he did everything that was asked of him, but after he performed the test with each toy, he seemed to assume that he would then have his turn to play with them. But nurse Judy swiped them all away before he knew what was happening. It all became too much for him when she started poking him with that nasty wood-tasting gag stick – who can blame him for crying; I could never stand that thing either! And, in a true kid's toast to irony, he began to cry the moment the nurse asked, "Is he always this mild-mannered?" Then, "WAHHHH!". Hilarious!

Our 15-month old (and first boy of the family) is 31 inches long and 22 lbs. 11 oz. He is in the 40th percentile for height and 25th percentile for weight. This means that if you take a sample of 100 15-month-olds, my son is shorter than 60 of them and lighter than 75. He is the first one of my kids to be under the 50% mark. Two of the girls were around the 90-100% mark, so Beeber is a little guy! That's cool; you can be good at baseball if you're on the smaller side ☐

Overall, he checked out very well and impressed the nurse with his development. Although he gets into so much trouble at home with his constant climbing and desire to spill liquids

and throw things, it's still a blast to witness this stage of toddler-dom. Case in point:

You Haven't Heard Of Bulbo, The Wicked Witch Of The West's Dimwitted Son?

I found a big behind-the-scenes book about my favorite movie, The Wizard of Oz. I remember getting this book as a kid, but I read the juicy parts (many of the rumors about wild Munchkin behavior are true), skipped the rest of the book, and forgot about it. So I came across it as an adult; it's one of the few things that somehow clang to us through more than a few moves throughout the midwest. I've been enjoying reading many Oz secrets lately, and I'm currently on the chapter about the script. In the '30's, MGM (the movie studio that made the Wizard of Oz) had salaried writers, so they would assign a few to write a "treatment" of a project, or a sample of script. Several of the writers had some interesting ideas for L. Frank Baum's Oz project; including bizarre characters. For example, one writer created a son for the Wicked Witch of the West – a dimwitted guy named Bulbo. She wanted to attack Oz with "ten thousand armies, 2 thousand wolves, and 200 flying monkeys" to defeat the Wizard and make Bulbo the king of Oz. In another treatment, the cowardly lion was actually a man who was to marry a girl named Sylvia. The witch wanted Sylvia for her son Bulbo's bride, so she turned the man into the cowardly lion. A couple of the writers who were working as a team decided that there shouldn't be any death in their family-friendly picture, so they decided that when the house falls on the Wicked Witch of the East, she should turn into something less threatening; like a parrot or a white tabby cat. That would have been silly!

While all of these possible Oz variations are fun to read

about, I'm really glad that the Wizard of Oz ended up as the movie its legions of fans are familiar with – we love it just the way it is!

Finally, The Wedding!

I'm talking about the nuptials of Jim Halpert and Pam Beesly, of course! If you're not a fan of The Office, you can stop reading now. But for everyone else, how about that special 1-hour episode the other night? Hubby and I thought it to be amazing – I laughed, I cried, I laughed *until* I cried... Thursday's episode was heartwarming, hilarious, and humongous with its 1-hour run time!

Now I will be the first to admit that some of the plot lines contained within this episode were so outrageous that they were almost silly. But given this show's talented cast and production staff, things that would normally be ridiculous on other shows instead made for some great tv in this case. I won't waste your time with a recap; you can get that [here](#) from the quick-witted tvguide.com writers. But I absolutely **loved** this episode, so after much deliberation, here are my top 3 moments from The Office episode "Niagara":

3. Pam's 80-year-old "Nema" saying, "I had to sit there while it happened to me." – Pam's grandmother is referring to the previous night in her hotel room when she couldn't figure out how to get the tv channel switched from the movie "Bruno". Having been exposed to the same trash, her line echoed my sentiments exactly!

2. This exchange was the one that had me crying laughing:

Pam Beesly: Hey hey! Where are you? Can you take Andy to the hospital?

Jim Halpert: What?
Pam Beesly: He tore his scrotum dancing.
Jim Halpert: What?
Pam Beesly: He is in my room icing his balls.
Jim Halpert: What?
Oh, my – TOO funny, enough said!

And the best moment of the episode was... (drum roll please)...

1. The wedding dance! The attendants and attendees of Pam and Jim's wedding danced down the aisle, imitating a popular youtube video. I struggled deciding which version to post on my blog, the real one or The Office's version, and I went with the original. Not only is it entertaining to watch this happen at a real wedding (can't believe they allowed this in a church, but if you look, the officiant is standing on the altar, grooving along!), but I decided not to post the clip from The Office because I think much of its entertainment value comes from being a fan of the show. If you are a fan of the show, then you've already seen the musical montage in this episode set to Chris Brown's Forever (shows what I know – after his arrest, I just assumed that Brown was another trouble-plagued hip-hop star, but this song actually has me tapping my toes. Am I a Chris Brown fan?). Non-Office fans wouldn't appreciate all of the significance of the events that take place during this scene of the show, so I figured, why show it? I LOVED this part; it's the part that made me cry, albeit with happy tears, of course. Every moment between Pam and Jim for the past 5 seasons has been leading up to this moment, and despite all of the anticipation by fans and viewers, it did not disappoint! I won't say much more – don't want to spoil it for fans who haven't yet watched, but let's just say (assume Comic Book Guy's voice from the Simpsons): "Best. Episode. EVER." One I will be watching over and over, laughing and crying each time.

The original version of the Forever wedding dance (this couple also made a parody of their own wedding video with them doing

the Forever dance in court during their (fake) divorce proceedings if you want to check it out):

Why I Loathe Fundraisers – 2009 Edition

If you're wondering why my blog post title sounds familiar, look no further than this – a blog post I wrote about the same subject almost 13 months ago, the original [Why I Loathe Fundraisers](#). Consider this part two of an ongoing, once-a-year series, I guess. And the inspiration for part two? Again, my oldest daughter brought home a school fund-raising catalog, except there were two differences this year: 1) they seem to have waited longer than the second day of school to hand it out. I don't recall exactly when it was given out, but I think it was a little later this year, so that's good. 2) I did not go out and ask everyone I know about ordering stuff this year. I sent an email to the closest family asking if they wanted to order, and then our family decided to order a little something this year – I do want to be supportive of the school.

Let me back up a little bit. If you've read part I of my Loathing Series, then you know that I treated myself to a subscription of US News and World Report, which I can now say turned out to be a bust. First, the magazine comes at odd times (and it's STILL coming!) – it came weekly for a few weeks, then I forgot about it cuz it didn't come for a month or more, then it started coming every *few* weeks... I gave up trying to figure out the pattern. Especially because after 3 or 4 issues, I realized that this is not the magazine for me. I thought it would be about current events, but it turns out that US News and World Report chooses the most boring news topics to write about – especially politics. I am a current events / news junkie, but when it comes to politics, it's difficult for even breaking news to catch my attention.

During the whole Bush-Gore undecided election story of 2000, throughout the counting of votes, the analyzing of dangling chads, missing chads, dimpled chads, and the entire chad movement, my husband was glued to the news while I could barely force myself to take notice. So anyway, after realizing that I was not a fan of this magazine (anyone want me to save you some US News and World Reports? I won't think you're boring, honest!), I realized that I had gotten a magazine appetite whet. So, for my daughter's fundraiser this year, we decided to try People magazine for me. I've always enjoyed People; I used to buy it before long flights (back when I used to fly), and sometimes friends and relatives give me their old issues to peruse. So the other day, we received our fundraiser order in the mail. Well, this was a nice change of pace – apparently the days are over of spending an hour on a Saturday in a crowded gym picking up fundraiser orders – thanks to the internet. Instead of an issue of People for me, there was a voucher in the box. I just had to choose my magazine (thought I already chose?) and send it in. Tangent for a minor complaint – if you don't have internet, you'd have to pay an additional \$.44 to send in your voucher without the company even warning you first! Would it really be that difficult to make it postage paid, I mean, come on! And now for the major complaint – People magazine was not on the list of choices! Sure, I could have a subscription to People En Español (my Spanish isn't THAT good!) or People Style Watch, but I am so not into style AT ALL! I could not care less. I barely care about the celebrity gossip in People; I 'm mostly entertained by their inspirational stories of every day heroes or just quirky things (they once had an article about a lady who turned an airplane into a house for her to live in! Now that is some cool news and worthy of my leisure time), so what the heck would I want with People Stlye Watch? Yech. I feel like they tried to scam me. I wish I had kept that catalog! Well, I emailed the company, so hopefully they'll fix the problem. If not, stay tuned for Why I Loathe Fundraisers – Part 3!

New TV!

Last night, my husband and I decided to visit an old friend we haven't seen in some time – The Redbox. You all know the Redbox – the dvd rental machine that sits like a swollen ATM at many Walmarts, Meijers, Walgreens and the like. Dvd rental at the Redbox is \$1 per night, and one of the perks of the Redbox is lack of selection. Yes, I said **lack** of selection. In this day and age of rushing from here to there, who has time to actually make an extra stop to go into a video store and browse hundreds of selections? We really enjoyed our Redbox summer, renting a movie almost every night and exhausting pretty much the entire Redbox collection. Now the kids have been in school for a few months already, and time has gone by without us having time to think about our long-lost Redbox bud. So anyway, last night, with the cold wind howling outside, we thought it to be the perfect night to stay up a little too late with a random Redbox horror movie. It was [Seventh Moon](#), and it seemed to actually be pretty scary, except that it is a 'dark and shaky' type horror movie – the camera moves around a lot, and the entire movie takes place in the dark. We turned off our lights in the house, but we still couldn't really see. Remembering what a repairman had told him once, my husband suggested we take the front panel off the tv and dust a little mirror inside – supposedly we would get a brighter picture. Thinking it sounded easy (?), I agreed and we began to unscrew our tv. We get the panel loosened and discover that there isn't any dust on the screen! And, you'd be surprised at how much empty space there is in a big tv! But anyway, we started to put it back together when CRACK! Uh, oh. Here's a hint – if you ever decide to tackle a home improvement project on the suggestion of someone else, no matter how small the project, always

remember *who* told you to do *what* so that person can be held accountable!

So we are trying to put the tv back together, and we were thinking that at this point, we would just like to go back to our movie, however dark it might be, we just want to be able to WATCH the movie on a working tv. But then my husband sees the small mirror at the bottom that is FULL of dust! I rigged a paper towel rod with a dust cloth, and reached in there and dusted off that little mirror. We tried again to put the tv back together, encouraged and excited by the fact that we might have actually been able to fix it. We put the tv back together, but we had cracked something, so it's not really properly lined up and is now missing a few screws, oopsie. BUT... the picture is SO much brighter! Not only were we able to see the rest of the movie (which was a nice 'n suspenseful creature feature), but now we can actually watch tv during the day! Oh, if only we had discovered our new tv during those bright summer days months ago when the Chicago Cubs were still invited to play baseball...

Geez, You Can't Even Put Your Kid In A Box For A Ride On Top Of The Car Anymore

Often I write about laws and regulations that are intended to help parents decide what is right for their child because sometimes these laws overstep boundaries. There was a story a while ago about a woman who was arrested for leaving her sleeping toddler in the car while she walked with her other daughter to donate change to a Salvation Army bell-ringer less

than 50 feet away. I, like many others, couldn't help but wonder if perhaps the police overstepped their boundaries in that case – it was probably traumatic for all those kids to have to watch their mother getting taken away by the police in handcuffs. I wish that parents nowadays could just be trusted to do what is best for their children – but then there are people like this woman from Alabama:

ALBERTVILLE, Ala. (AP) – An Alabama woman has been charged with endangering the welfare of a child after police say she let her daughter ride in a cardboard box on top of their van. Albertville Police spokesman Sgt. Jamie Smith said the 37-year-old woman was arrested Sunday after police received a call about a minivan on a state highway with a child riding on top.

Smith said the woman told police the box was too big to go inside the van, and that her daughter was inside the box to hold it down.

Smith said the mother told officers it was safe because she had the box secured to the van with a clothes hanger.

The 13-year-old daughter wasn't harmed and was turned over to a relative. A jail worker said the mother was out on bond Monday.

Thank goodness the child was not physically hurt.

Ready, Set, Relax!

A few years ago (3, I think?) an organization in our county enacted a yearly event called "Ready, Set, Relax!". Every year, on the first Monday of October, families in the county

are encouraged to take off and set aside everything outside of family: no work, no meetings, no private lessons, no practices, rehearsals, games, homework, tv, nor internet. Every local entity takes part; ie, the teachers don't assign homework and various civic groups (the Girl Scouts, the local city councils, etc.) reschedule their meetings for this day. The idea is that for at least one day, families can enjoy each others company. I think it's a great thing, and even though I feel that our family is blessed with much more "together" time than most, we enthusiastically participate in "Ready, Set, Relax!" each year. This year, we made sure to have a sit-down family dinner together (which can be surprisingly difficult to accomplish when you have 4 kids of different ages!), then we took a long walk together. When we got home, the two eldest planned a carnival for us parents and their youngest siblings which included a puppet show, dancing, playing games, and story time. It was so much fun! Even though we are blessed enough to be able to spend a lot of time together as a family, "Ready, Set, Relax!" gives us just another excuse to enjoy each other. It's definitely something we will do year after year, and something I hope might catch on for the rest of the country!

He's Walking!!

My son will be 15 months old on October 11, which makes him due for his next check-up with the doctor. I made the appointment today and found out that all 15-month appointments are made with our pediatric nurse rather than our regular pediatrician, whom we really like. We like the nurse also, but some of her ideas about health care are a bit extreme for our tastes. For example, she thinks sippy (sippie?) cups are just about the worst things ever invented. Her opinion is

that a child should be weaned off the bottle around 1 year of age and that he or she should be given a regular cup with just a little bit of water in it. No juice, nothing but water and milk with meals. Ok, that's fine, but once the baby becomes a toddler, the nurse teaches that they should only be given a glass of water at the sink, several times a day. No bottle, and certainly no sippie cup ought to be carried around the house or elsewhere. I personally don't have a problem with my kids drinking (especially if it's water!) away from the sink or out of a sippie cup – I don't really have the time to be cleaning up even more spills around here, which is what would happen if my kids didn't graduate to sippie cups from bottles. I have three kids who have weaned off of sippie cups just fine. So anyway, the nurse is nice but can be kind of a stickler about certain things...

And as for the newest milestone – he's walking! He's been walking for awhile now, but before Sunday, it was only a few steps at a time. Then he started walking with little push-toys, and he was really good with those; he would make push-toys out of things that weren't even supposed to be push-toys, like my daughters' step-stools, strollers, etc. He's gotten so good at maneuvering the push-toys that he can practically run while pushing, and by now, he's also great at steering them. We took a walk today, and instead of putting him in his stroller, I let him push his push-toy down the sidewalk, and he was off and running! He got so excited that he took a hand off the push-toy, raised it in a wave, and yelled "Hi!" to the kids playing in the schoolyard we passed. But aside from all of these awesome first steps (pun intended), he really officially started walking yesterday. Yesterday was the first day he began to take lengthy jaunts across the house on two legs without the assistance of a push-toy. He was on a roll; he'd walk over, pick something up, and then straighten up to throw or pass the object rather than flopping down onto his knees and going into a crawl as he would have done weeks ago. So, my son is taking baby steps to learn to walk, haha.

But we think that yesterday was a big breakthrough, err, a big **step** for his learning to walk, and I would bet that by this time next month, he will be walking and running around just like a full-fledged toddler... wonder what the nurse will say about that when she has to chase him all over the room?

80s Toys

All that talk of California Raisins on my blog the other day got me to thinking about many of the toys I used to play with when I was a kid growing up in the 80's. I was a big fan of Fisher Price's Little People back then, and I generally liked playsets of any kind. The internet is a cool thing for many reasons, and it's fun for stirring up nostalgia now and then. I remembered this set of wind-up skill games they had in the 80s that were really small. After a few minutes of google searching, I found them: [T.H.I.N.G.S. by Milton Bradley](#) (Totally Hilarious Incredibly Neat Games of Skill – who remembers these?) . It's funny how most of these little toys look like just your everyday junk from China when you're an adult, but when I was a kid, I had the Sir-Ring-a-Lot game and wanted all the rest of the T.H.I.N.G.S.

I was also really into [Nerfuls](#) after sending away for one (visor guy) in exchange for cereal UPCs. These were little 3-piece figures – a body, a ball for the head, and a hat or hair. Some came with vehicles and the coolest parts were the stackable Nerfuls houses.

Legos were also really cool (still are!), and I'm thinking of getting my 5-year-old some of her own sets for Christmas this year.

Added link to [Weebles Mickey Mouse Clubhouse.](#)

Science Probably Could Have Given Us Something More Useful Than This

... [giant puppet, but I found it](#) pretty cool when I came across it the other day. Check out the frenzied movements of the puppeteers in red – there are lines of men, and they take turns running and jumping to pull the ropes to move the huge puppet.