

YEEOWWW!!!

Darn it, I am sick of this! Some time last week, I came down with a nasty canker sore. I don't remember what day it was, but I remember that by Friday, I was already sick of it. We took the kids to the county fair and the demolition derby on Friday, which was great fun, but I was in a lot of pain and couldn't enjoy the fair food in the slightest. In fact, the location and intensity of the pain has kept me from enjoying many of my favorite activities since last week – talking, singing, eating, drinking, even smiling... THIS SUCKS! I've never had a canker sore this painful! I feel like that big grumpy bear with a toothache from some old cartoon. It's really hard to think about anything else, and since I can't really do anything in daily life without aggravating it and causing more pain, I think I've been kind of crabby. I've been looking up remedies incessantly on the internet (and no, I didn't find any cases of fatal canker sores, which is why I vowed to stop looking up medical stuff on the internet after we scared ourselves silly about my husband's stomachache), and none of the remedies I've tried help. Since I can't really eat anything, I've been living on water and Tylenol for the past week! The Tylenol barely works, so I finally went to Walmart yesterday and got myself some Benzocaine stuff to put on it. It works wonderfully; my entire mouth goes numb, and there is a substantial amount of drooling and slurring of words, but no pain. The only problem is that it only lasts for about 25 minutes. But for those 25 minutes, I am so high on my own endorphins from finally not feeling intense pain that it's wonderful. But then the pain returns, and it's almost worse than before I took the medicine because I actually got to experience life pain-free, even for just a few minutes. I think I'm going to have my husband hide the benzocaine from me before I become addicted – it's really hard to stop putting it on there when I've had constant pain for a week! But I read that if you use too much benzocaine, you

could develop a serious condition called Methemoglobinemia, among other things, so I'm really trying to limit that. I've read a lot of things about canker sores, but like I said, nothing has really helped. Experts are not even entirely sure what causes the darn things, but stress is the top suspect. That makes sense; I've had a ton of stress lately between family stuff (Sammie is back in a phase among other things) and just being so busy all the time, and I don't always handle stress in the best way. Guess I need to find better ways to deal with stress than to internalize it, but I can't deal with learning that right now – everything is hard to do with all this **pain!!!**

I can't help but think what a great diet this is though – it hurts to eat anything, and I'm really surprised certain Hollywood types haven't paid someone to discover how to give them canker sores just so they can't eat. People are crazy that way; I used to work at a frozen yogurt shop in an upscale suburb of Chicago, and these rich housewives would come in with their jaws wired shut wondering what kind of fat-free yogurt they could still get into their mouths. Not that any of them were terribly overweight to begin with... But anyway, I hate this! I guess there's not much more to write about it, but I have to say that it feels good to be able to “talk” without the pain increasing... Time to take more meds! YEOWWW!!! ☐

And I Thought The Sky Safari Was Cool!

The [Sky Safari](#) is an aerial ride at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo in Fort Wayne, Indiana. It's like a chair-lift at a ski

resort, but lose the snow and add views of zoo animals; including zebra, ostrich, wildebeest and lions. I rode on it earlier this summer with my daughters, mom and uncle, and we all loved it. Speaking of travel, I've heard from a bunch of my Ohio friends about how beautiful the Hocking Hills area is in the southeastern part of the state. We probably won't have a chance to visit this year, even though I've heard that it's just gorgeous in the fall. It might have to go on the "to-do" list though after I found out they have [this](#); a 2-hour zip line tour through the treetops! Check it out – the first part of the video is the training and orientation, they really get going around the two-minute mark if you want to fast forward. But it looks like something I think I would try!

I'm A Winner!

Apparently, my email address was chosen to “win” a prize: US citizenship! This is no joke – a scam, surely, but the following is a copy of the actual text contained within this email. It’s one of the most ridiculous things I have ever read, although I have to admit that the “disclaimer” text at the bottom (in italics) seems very authentic – despite the numerous spelling and grammatical errors in the email! So Happy Constitution Day – according to my 4th grader, anyway – celebrate by reading this B.S. email and laughing out loud (and praying for the poor people who are actually victimized by this garbage).

CONGRATULATIONS YOU ARE A WINNER!!! U.S. PROGRAM OF GREEN CARD LOTTERY-YEAR 2009/2010

We are here to inform you that you are among people selected that have won US Green Card lottery. Your email was selected so you are now citizen of United State of American. USA president has offerd you free ticket to United state of American. Live, Work and study in United States.

Kindly contact your claim agent Dan Gold usafis_organization_green_card@live.com on more details of how to get your traveling documents and free air ticket to USA.

Congratulations once again.

Sincerely yours,

Lisa David

***USA Department Of State From the U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs Visa Services:***

The congressionally mandated Diversity Immigrant Visa Program is administered on an annual basis by the Department of State and conducted under the terms of Section 203(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Section 131 of the Immigration Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-649) amended INA 203 to provide for a new class of immigrants known as “diversity immigrants” (DV immigrants). Alien petitioners for the Diversity Visa Program will no longer be permitted to submit a petition by mail. Instead, the Department will require that all petitions be submitted to it in an electronic format, using an Internet website dedicated specifically to the submission and receipt of Diversity.

Disney Vs. Universal – Round 1,642

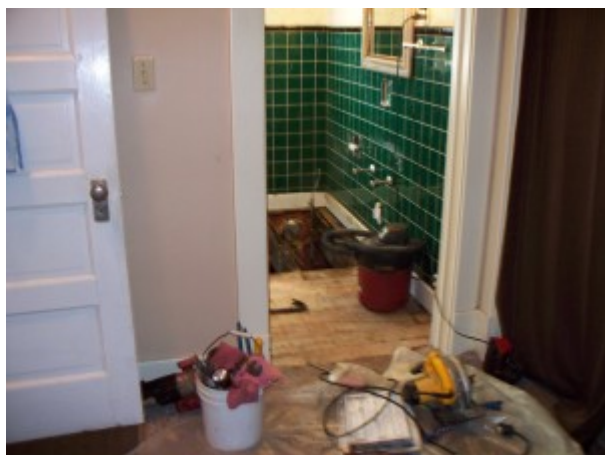
As a frequent visitor to Orlando Florida, the United States theme park capital, the following news stories caught my eye. Disney World and Universal Studios have been competing in an epic battle for tourists for a few decades now, and as a result, us tourists are the real winners! Check out the two new additions to each park!

[Universal Studios is adding a Harry Potter-themed world!](#) I’m not even a fan of the series and the pictures and descriptions of this place excited me! I might have to read a Harry Potter book or see some of the movies before I check it out! This answers the question I posed in a previous blog post – What will happen to Marvel Superhero Island when Disney buys Marvel? Answer: who cares? Universal will have the Wizarding World of Harry Potter!

Not to be outdone, Disney has released that they are doubling the size of their current Fantasyland area, adding a Little Mermaid attraction, among other things. If the rumors on [this blog](#) are true, it seems to me like Universal is going to win this time. More meet-and-greet space at Disney? Yawn! Bring on the thrill rides! But if I know the folks at Disney, they have more than doubling Dumbo and adding more Disney princess meet-and-greet up their sleeves and just haven't leaked that part of the expansion to the public yet... So stay tuned!

One Of Those Days...

I knew it was going to be a busy day today before I even woke up, and I was dreading having to get up early. I am very lucky (thanks to my wonderful husband) that I don't have to get up early every day; I'm not a morning person. But today there was an early morning dentist appointment and someone also had to be here for the plumbers (more on that later). So I had begrudgingly set my alarm, but someone nearby decided to mow their lawn early this morning, there were dogs barking (turned out to be ours, of course, doh!), and a weird smell in the house (like someone had just gotten a perm, yuck). So I got out of bed a half hour before my alarm even got a chance to make a peep. And when I went downstairs, I found this where our downstairs (and most popular) bathroom used to be:



Well, ok, so it wasn't a complete shock. We had scheduled the plumbers to come today to fix [our bathroom floor bulge](#), but I wasn't expecting the bathroom to be **missing**! And obviously the plumbers' estimate of the work is going to be way low (and the estimate was frightening enough in the first place!) since much more of the floor was affected than they originally thought even before they tore it to pieces. Tomorrow we find out if the plumbing itself is "worse than they thought" as well, which would add yet another day to this project and who knows how much money, yikes! Plus we still have to get a new bathroom floor; to be installed by a different contractor all together – how much is **that** going to cost? Did I mention I've had a headache all day? The plumbers' drill isn't helping; it seems like they're drilling my head open... All this after we put a bunch of money into house stuff earlier this year when my husband sold his software which we considered a blessing at the time (more on that later). We got rid of our humongous, room-sized furnace and put central air in the house, and then ironically it was the coolest summer on record and we barely needed the new air conditioning system. We have the strangest luck sometimes. I wouldn't go so far as to call it bad luck; after all, the irony is born from good things we're receiving, so how can that be bad? I do get a new bathroom floor out of this, at some point anyway – we might have to try the ~~primitive~~ classic wooden look for awhile... And while I'm venting about the frustrations of today, let me just go off for a bit about how darn

inconvenient it is to get things done while sharing a house with a few (extremely talkative) plumbers who are tearing apart the bathroom! Not only do I have to keep the kids away from there, but I have to bring the whole gang (of kids – not the plumbers of course!) with me upstairs every time I need something from the bathroom!

And back to the stress of my husband's work right now... Back in the spring when his business deal went through, we were ecstatic that we would be able to pay some bills, fix some things on the house, and most importantly, spend the summer as a family without having to worry about work as much. It was a great summer, but now we have come to find out that a major company wants the software that was sold and is willing to pay much much more than for what it was sold just months ago. In short, if we had waited to sell the business for just a few months, we would be... let's just say 'in a very good financial place' right now. I'm learning a bit about the lessons of patience and greed (ain't human nature grand? Just months ago we were perfectly happy with the business deal the way it was, and now I think about regretting selling because it's worth so much more money), but it's frustrating; especially on a day in front of little sleep and after the destruction of my beautiful bathroom. Does this make sense? I feel like I'm rambling a little bit... I stopped in the coffee house drive-thru on the way back from the dentist appointment, and it's been a while since I've had a White Lightning, so I kind of feel like I'm all over the place...

But anyway, I should get the kids out of here and away from the busy plumbers (imagine that, a gaping hole in the bathroom floor attracts kids like flies to... well, I won't go there. At least the drive this morning to the dentist through the NW Ohio countryside at the beginning of the beautiful fall season relaxed me a little. If only there was time for a nap before I go and try to lead a group of 13-year-old spastic seventh-graders...

Many MOPs Are SAHMs

I'm not going to pretend to know the latest texting lingo. I know ASAP and TTYL and even oic, but that's about the extent of my in-house texting-acronym dictionary. Not that I care too much – it doesn't even make me feel old or out of it because texting itself is amusing to me; not when texters are behind the wheel though, that's just scary. I saw that graphic UK public service video with the girl who was texting and crashed her car. Awful stuff, I DO NOT recommend you watch that; it was incredibly disturbing. But anyway, I **do** know the acronyms I need to know for my chosen profession as a SAHM = **Stay At Home Mom**. And last night, I officially became a member of MOPs = **Mothers Of Preschoolers**.

It was really different and very nice – after dinner I left the house **alone** for a change. Poor hubby got left with all 4 kids and a messy room to get cleaned. I didn't feel guilty; I knew he could handle anything without getting so frustrated he would melt down for the rest of the night, which is more than I could promise for myself. And after all, I had been waiting for my turn to go out ever since Hubby was in his last community theater production and I got stuck home with kids during his rehearsals. But that was a year ago, and in the meantime, there was just never anyplace to go that would have not been more fun with my entire family.

So last night, Hubby fared well; the room was cleaned (sort-of), but the most important thing is that no one was stressed out, and 2/4 kids were actually *asleep* when I got home – BONUS! As for the MOPs meeting itself; it was different than I was expecting...

I was expecting a few women from our church who I know have

young children, but when I showed up, the parking lot was full. I went in, feeling a bit intimidated since everyone else seemed to be with a friend or two. And there were about 60 women, dwarfing my prediction of 5 or 10. Not only that, but there was a sign-up table, where I learned that you were supposed to sign up ahead of time in order to be assigned to a group. Oops – guess who hadn't signed up? So I crashed a group, but I knew at least a few of the other women from church, so it wasn't really like crashing. Our poor friend Jeremy, the teaching pastor at the church, was there to make a church-related announcement, and I've never seen a man look so out of place. He stood before 60 women in a room *oozing* with femininity – an endless sea of scrap-booking supplies, flowers, chocolate, and scented candles... And he looked like there was *anywhere* in the world he'd rather be; it was hilarious. He gave his spiel, left in a quite a hurry, and then we snacked, chatted about our families, and made our scrap-booked our place mats which will be at our tables every month during our meetings. Overall, a very fun evening, and we even got to take home some cute little fall trinkets. I found out that childcare is available, so next month Hubby can have a break too while the kids play. I learned that many MOPs are also SAHMs like me, so we have kind of a girly little community. And that reminds me; I was really amused when the coordinator asked, "Does anyone have any special announcements? We have gifts for any of our members who are expecting or adopting." I guess in a room full of dozens of women in their child-bearing years who already have young children, asking if any are expecting doesn't really come from left field. So of course, not one, not two, but *three* women came up to share their blessed news. Then we also heard from two who had recently had babies and brought them to the meeting – talk about a dose of baby-itis! But for now it's fun to talk about our kids and our lives – I'm the only one in our group with more than 3 children; which surprises me – I thought large families were making a comeback? But for any other moms out there who want to join a fun Christian-based

peer group, check out [this link](#) for a MOPs group near you!

Lincoln Legends

Just in time for the Halloween season, as I mull over costume choices for myself and my two youngest, haunted places have come up in conversations recently. These recent topics have reminded me of a few such places in Lincoln Nebraska...

Back when we were a little family with only one toddler, we lived in Lincoln for a year. It was a great city – large yet rurally isolated and without the sprawling suburbs we had grown accustomed to after growing up in the Chicago area. After a few months in Lincoln, I was charmed by the city and began reading up on local history, which is where I found out about the interesting stories of Charles Starkweather and Robber's Cave.



*(Caril Fugate and Charles Starkweather
before the murder spree)*

Charles Starkweather was a young, lower-class, James Dean wannabe who dated a younger girl named Caril Fugate in Lincoln in the 1950's. There is some debate about Caril's role in the horrific events for which the pair is known, but Starkweather

was convicted of the murders of 11 people in Nebraska and Wyoming during a 1958 eight-day-long murder spree. Starkweather was executed by the state in 1959 at the age of 20, while Caril served some time and is now presumably living a quiet life. I think it would be interesting to see an interview with the now 68-year-old Fugate, but like everyone else involved in the horror, she deserves her privacy and probably guards it. So anyway, Starkweather is buried in a large, beautiful cemetery nestled amongst rolling hills in the heart of Lincoln called Wyuka Cemetery, and has the unusual (however macabre) distinction of being buried in the same cemetery as some of his victims. Caril's dilapidated house (where the first murders, those of her family, took place) no longer stands. But Starkweather had a huge grudge against upper class folks, and the beautiful house of the Ward family, a wealthy couple who along with their maid fell victim to Starkweather's massacre, still stands. Also interesting are the many works of pop culture inspired by the rampage; movies such as *Natural Born Killers* (though this one is very loosely based), *Badlands*, and books: characters in both Stephen King's *The Stand* as well as *Outside Valentine* are based upon Starkweather, Caril and some of the victims. Interestingly, the author of *Outside Valentine*, Liza Ward, is the granddaughter of the wealthy couple that were victims of Starkweather in 1958.

So anyway, if you're into that kind of thing, plenty to see in Lincoln based upon the Starkweather case alone, but that was actually a super-huge tangent that took me away from the original reason I wanted to write this post! Guess I'll save Robber's Cave for my next post...

FOOTBALL! Time To Blog, Except...

... I've gotten engrossed in another video game. And because I'm a mom of 4 and don't have a lot of extra time, my blogging frequency is going to suffer while I divide my spare time with mindless gaming, oh well. With the start of the NFL season and back-to-school-time, I will have more time at home for my favorite quiet activities like reading the newspaper, blogging, and playing video games while my husband watches football (Go Bears!). I thought I'd be rolling out blog posts, but then my husband put an N64 emulator on my computer, distracting me with what is quite possibly the best video game ever made – in my opinion, anyway: The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. It's an adventure game, which is my favorite genre of video game, but I'm very picky – there has to be large 3D worlds to explore, as well as a variety of puzzles peppered with the perfect combination of inventory, fighting, and weaponry. This version of Zelda has everything, and this is actually my second time playing it through. Currently I'm in the second dungeon (Dodongo's Cavern) which is probably my least favorite in the entire game. Once I get past it though, I have lots of fun ahead – there are plenty of areas left to explore; including an underwater colony and the inside of a volcano. This game also skips ahead 7 years, and you get to see what Hyrule (the country you are defending) looks like in the future when your character has grown into a young man from a little boy. Here is a screen shot:



...which makes me want to get back to it so I can kick some Dodongo a**!

GO BEARS!!!

Four Day Weekend, Already?

But didn't school JUST start? And wasn't the kids' first weekend a THREE day weekend? Yes and yes. But to be **fair** (pun intended), this 4-day weekend was not planned in advance, well not entirely, anyway. It began with Monday being Fair Day for the kids – our county fair opens tomorrow, and the kids are off school on Monday to go to the fair and also because many of them have 4-H projects that will be judged at the fair on Monday – that was a planned day off. So then today, my husband was driving our daughter to school, when he realized he was the only one on the road and at the school. At least, that's what he thought -it was so foggy they couldn't see much of anything... so they returned home only to find that there was a two-hour delay because of the fog – our phones had been turned off so we didn't get the early morning call... So anyway, the 2 hour delay turned into an entire fog day because the dense fog would not clear early enough for the

school district to send the buses into the country to pick up the kids. Fog Day on Friday + Fair Day on Monday = the first 4-Day weekend of the new school year, taking place on only the third weekend of the new school year! Luckily our student calendar is set up to include 5 calamity days, and in NW Ohio, early morning fog is considered a calamity, I guess! What will we do when the 5 yearly calamity days are taken out of the calendar since the governor's plan calls for calamity days to be phased out? Wait and see, I guess...

And now I have to totally rearrange my day – so much for advance planning! I'll have to juggle the not-4-kid-friendly errands I have with my husband's planned business call – keeping 4 kids quiet and out of the way for that? Good luck to me! These are the times when I wish he had his own office... The benefits of working at home outweigh the negatives of him working at an office of course, but on days like these, ugh! It's funny because I'm not native to NW Ohio and so both fog days and fair days are new to me – man, would I have loved these as a kid. As an adult... not so fun. Maybe we can have another calamity day later this year when we have nothing planned and we can just sit inside and watch movies and play games all day... Then, let it snow!

A Whim? It Was The 19th Pregnancy Test!

I've blogged about the [Duggar family](#) before – they are famous for having a TLC reality show about their large family of 20. That's two parents and eighteen natural offspring – no adoptees, no foster kids; just two people who don't believe in birth control and who have the utmost faith in God and their

marriage. I blogged about their daily routine (involving a cool-looking, specially outfitted custom-built house for a large family – think industrial size kitchen appliances and 4 washer / dryer sets) that seems to be successful in keeping their 20-member household functioning smoothly. I also linked to their website, which had pictures of the interior of their custom-made house. They had their own buffet line built into one of the kitchens, and their dining room has a drink station with cups for each of the 18 kids. As a parent of 4, I find their larger family way of life fascinating. Actually, some of their practices have changed since the eldest Duggar offspring is now moved out, married, and expecting a baby of his own.

Not to be outdone, his mother Michelle is pregnant with her *nineteenth* child. She says she took this latest pregnancy test “on a whim”, which is difficult for me to comprehend when she’s had probably around a dozen and half positive pregnancy tests in her life. She said she was nursing, and her infant grew fussy – in the past, a fussy nursing infant meant that mother’s milk had pregnancy hormones, so that’s why she took the test. I can’t imagine having kids close enough in age to be able to find that out once, let alone to test it over and over like a theorem. And another thought on this – when Mrs. Duggar gives birth to child #19 (wonder what personality traits can be attributed to #19 according to the psychologists who specialize in birth order? Do the books go that high?), she will have spent roughly one-third of her 42 years on this Earth pregnant. I hope for her sake she doesn’t go through a pregnancy withdrawal when her body is done having kids. But for now, the family seems happy as can be, and what’s interesting is that Michelle’s first grandchild will be about 5 months older than his or her aunt or uncle. And let it be clear that I’m not putting these people down – they have a solid family and all these kids seem well cared for by two loving parents who are still married, not to mention LOADS of siblings... more power to them!