

# Sometimes Just One Word Can Mean A Lot

Like in a newspaper's picture caption. Many locals make fun of our county's newspaper; pointing out miscellaneous typos, erroneous information and errors, but today's typo in the following picture caption is kind of a big oopsie:

*The line for the H1N1 virus snakes through the parking lot at the County Fairgrounds Wednesday afternoon.*

Obviously our county does not have people lining up to get the H1N1 **virus**; the replacement word here in case you've fallen asleep is *vaccine*. *The line for the H1N1 vaccine snakes through...*

Now **that** would be one nasty small-town rumor!

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## Quack Doctors – Take Two

Just a little update to let you know my mouth is finally feeling better and yesterday I was able to indulge in food and got to actually enjoy the feeling of being full for the first time in an entire week. No thanks to our local doctors, though, my husband made me some sort of concoction from stuff we had around the house that I swished around in my mouth. I don't know if it was coincidence or if that's what finally did the trick, but all I have to say to the doctor's \$300 mouthwash is **HMPF!** And it should be noted that we went to the doctor's office again yesterday and sat there for an hour and half waiting for the doctor whom they said was out to lunch. I didn't want to pay to be seen again, but I wanted him to

change my prescription to something that would help me and that I could afford. Finally tired of waiting, we left with the nurse's promise that she would call me as soon as he got back from lunch, but they never even bothered to call until this morning when I was finally feeling better. Rude isn't even the word for this, I was in agony! And all that after 3 different nurses and Walmart told us like 5 different ways they could help me, none of which turned out to be true. As my husband put it, it seems like at this medical center, the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing! Kind of sounds like another local organization we've worked with, but that's another blog...

I'm a bit concerned that this canker sore problem is something that I might have to deal with from now on in my old age. Even though we think this latest canker sore outbreak was caused by hand, foot, and mouth disease, the doctor shrugged off our internet diagnosis since it's so rare in adults. So if he's right and it was just canker sores, it might be something that I'll have to deal with every once in a while, especially since it seems to be a hereditary problem! Let's hope not – my family can't handle the stress of anyone else being sick!

On a side note, please pray for my little nephew who was admitted last night into the hospital with croup. I'm praying that he gets well and that it's not H1N1 and that none of the other kids he was playing with (his brother and my kids!) last weekend get it. I'm really really hoping we can dodge some bullets this flu season since there are six of us, thus six open doors for viruses to come into our household. But for now, we're hanging tough (groan!) and ready to party this Halloween weekend. Don't worry – I plan on getting the house scrubbed down for all of you coming to the Halloween party! Can't wait!

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# Quack Doctors

I know I promised to stop whining about my sore mouth, but it's amazing how little focus I have for other things when I'm not eating – all I can think about is pain and food, but sometimes I think about food and pain. The good news is that today when I woke up, the pain was loads less than yesterday. Today marks the first day of improvement since this thing began last Tuesday. But there is also bad news.

Even though I was feeling better, I decided to go to the doctor because this is totally and completely interfering with my daily life. I can't really talk, and it's really hard to chat with, guide, or discipline my kids throughout the day without being able to talk loudly. I can't eat, and I can't drink without pain, so my energy level is very low. So the bad news? The doctor told me it was canker sores after only looking at my tongue. He prescribed me "Meyer's Magic Mouthwash", a concoction listed on a piece of paper unlike any prescription I've ever seen. It looked like a cooking recipe, and my name was scribbled on top and the doctor's on the bottom. I should have taken a picture of it, but I was so anxious to get it filled. The pharmacist used a word that I can't recall at the moment, but she basically meant that they were going to have to brew it up like a potion. It was going to take a few hours, at least.

I got through the day, made it back over to pick up the medicine where I learned that it would be \$308 and insurance wouldn't cover it of course. Needless to say, I am not going to buy \$300 mouthwash! I'm angry that the doctor shrugged off the internet diagnosis without so much as a look or a test for hand, foot, and mouth disease. I'm mad that he didn't give me anything for the pain and that the medicine he did give me

costs so much. What a waste of time and money. I had better things to do today than to sit at the doctor's office – and who knows what else I picked up.

That reminds me, when I was at Walmart today stocking up on my favorite meal as of late, Equate shakes, I saw a lady wearing a medical mask. I wonder if she was trying to keep something to herself or trying to keep other viruses away? I wonder if mask-wearing will become more common as this swine flu business becomes even more serious?

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## Outbreak

The flu season is upon us, and it's obvious. In our family, we are teetering between two outbreaks of illness. Last week, it was hand, foot, and mouth disease (not to be confused with its fear-provoking counterpart, foot and mouth disease, which is only found in animals). The kids had little bumps on their hands, and a general feeling of being unwell, known as malaise as I learned on the internet. This is an extremely common (in children anyway) viral illness that usually runs its course in most kids. When my mouth erupted in sores last week (it's like having 10-20 large canker sores at the same time), I was shocked because it's supposed to be very rare in adults. We contacted 3 different health professionals to make sure that our trip to Illinois could go on as scheduled, and they all assured us that if there was no fever, we were not contagious. We ventured across the state of Indiana, and I don't know if I was more fearful of what we were bringing with us or what we were going to take home, what with the many recent flus reported in Illinois and elsewhere, H1N1 and otherwise.

More on the really great parts of the trip in the next blog post – I need to get this out of my system so to speak, haha – a sick post and a fun post. So for the sick part...

My husband woke up today feeling awful – the flu. My morning started pretty much like the past 2 or 3 mornings now – tremendous pain in my mouth, worse than the day before. One of my favorite things about visiting the Chicago area is the food – despite the city's drawbacks: the aggravating traffic, the inflated prices, CROWDS; Chicagoans do have a talent for their intolerance of crappy Sysco food – ie, Chicago food is fantastic! Last week, anticipating our upcoming trip, I remember thinking that it was only Wednesday, surely my mouth would heal by Friday so I could indulge in some of my favorite Chicago treats. But alas, Thursday's pain was worse than Wednesday's, and Friday's was worse than Thursday's. Actually, as I said before, it's gotten worse every day since it started. Somehow, I was miraculously able to enjoy my [Italian beef sandwich](#) Friday night, but pain-wise things just went downhill from there. We had a wonderful breakfast at the [Uptown Cafe in Arlington Heights](#), quite possibly the best breakfast restaurant *in the country*. They have the best eggs benedict I've ever had, but unfortunately I came very close to sinfully wasting my eggs benedict when I could not eat them (let alone carry on a conversation with relatives) without my eyes watering from the pain in my mouth. My little boy saved me from wasting half my order ( I knew I should have gotten soup or at least a half order of eggs benedict, but I literally could not resist – we get to this place less than once a year!) – but my toddler ate *half* my eggs benedict – he is his father's son!

The weekend ended with my sister making us wonderful homemade lasagna, of which I had about 5 small very painful bites. I did not try any of the appetizers, the steamed vegetables, the salad, the garlic bread, or any of the desserts ☐  
I also did not get my usual crave case of White Castle

cheeseburgers to bring back to Ohio, although generous relatives supplied us with some Chicago beef for sandwiches, homemade soup and Grammy's out-of-this-world homemade spaghetti sauce, all frozen and ready to be thawed as soon as I'm better! Talk about something to look forward to!!!

We ventured home at 2 am this morning, and arrived safely, however painful (and tiresome for my husband) the ride home. And a special thank you to Officer Friendly of the Ohio State Patrol, who did not issue even a warning for my husband's "hovering around 60 in a 55." I'm glad he seemed to take the 4 sleeping kids and the grumpy wife in the passenger seat into consideration – this police stop was completed very quickly and only blocks from our house.

This morning I awoke in a lot of pain, and it's gotten worse throughout the day. I think if it continues its trend and gets even worse tomorrow, I'm going to have my husband call the doctor to make an appointment. I am so thankful that my kids seem to be over it, and as horrible as it's been for me, I'm still happy I got the most of it in the family. I pray for my husband, and I'm really nervous about swine flu, but he seems to be feeling better, unless he's just putting on a braver face than I. This illness for me has been characterized by bouts of severe pain sandwiched between constant regular pain. In the past hour, twice that I've talked brought on the most severe bouts of pain and was enough to make me start typing on the computer and making my husband read it in order to communicate. Whatever works, it's amazing how easily the threat of tremendous pain can train a person to keep her mouth closed (like [Pavlov's dog](#)). My husband joked that it's the "shut-up disease". That brought a smile; it doesn't hurt to smile – just the talking, eating, drinking, and sleeping. And that reminds me, being in constant pain has made me an insomniac. I couldn't sleep in Illinois at our hotel and ended up listening to an hour-long Larry King interview with Suzanne Somers – even that did not

put me to sleep. Did you know that Suzanne Somers never actually had cancer even though 4 different doctors told her to get her affairs in order because they had mis-diagnosed her? That's a tangent that doesn't need to be taken...

Well, anyway, that's enough from me for now. Sorry about the rambling, but this really sucks, and typing is my voice right now. Hubby is watching the Bears game, so it'd just be rude of me to constantly interrupt by making him read my ramblings. I wish I could take care of my husband while he's sick, but for now we're helping each other. Let's really hope this gets better – if I have to go to the doctor, I can't tell them what's wrong with me because I can't talk, and I don't really want to bring my family with me to the doctor's – who knows what else we could get?!? I guess I'd have to write a note, but I feel kind of silly...

A real Halloween horror treat tonight would be for us to watch the movie [Outbreak](#) – now that's just TOO scary!!!

At least we have a good part of a week to whip these things and get ready for fun Halloween activities abound next weekend! Super-fun blog post about the awesome parts of the Illinois trip – including haunted house ratings! – to follow this depressing post, I promise!

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## 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...

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## **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!

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## Bee Vs. Me

Yesterday I became unwittingly involved in a duel, but at least I was the winner!

I was standing outside throwing out our old bread for the birds with my 3-year-old when I bent over to pick up some doggy-doo. I noticed a few bees hovering about, but there have been a lot of them lately, and I'm never too worried about bees since they don't usually sting away from their hive unless provoked... unless you happen across a bee who is a little off his rocker or something. So anyway, I went inside to wash my hands, and that's when I got stung on the back of my neck. Out of instinct, I slapped the little pest, and then I ran outside to get my daughter to safety away from the other bees. When we got inside, the bee was on the floor and still alive, so I triumphantly took it hostage. I looked up how to treat a bee sting (it **hurt!!!**), as well as what they eat – I had not captured the thing to torture it, but I certainly didn't want to let it go... I wasn't sure what I was going to do with it, but I didn't want it starving in the meantime. After finding out that it was indeed a honeybee, and that he would probably like some nectar before he passed away as a result of his stinger being torn from his behind (and implanted into my neck). I guess I just kind of wanted to see if what I thought was an old myth was true – do honeybees die after stinging? From everything I read as well as my real-life example (he passed away last night), it seems to be truth rather than fiction. So goodbye to the bee that stung

me yesterday, and farewell – I'm sorry it had to end this way. The good news is, other than a marble-sized lump on the back of my neck, I don't have many ill effects from the sting; the pain is gone and the itching is tolerable. I traded my story with everyone I ran into yesterday because who over the age of 30 still gets stung by bees? Surprisingly, it's more common than I thought, and not just something that happens to reckless kids whose curiosity and carelessness often pave the way to childhood wounds and ailments. After trading bee stories yesterday, I learned that a friend and her husband were stung by what they said were sweat bees while riding their motorcycle, but after further research and thanks to the Schmidt Sting Pain Index I found on Wikipedia, I've concluded that neither their nor my bee stings could be the work of sweat bees. Honey bees are more likely the culprit, as the pain from their sting ranks much higher on the scale. Since my husband found the pain index so interesting (and began looking up bullet ant stings on youtube, yeow!), I've posted it for your reference as well. Yet another thing I love about living where I live – we don't have all the varieties of nasty stinging insects as are found in tropical climates, and the ones we do have at least give us a break over the winters. I'm glad for that because after the pain I went through yesterday, it's going to be difficult to let my little ones play outside until the bees are gone – thank goodness this happened to me and not them! Oh, and if you don't cringe or at least wriggle your toes when reading the following descriptions of types of pain, there is something wrong with you!

RIP, Bee!

### **Schmidt Sting Pain Index**

- \* 1.0 Sweat bee: Light, ephemeral, almost fruity. A tiny spark has singed a single hair on your arm.
- \* 1.2 Fire ant: Sharp, sudden, mildly alarming. Like walking across a shag carpet & reaching for the light switch.

- \* 1.8 Bullhorn acacia ant: A rare, piercing, elevated sort of pain. Someone has fired a staple into your cheek.
  - \* 2.0 Bald-faced hornet: Rich, hearty, slightly crunchy. Similar to getting your hand mashed in a revolving door.
  - \* 2.0 Yellowjacket: Hot and smoky, almost irreverent. Imagine W. C. Fields extinguishing a cigar on your tongue.
  - \* 2.x Honey bee and European hornet: Like a matchhead that flips off and burns on your skin.
  - \* 3.0 Red harvester ant: Bold and unrelenting. Somebody is using a drill to etaylhisvate your ingrown toenail.
  - \* 3.0 Paper wasp: Caustic & burning. Distinctly bitter aftertaste. Like spilling a beaker of hydrochloric acid on a paper cut.
  - \* 4.0 Pepsis wasp: Blinding, fierce, shockingly electric. A running hair drier has been dropped into your bubble bath.
  - \* 4.0+ Bullet ant: Pure, intense, brilliant pain. Like fire-walking over flaming charcoal with a 3-inch rusty nail in your heel.
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## **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!!!**

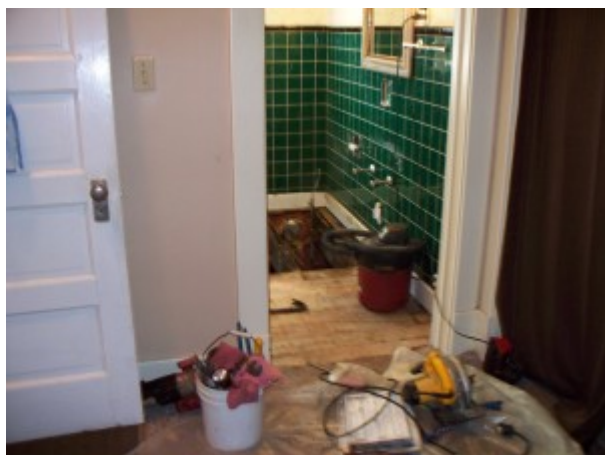
I can't help but think what a great diet this is though – it hurts to eat anything, and I'm really surprised certain

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!!! ☐

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## 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...



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# 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!