

Third Trimester Blues

Well, it's that time again, the lovely third trimester of pregnancy. It crept up on me really fast while I was waiting for the 'golden age' of pregnancy to kick in – the second trimester. Except that I never felt as great as they say you should feel during the second trimester, so while I was waiting, time passed on by and here we are in the third trimester. I guess I should be happy that the pregnancy is almost all over, but it's hard to look at it that way. This is the time when babyitis kicks into overdrive. The yearning to hold and sniff and care for the newborn baby becomes so overwhelming, it's intense. And then there's the lethargy and the grumpiness. I just don't feel like doing anything lately! It's really difficult to not be grumpy while chasing after kids all day when all I really want to do is sit on my butt and play video games. But if I were even to allow myself to indulge in some "doing nothing" time, I know I would be interrupted constantly by needy kids – kind of like when I sit down to type a blog post! And then there's the guilt... now that we're past the 85°+ heat wave, I feel like I should take the kids outside, but I'm just too tired! Besides, as much as I tell myself to let the housework go for a month or two, I still can't bring myself to actually let it happen. So by the time I'm done with my "dailies" (daily chores like laundry, meal making, picking up after kids, errands, etc), I have barely enough energy for anything extra like my long-gone daily walks. This week, I have to unpack the kids from their trip to Grandma's, but at least I got caught up on laundry while they were gone and lucky for me, Grandma sent them home with literally only 2 pieces of dirty laundry – NICE! The kids had a lot of sleeping to catch up on, so they've taken naps today, and I've gotten a lot done, so maybe tomorrow or later this week we can get out and enjoy the beautiful weather. Our town's annual carnival is in town starting tomorrow, so I know we'll be up there once or twice. They

have Dippin' Dots, ice cream super-frozen into little balls, and it's SOO good! It's my favorite thing to begin with, so during pregnancy, it's a MUST-HAVE!

The good news is that my mood seems to be improving. I actually wrote the beginning of this post weeks ago – I just haven't had time to finish it until now. And now that I'm finishing it, my feelings have changed a little. Instead of feeling the usual 'my-body-will-never-be-back-to-normal' frustrations, it seems like the birth of our baby is right around the corner; actually I have to start doing the weekly doctor visits already! And I feel less grumpy than I did a few weeks ago, and even less sore in my body, though physically even more tired. The difference is that instead of not feeling like doing anything, now I feel more like doing things, but I physically cannot because I am so huge. I have gained over 50 lbs with this pregnancy. Perfectly normal, I know, especially with the insatiable appetite I encountered between 3-5 months, but things like bending over to pick things up off the floor have become impossible. You wouldn't believe how long it takes me to put on lace-up shoes without help – which stinks because those feel much better on my aching feet than my sandals. And turning over in bed has evolved beyond the 3-point-turns into the 5+ point turns – I kind of have to scoot in a circle until I'm turned over... not fun for me; must be incredibly annoying to my bedmate – between me and our kids who wake up very early and sometimes throughout the night, he doesn't get much sleep! And with all this fun comes the feeling of dread that I know labor is just around the corner... I sure hope this baby is easier on me than my second child was during labor... long story short, she took forever then came really fast, which meant that the 'window of opportunity' where I was supposed to get the pain medicine opened and closed too quickly for anyone to do anything for me, leaving me with a 'natural labor' – and NOT by choice! But kid #2 has been trouble from the time I could feel her kick right up until this morning's tantrum, so as I always

say, hopefully she is one of a kind!

Fun in South Bend Indiana

Of all the places to find fun, who would have thought that middle of nowhere, IN would be such a sight? Every summer, we meet my mom there about 4 times to swap the kids. She'll take them for a week, twice a summer, so because South Bend just happens to be about as close to halfway for each of us to drive, that is where we meet. We used to meet at a Wendy's just off the expressway, but our horizons have broadened, and my husband and I have been venturing off the beaten path to discover new things to see and do in the area. We found a good restaurant called Eleni's with amazing gyros and saganaki, two of our favorite dishes. We also found an authentic Greek restaurant called Elia's right down the street, but oddly enough, they are almost never open. They have more exotic Greek food like stuffed grape leaves, moussaka, and baklava, YUM! Their food is excellent, though we've only been able to eat there once because of their strange hours and seemingly constant family vacations. After eating and getting the kids back from my mom, we headed to the [Potawatomi Zoo](#). The zoo is a really cool size, perfect for our family of 3 small children and a now VERY pregnant woman. Not much walking to do at all, yet it has a good amount of animals, native and exotic, all types and sizes from lions, tigers, and bears, to monkeys, bison, alligators, parrots, and red pandas. I will have to mention that the Potawatomi Zoo did not seem very well-kept. A gardener in that place could have done wonders as there were many overgrown weeds, trees, and shrubbery, some even blocking what could have been better views of the animals! One tree was so untrimmed it was blocking a drinking fountain! But as I said, it's a very cute

little zoo, and they reciprocate with our home zoo, the Toledo Zoo, so our admission price was free and they don't charge for parking. I was surprised to see that the zoo wasn't very crowded seeing as how it was a Saturday in June under 90°... That zoo could really use a Jack Hanna to fix it up and get the publicity rolling – I see a lot of potential for it, but it does need some work.

After the zoo, we had kids begging for 'one more fun thing' (remember, they had been used to the fun of Grandma's for just short of a week!), my husband whips out Mr. GPS, and apparently he has a phone book feature on him, so from your car, you can find gas stations, restaurants, and most importantly, fun places and attractions to visit!

So KUDOS belong to Mr. GPS this time! Instead of getting us lost and chuckling at us electronically, he led us right to this strip mall that was like a step back in time, it was really strange. It looked like it was right out of 1983. I don't know how to explain it – we should have taken pictures. It would have been a great place to film a movie set in the early '80's, took me right back to my childhood. Anyway, in this strip mall was a place called Mega Play. From the outside, it looked closed down – they really need to get themselves a big bright 'open' sign. But once inside, it was a huge space where they had tons of video games, pinball machines, indoor minigolf, bouncy castles and tunnels for the kids, lots of ride-ons for toddlers, and right out of 1983 – a ball pit! The ball pit had a pyramid in the middle of it that the kids climb up with ropes and once they got the hang of it, they had a ball – cheesy pun intended. That pyramid gave me a flashback of playing on the same thing when I was little. I think they used to have them in KMarts, and my husband agreed. It was neat to see vintage video games and pinball machines also. The arcade ATARI games they had in one bouncy castle area were free to play – they had Kangaroo, Pole Position, Asteroids, and some shooting game I hadn't heard

of. I walked over to the pinball machine area because days earlier, we visited this cool pinball shop in a suburb of Toledo. The guy started it as a hobby, but it grew into a store, and he had all kinds of pinball machines, new and mostly vintage. He had titles on display like Demolition Man, Star Wars, The Shadow, and Hercules (an older game – it was HUGE!). He even had this Looney Tunes racing game (not pinball) that was really vintage and one-of-a-kind... it was cool to see. I wonder if the pinball guy outside of Toledo is familiar with Mega Play? But anyway, back to Mega Play... it was a huge, wide-open strip mall space that had tons of games, ride-ons, and bouncy castles packed into it – lots of fun there, but still spacey so you didn't feel closed in. It was the exact concept my husband and I had in mind for our own business of the same type we started a few years ago. We ended up having to sell the business because it was too labor intensive for the time and staff we had however. Too bad Mega Play is all the way in South Bend, or we could challenge our putt-putt-ing friends to the mini-golf course ☐

After Mega Play, it was time to find something to eat, and before we knew it, we were out of South Bend and into the country. The kids started getting crazier and crazier, and we vowed to stop at the very next restaurant we found before someone passed out or went insane – and some of us were close to either condition! So, we stopped at a restaurant called Dakota's in Elkhart IN, and I highly recommend it if you're ever out that way. They had the best cornbread, and their steak and cheese sandwich was simply AWESOME! They also have barbecue items, and they happened to have karaoke the night we went... it wasn't too intrusive though. They were in another room and we didn't even know it was karaoke at first until the audience began applauding. The DJ hosting the karaoke was singing a few songs also, and he was pretty good, so he actually sounded like a recording with a live quality. I don't know how often they have karaoke there, but their food is great, prices reasonable, nice atmosphere, and the staff is

amazingly friendly. Keep in mind I say this coming from a super-friendly town myself, so we're used to the usual chit-chat when we go out to eat – but people in Elkhart were *exceptionally* friendly.

Overall, not a bad place to spend a day – fun and very inexpensive to boot. Too bad with gas prices the way they are we can't consider South Bend for a normal day trip for our family – there is plenty to do! Maybe we'll wander around some more the next time we meet Grandma there in July...

Vacation!

In case you've been wondering where I've been lately (or even if you haven't) – Grandma has helped us get one last little vacation before baby arrives. We were going to head to New York, but decided not to do that, thank goodness. Admittedly, the gas prices were the original deterrent, so then we explored taking a Greyhound bus there, but in my huge condition, I didn't see any opportunity for good rest on a long bus trip. I am really glad we declined the big trip, though, because my feet have been killing me, just from everyday tasks, like cleaning or shopping. I would have had to cut short all of our sight-seeing in New York or rent a wheelchair for the week. And staying home had afforded us time to do much needed catch-up work around the house. We've been making landscaping plans, and I will be very excited to see how that turns out in a few weeks when it's finished. We cleaned out the famous closet o' games, and we didn't even need to knock down the wall to expand the closet as I was talking about in another post. We found enough room for all of our games by sending all the kids' games upstairs to their room. Our house has lots of built-in shelving and drawers,

and the kids had a huge cabinet in their closet that wasn't even being used. So, up went all the kids' games. I am a little concerned that they will tear apart their game collection and scatter pieces and whatnot, but they will have to be taught somehow that this is not going to be tolerated. Most importantly on our vacation without the kids, we achieved the cleaning of their room. It is a huge bedroom, and we have all 3 of our girls sharing it, but until we cleaned it, they could barely fit in there because they had so many toys. Whenever we'd make them clean it, we noticed that they would play in there for such a long time afterward because they actually liked having all the open space. So we donated about 90% of their toys to charity while they were visiting with Grandma. It might sound mean, but we kept the important stuff, and like I said, they actually enjoy their room and the things in it much more when everything is picked up and they have fewer things to appreciate. I will keep you posted on how well (or not) this is received when they get home. They will probably forget exactly what toys they once had, and by donating everything, more kids can enjoy them.

Even though it took an entire day of cleaning to reach the bottom of the toy pile in their room, we have managed to fit in lots of fun for just hubby and me. We've gone shopping several times, and yesterday we were in Toledo all day getting good food, seeing a movie, and taking in a [Toledo MudHens](#) game. If you're not familiar, the MudHens are minor league baseball. I've been wanting to get to a [Chicago Cubs](#) game last year or this year, but with the baby coming, I've ruled it out until at least next year. So, minor league baseball it was, and we had a blast – I got my live baseball game fix for awhile... there's just something about hearing the crack of the bat, the slap of the ball in the glove and the other sounds of a baseball game in the beautiful summer night air. And it was a great game. Seems a player from the [Detroit Tigers](#) was rehabbing with the MudHens, so we got to see a major-leaguer pitch for a few innings. The Hens were up 3-0 early in the

game, then they let Indianapolis tie it up, only to hit a walk-off homer in the 9th with 2 outs to win the game – awesome! And if you're not from the area and want to experience food that is uniquely Toledo, I recommend a restaurant called [Tony Packo's](#) to you. Their menu is somewhat limited; there aren't very many choices, so pass on it if you're a picky eater. But if you're like me and you like to try all different kinds of ethnic food, give it a whirl. They serve Hungarian food, namely sausage, cabbage rolls, and chili mac over dumplings. It's really good and a unique dining experience. It's also really interesting how we heard of the restaurant in the first place. We were in a thrift store and I saw this stuffed baby in a diaper with a tomato head. I thought it was really cute, even though it creeped my husband out, but it was only 5¢ so I bought it. Turns out, it's a character from Tony Packo's as labeled on the rear end of the baby tomato. I googled Tony Packo's, found out it was a restaurant an hour away from us in Toledo, looked at the menu, and we decided to give it a try. The guy who works their marketing in the gift shop really liked that story. What's weird though, is that while gutting my kids' room this week, the baby tomato never surfaced. Hmmm, I wonder what happened to it?

Sometimes you get more of what you want from a vacation by staying home. In this age of the horribly high gas prices, the media has even coined a new word for the 'vacation taken at home', but I can't recall what it is. If you know, post it in my comments – it's bugging me that I can't think of it. Anyway, by staying home, we saved a ton of money on gas alone, and we got some things done around the house that we will appreciate for months or even years to come, all while having a great time with just each other, no kids! Thank you, Grandma!

It's HOT!

For a few days now and a few more days to come ☐ the temperatures in our region have been over 90°. For a pregnant woman of my girth, it is proving disasterous. I am so lathargic – I don't feel like doing ANYTHING, including eating! The house is a mess, and the kids have been cooped up because I've been cooped up in the a/c. It's not the best a/c though because we have window units, not central air, so it's still hot! Luckily, the kids are going on vacation with their Grandma and will get plenty of stimulation next week. After that, I have to hope and pray for an arctic streak until I deliver the baby in mid-July or we won't make it. Since I'm sitting here doing nothing, just as I want, I decided to post this poem as a distraction to myself in lieu of the heat. It's a poem by Shel Silverstein, and I had to memorize it in 5th grade. While I no longer have it memorized, certain lines keep running through my head as I sit here and boil. Enjoy and stay cool!

It's Hot!

By Shel Silverstein

It's *hot!*

I can't get cool,
I've drunk a quart of lemonade,
I think I'll take my shoes off
And sit around in the shade.

It's *hot!*

My back is sticky,
The sweat rolls down my chin.
I think I'll take my clothes off
And sit around in my skin.

It's *hot!*

I've tried with 'lectric fans,
And pools and ice cream cones.
I think I'll take my skin off
And sit around in my bones.

It's *still* hot!

To Do

This seems a little strange to me, but the other day my husband suggested that I should put everything into my blog. Every to-do list, shopping list, etc. Anything I'm putting into my computer should be in my blog, he says. I'm a person who makes a lot of lists. I've even been known to make a list of the lists I need to make! It might sound dorky or anal, but it makes me feel better and more organized – I'm a busy person with a terrible memory, so any way I can feel a little closer to keeping my head above water when daily life becomes overwhelming is worth trying for me. And often I do so with lists. So, upon the advice of my husband, a person whose knowledge of everything seems to know no limits (and no, I'm not being sarcastic!), here goes – hope it doesn't bore you too much, but here is my To-do List for when Grandma has my kids for just under a week – an event I am anticipating so anxiously that it seems to have SLOWED the passage of time... We were going to take a trip to New York, but we declined it because of gas prices and in favor of getting things done around the house, sigh. Besides, I don't know how a woman who is 35 weeks pregnant would fare walking around such a big city! Such a shame, though, it's the LAST time we will be kidless for a long period of time because Grandma can't fit 4 kids into her car to take them all at the same time ☐

To Do While Kids Are Gone

RELAX!

clean game closet

organize kids room – clean out their toys, add toddler bed,
create play room

hook up hose

clean out laundry basket o' junk

clean out playpen

~~wash baby's clothes~~ – *(now that we just found out we're having
a boy instead of a girl, I have no boys' clothes to wash!)*

pack away Disney's clothes *(now that we won't be needing them
for the new baby!)*

fix pipe in upstairs bathroom – and the light that got broken
and flooded because of the pipe!

Baby Christopher's Warm Fuzzies

When I was in high school, I was in a peer group called Snowball and one of our activities was to write "warm fuzzies" about each other. Warm fuzzies are kind thoughts. When we told family and friends we are now expecting a boy instead of a girl, we got lots of warm fuzzies, so I decided to collect them in one place so baby Christopher can read them someday.

Lisa,

How exciting to find out about your new son, we are so excited for you.

Love, Linda

YES!!!!!!!!!!

I knew you guys could do it! Congratulations!!

Mary Beth

Hooray!!!

That is sooooo great. I can't wait for HIS arrival. I sure Dad is as excited.

Jamy

Wow! No wonder you are in shock! I'm excited for you. I had 3 boys and the last was a girl, and I didn't know till she was born – no ultrasounds in those days. All I can tell you from my experience is the girl was nothing like her brothers, from day one. For me, 3 boys were easier than one girl! I'll be interested to see how your experience is. Can't wait to meet little Christopher. I have one of those as well. (He is and was the "toughest", most bull-headed of my boys.)

Shirley

You are going to love having a son. I know I was very nervous about having a son because I wasn't sure if I could feel the same way about a boy as I did about Abby. Because she was a girl, I thought we had this unusual bond that couldn't possibly exist between a mother and a son, but it turns out that gender has nothing to do with it. I knew I'd love him, but I wasn't sure that there'd be that "click" I had with Abby. I'm glad to reports I was very wrong. I'm positively in love with my son and couldn't imagine life without a boy to raise. I've often said that I'd have a whole ball team of boys before I'd have another girl, so if that tells you anything, you'll LOVE having a son. HOORAY for you!

Tracy
