

100!

This is my **100th** blog post! What a long way I've come from my first blog post, aptly and boringly titled, "First Post" – it was a description of me learning to blog! And what a variety of subjects I've covered, from retractable sharpie pens, to kids' blankies... from movies and tv shows to animals, trips, and family life... It seems like forever ago that I was taking you all through the 11, 572 snow days we had, and it's been fun to share all these aspects of my life on the internet while learning things about my friends and family who read and/or comment on my posts. So thanks to all my readers, even if you just read because I make you, thanks anyway... I truly appreciate each and every comment I receive – written and spoken, keep it up! And might I add that I'm the first tangents.org blogger to achieve this milestone... hope to have others join me soon!

Weird Pregnancy Symptoms

Since this is my fourth pregnancy, I've experienced a wide variety of the symptoms that go along with being "with child". It's amazing to me how every pregnancy is different, even when they are experienced by the same woman. Pregnancies are as different as the personalities of the children that result. Is it possible then, that a child's personality can actually be displayed through the symptoms of the mother's pregnancy? For example, my aunt told me that when she was pregnant with my cousin, she craved spicy food after not really liking it before. My cousin, the result of the spicy food pregnancy, is now 31 years old and has always been a fan of spicy food!

When I was pregnant with my oldest daughter, my husband would blend a huge glass of juice for me every morning with lots of fruits and veggies in it. My oldest daughter now prefers snacks of fruits and vegetables to junk food. I didn't really crave the fruits and veggies, so that's a different example, but it's still an illustration of how womb behavior may affect the child throughout life.

My second daughter was, for lack of a better word, crazy in the womb. She was the last thing I felt before I fell asleep at night, and the first thing I felt in the morning, and let's not forget all those middle of the night bathroom trips... she was kicking and rolling during those too. I would often joke that I didn't know if this baby ever sleeps. Once she was born, I got the answer: she doesn't ever sleep and never did apparently. It felt like she was tearing me apart from the inside out with her strong movements in the womb, and to this day, she is our strong-willed, "spirited" child.

My third daughter was very gentle as a fetus. She rarely moved – compared to her older sister at least – and when she did, it was always in one spot. As a toddler, she has a very sweet, patient, and obedient demeanor. So, as for #4... so far she moves a lot. I don't want to jinx anything here, but her movements remind me of our second daughter – the spirited one. But I've also experienced some strange symptoms with this pregnancy that I haven't felt before. First, I've been having nightmares. It's common in pregnancy to have more vivid dreams, and I've experienced that, but lately I've had lots of nightmares, ones where I actually wake up too creeped out to go to the bathroom... Strange. And with this pregnancy, red fruit has been especially tasty. I don't crave it, but things like tomatoes, strawberries, and especially red grapes (I've always preferred green to red until now!) taste extra yummy to me. It's so weird to me how tastes can change during a pregnancy. I've never liked bologna and still don't, but during my first pregnancy, I liked it and ate it quite often.

There is probably some scientific research out there that speculates about how much a mother's pregnancy symptoms impact the resulting child, but rather than research it, I think I will just wait and see what my girls are like when they enter adulthood and we can sit down and read my pregnancy diaries together, compare their personalities with that of their womb behavior, and share some good laughs.

Don't Let a Hospital Kill You

What a time for me to stumble across this article on CNN – [Don't Let a Hospital Kill You](#)

I visit the doctor's office monthly, and it's time for me to start visiting every 2 weeks already! Also, I will be a resident of a hospital in about 2 ½ months! As I've written before, I try really hard to put my faith into the doctors and nurses who care for me, however, my husband is a born skeptic of the medical community. Sometimes it's difficult to cast his doubts and concerns aside, especially when I read something like this. Also, since I grew up in a huge metro area, even though I love our small community, I have to be honest and say the small hospital here scares me a at least a little. I haven't shown my husband this article yet... maybe I'll wait until the baby and I are home and healthy in July?

Family Update

I haven't been posting as much as I used to lately. This is because of the surge of activity in our lives... It's also led to me making less phone calls to catch up with people, so let me fill you in this way about what's been going on with us...

Taylor has been needing lots of dental work in Toledo. It's been treacherous, but we have only ONE appointment left, and her teeth look (and now that the pain is gone today – feel) great! She's been handling it all SO well that she is the dentists' and dental assistants' favorite patient. I think they will really miss her. After she leaves the office though, she has a really hard time with the bleeding, and today was especially bad for her, and she also had some pain. But she came out of it all ok, and if she takes good care of her teeth from now on, we shouldn't have to go through anything like this again!

Despite all the bleeding, pain, and the \$30 price tag for gas (!), our trips to Toledo have been kind of a fun time for just the 3 of us – Mom, Dad, and biggest sister – to hang out. We've been going out to eat, and stopping at the zoo a lot. That zoo membership they got me for my birthday last year has REALLY paid off! We've been watching the family of orangutans they have at the Toledo Zoo – there's a mom, dad, a 4-year-old, and an almost 2-year-old. Seeing them week-to-week, I've gotten to know their personalities and have grown a little attached to them – when our trips to Toledo stop, I will miss them! The patriarch of the family, a VERY large orang named Boomer, is a gentle giant. His hands alone are about the size of my 8-year-old's leg from hip to knee! While most males of his species are solitary creatures, Boomer enjoys being with his family, and he even assists with the rearing of the young, something almost unheard of for male orangs! Today, Kutai, the mother, carried her youngest baby with her and sat on the window of her exhibit that positions her directly above the

guests. People were looking up at her, and when they took their camera out, she smiled, teeth and all! I of course did not have my camera with me today to capture this awesome zoo moment ☐ The keeper was saying that Kutai enjoys looking at books, and she can recognize pictures of herself vs. pics of other orangs, so is it possible that she understands what a camera is?!? I think the orangs have taken over the gorillas as my favorite zoo animals to watch. They are just so intelligent and their actions are so individual... Last week when we were there, we heard the zookeeper talking about how they escaped from their exhibit after it was first built. Seems they watched the contractors build their new exhibit from an adjacent one, and apparently noticed when they missed caulk in one little spot. As soon as they were let into their new exhibit, they went right over to the spot, pulled the fence from the wall, and out they climbed, leaving the zookeepers to fetch them from the roof! Sounds like something that would have happened to Jack Hanna ☐ The orangs were inside on such a nice day today because the keepers were hooking up their water toy – when they push a button, it soaks guests who walk by on the outside of the exhibit! That should be lots of fun; I really hope I can make it there at least once this summer to see them activate it, but with the new baby and all, it's doubtful... But anyway, it was a great day at the zoo, and we even saw a wild woodpecker, pecking away high in a tree!

Monday night, the girls had their “sibling class” at the hospital. It was really fun and informative. They saw the room where mom and baby will be staying, then they diapered and swaddled “babies” (fake of course!) and made little t-shirts for their new sister. The one thing I would recommend for the class that they didn't include however, is an emphasis on how older siblings can even help mom way BEFORE the baby comes by being well behaved, picking up some extra chores, or just doing the chores they are asked to do. We've had some difficulties in these areas lately, and they are lucky their

wonderful father has picked up all their slack around the house! But other than that, the sibling class was great and they loved it.

Zoo trips aside, just the same business around here as usual... Taylor is still taking her piano lessons, her school will be over for the summer in June (5 or 6 weather days to make up; I've lost count!), Sammie really likes her school, especially now that they go outside every day they are able, and Disney is growing by leaps and bounds, totally walking, totally talking, making her way towards two... help us all ☹️ Seriously, though, Sammie's terrible two's had already started by the time she was the age Dis is now, and I wouldn't say they are over yet! So I am optimistic that Disney's will seem like a piece of cake comparatively... and hopefully ☹️

Blankie Woes

I think 8 is too old for a blankie. I mean, it's ok to have one at that age, but only if it doesn't interfere with daily life. On February 19, I made a post in my blog about the same subject – the post is called Blankies. It's funny to read that post now and see how far we've come, yet we've also gone no where on this issue at the same time. My 8-year-old daughter has this raggedy blankie that goes everywhere with her... well, that's not accurate – it would if it could, but I put the kabosh on that long ago. It got so bad that if we didn't remember it to go out to eat or walmart or somewhere simple like that, the whole family would pay the price. So, probably about a year ago now, I said, that's it, blankie stays home. I got tired of the liability involved also. If we brought it to a restaurant or anywhere for that matter and it got dirty, I would have to wash it immediately when we got

home or else it wouldn't be ready for bed time that night, and my daughter would put up a huge fuss. Now it's gotten to the point where I'm worried it won't make it through the wash in one piece. Heck, it's barely in one piece as it is.

A few weeks ago, I said, it's time for the blankie to stay upstairs. It's only for bed and that's it. My daughter would bring it down in the morning, then she'd leave for school all day, and I got tired of tripping over it while doing housework. She hasn't been listening to that rule very well... and old habits die hard, I guess. The other day, she brought it downstairs and left it on the couch where little sister came and sat on it. Problem was, little sister had just wet the bed, so needless to say, blankie needed a wash. Somehow, I did not find out about this until bedtime that night, when a huge fuss was made about blankie not being available for bedtime. I was not about to do a load of laundry at 10 at night, especially on a Sunday, which is technically (though it never works out this way with a family of 5 almost 6 and 3 of them little kids), my day off laundry. Not only that, but the blankie would not have been ready for at least an hour anyway, and it was already bedtime. There was much struggle and lots of tears, but she did finally spend a night without her beloved blankie. And guess what? She survived unscathed!

A few weeks ago, she had a sleepover for girl scouts. The rules were, bring a sleeping bag or a blanket, so she planned on bringing her blankie, which is holey, threadbare, and of no use when it comes to keeping someone warm. Not only that, but she is at a good age for kids to start making fun of her for something like that, and both my husband and I know from experience that kids do not forget things easily! She has a really nice sleeping bag that she's never actually gotten to use at a sleepover yet, so we convinced her to just bring that... or so we thought. She packed her own overnight bag, and I didn't think to check for contraband. The next day when I unpacked the overnight bag, I found the stowaway blankie. I

felt so duped.

Ironically, as I'm writing this very post, my husband came downstairs and said, "Taylor can't find her blankie. She is really upset about it and crying." It was downstairs today, even though it wasn't supposed to be, so I know I had to add it to my huge load of laundry to bring upstairs... I told him to pass the message to Taylor that if I find it down here again, it will be gone forever because I am so sick of the whole situation. And I haven't done anything with it yet, honest, tempting as it may be. Don't get me wrong, I'm not mean or cruel, and I don't have a problem with kids needing a comfort item, even at 8. But when that item interferes with daily life, and one cannot function without it, then I believe it's time for a change. She should hope Dad or I don't find the blankie first – we are pretty fed up with the situation and cannot guarantee the safety of the blankie should we come across it!

Here He Is!!!

My new nephew looks totally adorable, so I had to share his picture:

Ryan Timothy



Spring is in the Air = BABIES!!!

CONGRATULATIONS to my sister in Illinois, who gave birth to a healthy 8 lb. 15 oz. baby boy today!!! I can't wait to see pictures of the little darling, and I will post them when I get them (HINT HINT - no, just kidding, I know you have much more important things to do right now than to worry about sending pictures) I just wish I could hold him! And Congratulations to Austin on becoming a big brother - it's an important job buddy; I know you'll be a great one! Welcome, Ryan Timothy!

Other baby news - our kids' babysitter's cat had kittens the other day. Look how unbelievably cute they are:



See if you can count 'em - makes a good picture puzzle, doesn't it? There are 6 - the little orange one kinda blends in with the towel - he's unique!

My daughter's teacher had her baby, and my two cousins also had their babies, which means 3 of my grandmother's 4 expected great-grandchildren for this year are here already! I am the last one standing ☐

Seriously, I feel left out, being the only one left pregnant out of all the women I knew who were expecting. I am ecstatic that all the babies are healthy and thriving though - that is truly something to be thankful for! For the most part, I love being pregnant, though I have to say this one is the most difficult pregnancy yet in some ways. Also the easiest in some ways too, so it's not all bad... But my feet are killing me constantly... I feel like I can't stand for more than 10-15 minutes at a time, and with a toddler and 2 other little kids to care for, that is a tough feeling to have. Plus I'm exhausted much of the time, and have terrible heartburn a lot... all this and 3 months to go, not to mention the fact that the weather is only getting nicer, then it will get really hot and then I'll just be miserable. I hate not having the energy or the desire to go outside to enjoy these

nice days... it makes me feel guilty, especially because it means my toddler can't enjoy them with me. Is it mean for her to be couped up in the house with me on gorgeous days like today? She doesn't seem to mind though, and we do play together lots while I'm sitting down, so it can't be all bad... I just tell myself that in August I will have much more energy and time to enjoy the weather. It's hard to imagine now, but some of the fatigue and aches and pains will lift, I HOPE!

Retractable Sharpie Update!

RECAP: My favorite kitchen tool (can you tell I'm not a gourmet cook?), my retractable permanent marker aka Sharpie, went missing.

UPDATE: Just when I had given up and assumed that my toddler had thrown it in the garbage, it turned up in the unlikeliest of places (of course). It was in the laundry room, in the cabinet next to the parrot's cage where we keep all his toys and stuff – go figure. Wonder how it got there? Sadly, it was left un-retracted, so it is of no use to me anymore. But at least we have closure and it had a proper burial. No more wondering which kid was going to turn up with permanent markings all over them. And, a thoughtful reader of my blog was kind enough to surprise me with a 2-pack of replacement *COLOR* retractable Sharpies – thanks Mom ☺

I Passed!!!

Yesterday I did something I've never done before – I passed a 3 hour glucose challenge! I haven't had a gestational

diabetes-free pregnancy since my first-born 8 ½ years ago! It feels really good to know that I can eat whatever I want for the next few months without having to worry about pairing proteins with carbs and cutting out desserts; I can hardly believe it. I don't have to go and speak with the endocrinologist or the dietician, and I won't be taking non-stress tests at the hospital. Most importantly, I won't have to inject my body with insulin – something with which my husband and I were not very comfortable anyway. And since gestational diabetes often leads to large babies, I am curious to see what this one will weigh. The previous 2 babies were both 8 lbs. 12 oz, and my first baby (no diabetes) was only 7 lbs. 2 oz. Of course, she was a little bit early and is still pretty small for her age to this day. But, I just wanted to share the news because I'm very excited that I have a few less things to worry about, and I know I had people waiting to hear the results of my test.

Pinata Pilgrimage

I didn't blog all weekend because we made a few-hundred-miles trek to the Chicago suburbs for my nephew's 5th birthday party. We stuffed ourselves silly over there because as much as we love where we live, the restaurant choice can grow kind of boring. So, being in a different area had us stopping for food every chance we got, but by the end of the weekend, we were a wee bit regretful... I think that midnight case of White Castles are what did us in. Since there aren't any White Castles near us, we had to stock up and buy a whole case since they reheat pretty well. We stopped there on the way out of the area, and then we had to smell them all the way home – yuck. They taste good but don't smell so great, especially when it's time for bed... So, as you can see, we did fit in a

bit of culture on our trip. For those who aren't familiar with White Castle, it's a fast food chain found in the midwest that specializes in mini-hamburgers, also known as "sliders". They aren't just mini-hamburgers, though, they're steam-grilled, and they have a very unique taste... not to mention an, ahem, interesting side effect when you feed them to pets and small children. I will not elaborate; let's just say that my kids really like them, but the next day our noses were paying for it.

We also found time to stop at an ethnic grocery store for something my husband has been looking for called *Halva*, which is a Middle Eastern dessert. I had never tried it before, and I really like to try ethnic foods, so we picked some up. It is pretty good! The halva we got was actually from Macedonia, and though it tastes nothing like it, I would best describe its texture as that of the 'astronaut' ice cream. You know, the freeze dried ice cream that they sell at space museums?

And to round out our cultural experience, my nephew had a pinata at his birthday party. Pardon my spelling it wrong, I can't find the special n with the tilday over it they use in the spanish alphabet. So in my blog, it will be known as a pinata. Just in case you are not familiar with what a pinata entails, check out Wikipedia's explanation:

A succession of blindfolded, stick-wielding children try to break the piñata in order to collect the sweets (traditionally fruit, such as sugarcane) and/or toys inside of it. It has been used for hundreds of years to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas and Easter.

Seems that Wikipedia figured out how to do the tilday... but anyway, yes you read that right – **blindfolded, stick-wielding children!** Actually, it's customary to use a baseball bat instead of a stick, yet oddly enough, I don't think I've ever been part of a pinata party where a parent didn't have to step in and break it open themselves – this one being no

exception. It went pretty well, though we did almost have a casualty – my nephew took his first whack at the pinata, and his dad had not cleared the area, so CRACK went the bat against the cell phone he was wearing... but I guess all was well, especially since someone had talked them out of their original plan: giving a bunch of 5-year-olds an *aluminum* bat with which to whack at the pinata. Thank goodness for the insight! If you get a chance, you should check out the pinata scene in the movie [Parenthood](#), it's hilarious... the kids at the party lose interest after not being able to get it open, so the scene cuts to [Steve Martin](#) beating the heck out of the thing as it lays on the floor. Nothing like that at my nephew's party, in fact, his pinata opened rather easily. And when it did break open, there wasn't the usual melee either... the kids were actually quite orderly in picking up the pinata "guts". I was a little worried because the last time I was at a birthday party with a pinata, the kids all piled in a heap on top of each other, and the kid at the bottom ended up with a bloody lip.

So, overall, great weekend, even if it lacked sleep – lots of driving and we didn't get home until 3:30 in the morning! And I have a few weeks to decide whether or not we will be brave enough to attempt a pinata at my daughter's 4th birthday party... maybe that will be enough time for her to forget that her cousin had one...

One thing is for sure, if we have a pinata, we will *not* have an aluminum bat on the premises!