

Cool Summer

The kids are growing by leaps and bounds before my eyes, and it's unbelievable because I'm used to seeing them most of the day, every day – and I can still see the changes. They are growing up literally before my eyes!

So far this summer, the kids and I have carried a normal daily schedule that finds our time divided between fun activities and miscellaneous appointments (like Bible study class, violin lessons, doctor's and dental appointments, etc). I think we've done a good job of making the days fun, and we've also had some great family weekends since school has let out. Father's Day weekend saw us heading out to the [African Wildlife Safari Park](#) in Port Clinton Ohio. We love that place, but it's almost 2 hours away so we hadn't made it out there in a few years. But there was a Groupon a few months ago, and we got a great price on admission, so Hubby planned a trip there. Can't go to Port Clinton Ohio and not stop at [Cheesehaven](#) – 88 types of cheese, meats, sauces... yummy stuff. They have free samples so you can try before you buy. Should you find yourself in this little Lake Erie town (which is near the more well known tourist attraction: roller-coaster filled Cedar Point), stop by Cheesehaven and get a fresh corned beef sandwich – YUM!!

The Safari Park is great – you drive around the animals' huge enclosure, and herds of all types of different animals approach your car looking for food! There are alpacas, llamas, white-tailed deer, elk, elands, bison, reindeer (I never found this one in the guidebook, but it looked like a reindeer to me!), even giraffes and zebras at the end (while you can still feed them, the giraffes and zebras are behind a fence whereas the other animals are not). It's so cool to feed all these guys! Some are dainty, skittish eaters (the smaller deer), while the huge animals like the bison will fill your car with this hot, half-digested hay breath. It's

delightfully disgusting, and only animal lovers should attempt to stomach this! Here is the best video I could record while getting accosted by a thousand-pound bison (the kids were frustrating us adults since they would freak out and drop the carrot before the bison could grab it – we felt bad for the hungry fella!)

And what is the poor thing in the picture below? A llama, I think? He had a funny lip, which coupled with his flat ear gave him a whimsical look – he was a favorite to feed.



And next is a video of the giraffe – sorry for the shakiness, but he was too tall to get in one shot! You can see his curly tongue that came out and helped him grab his carrot. The car in front of us had the right idea – they were feeding the giraffe out of their sunroof – it was a sight to see and I should have taken video!

The Safari Park also has pig races, an animal show, a small walk-thru zoo, and pony and camel rides for the kids. It was a SUPER day, followed by a special day to celebrate Dads after
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Wild Kingdom

WOW... WHAT AN EXCITING DAY!!! A bunch of my EXCELLENT theatre friends and I took the short (?) road trip to Port Clinton to the [African Wildlife Safari Park](#). It was a very fun place to visit as you drove through a trail on which not only do you see a variety of African wildlife, but you also ENCOUNTER them. Elk (baby as well as adult), zebras, monkeys, giraffe, gazelle, longhorn steer, and don't forget the buffalo, and LUDO who was a friend of the friends I traveled with. I am told that Ludo had gotten along in years since their visit last year and was not nearly as active. Along the trail, most of the animals come to your vehicle to check out who was trespassing on their turf and to perhaps snatch a quick snack (of carrots or whatever was in the cups that were purchased at the starting gate. Quite an interesting experience having a buffalo stick his head in your car and leave his calling card of drool and stench.

I made two journeys through the safari. On the first, I sat in the back of the van with no operating windows. In order to get the full impact, a brave woman and I ventured out alone to brave the wild beast. Armed with the remaining four bags of carrots that I had purchased at Wal-Mart earlier that day, we circled the perimeter once again. I was really waiting for the hairy beast of buffalo to sneeze inside the car; thankfully, this did not happen. Carol and I seemed to have taken longer going through the tour the second time (still not

as long as it took our companions in the other vehicle the first time). At times, a multitude of baby elk seemed to be congregating right in the middle of the road, blocking oncoming traffic. Our solution, blare the horn and make a speedy dash through a small pond. Maybe that was the strange feeling encountered later concerning the van's "pick up." Near the end, the giraffe decided to be more sociable and ventured to the stream of cars. The presence of carrot vendors along the path may have had something to do with that.

Following our hair-raising excursion through the faux African wilderness, we rejoined our companions at a show featuring a few of the other animals at the park: a cockatiel named Sydney, a chinchilla, a hedgehog, a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig, and a boa constrictor. Following the show, a few of our brave troop had a photo op with the snake. For a great time apart from the ordinary trip to the zoo, take your family (we had a 5 week old along with us and the next oldest who is nearly 2 seemed to enjoy herself visiting the animals) for an African safari.

In my next post, I will continue on our fun-filled extravaganza.