

# At Least I Have No Regrets

Spring break is over, and for me it flew by- and it was wonderful. I had my concerns about being so tired and keeping 4 kids from getting bored and restless, and those fears mounted last week when I saw the weather forecast – 40s all week, scarce sunshine, and maybe even a little snow. I was especially concerned that spring break would be my own personal forecast to what summer break will be like because hard as I try not to, I have times where I dread the summer a little bit.

For one thing, there is a wonderful Christian camp that we've been hearing about from a friend, and we've been trying to let our kids go for years now, but it hasn't worked out for one reason or another. This year, it seems that the dates will work, but the fees are a little steep, and the 45-minute trip to the camp x4 (there-back-there-back for two kids) might hurt the wallet a little bit with the price of gas the way it is. Add to that a trip to Nashville Indiana with extended family – SO fun, but 8 more hours of driving, plus groceries and supplies to buy, plus 4 round-trips to South Bend Indiana, and I calculated my mileage from July 4-23 at 1388 – That's one thousand eighty-eight miles in 20 days. Factor in our van's crummy gas mileage and all the pregnant lady bathroom stops, and OUCH. But then I got to thinking about it, and I think I'd rather spend my July driving around the tri-state area than locked away in my air-conditioning with 4 rambunctious kiddos. As I said, the trip to Nashville will be lots of fun, and most expenses have been paid thanks to a generous Christmas gift. So what if I have to miss the 4th of July fireworks for one year (next year we do have to pick a different date though guys if you are reading this ☐ 4th of July is one of my favorite holidays!). And the trips to South Bend mean that Grandma is taking the kids – so that means fun for them, and a break for us. So what if it's not all 4 kids

gone at the same time anymore – that’s just one of the small trade-offs for having such a large (wonderful) family. And I’m STOKED that the kids finally get to go to this camp – they are so excited too! So what if we have to leave Nashville at 5am just to drive the 4 hours to get Sammie there on time? But the main reason for optimism for summer vacation was spring break – it was awesome, and it flew by.

For me, the month of March dragged on and on, and I think much of it had to do with my prenatal dr. appointment on the 31st. I just could not wait. Part of it was excitement – this stage of pregnancy is tough in a different way than the rest of it because many of the changes are internal, and you have nothing to show for it. I spend my time looking up sketches of what my baby might look like these days, but unless you count fatigue, nausea, moodiness, or tears, there aren’t any outward signs to get excited about – and no, leftover baggage from previous kids does not count as a “baby bump”. Also, I’ve been extra worried about this pregnancy – I can’t put my finger on it, maybe it’s that stupid stat I heard somewhere that keeps sticking in my brain – “1 out of 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage”. This is my 5th pregnancy, so that panics me. I wish I didn’t read the news so much. Maybe the worry is because of how incredibly difficult this pregnancy has been on me (and my family) compared to the others. Whatever it is, I’ve been especially panicked, but I’ve been building a great relationship with my new doctor – she is very understanding and so much more of a problem solver than my previous doctor. But either way, spring break saw me at my prenatal, and everything looks great! Baby is measuring at exactly 12 weeks, right where s(he) should be. AND... I got to see her (him) dance!! The baby keeps sneaking us ultrasounds – I wasn’t scheduled for one, but the heartbeat couldn’t be detected (my understanding doctor warned me of this ahead of time, or I would have panicked. Again.), so she took me into the ultrasound room. There, we saw baby on the screen, and my little 2-inch miracle was *dancing* – I saw her legs moving and

everything! I keep thinking and saying “she” and “her”, but don’t place any bets – I’ve been known to be wrong about my children’s genders in the past – *before* they’re born, of course, sheesh.

So I took the kids to the zoo on Monday of this spring break, and last night I’m still on cloud nine from seeing my baby dance, and the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I could not resist going back to the zoo on the last day of our season’s pass. We aren’t going to renew because as much as I love the zoo, it feels like a waste to renew right before summer, especially when I’m pregnant and (probably?) won’t feel like going as much. And I know I won’t be able to go after my surgery for a month or so... So I took the kids to the zoo not once, but twice this spring break, and I didn’t even feel like I was going to keel over by the end of today, which means that my first trimester fatigue *might* be fading (afraid to get too excited). I even took an extra kid with me to the zoo both days, a gamble that paid off both times since we all had a blast – even if I was late getting Ellyn home today (that’s why I didn’t stop to chat Justj – I’ve been kicking myself ever since. I really wanted to see your daughters! But I was late, and you just don’t expect to run into a friend 60 miles from home so I was caught off-guard).

So yes, I missed the Chicago Cubs opening day game taking my kids to the zoo, and I’m proud of it! Nevermind that I was looking forward to that game for months. Hubby recorded it for me, and I watched it as soon as I got home anyway. And I’m telling you what, the Cubs did not play badly (except for Dempster – if I still cussed he would be on my you-know-what-list), but they lost. But as I said, they did not play badly, so there is MUCH hope for the season – you can’t tell anything decisive on opening day. Well, except for last year but we’ll leave that out of it. But the best part is, I have no regrets. I can’t imagine how I would have felt had I missed my last chance to take my kids to the zoo in order to watch a

game where the Cubs lost.

Super decision on my part, and if this spring break was any kind of predictor for summer vacation, BRING IT ON!

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## Death By Hollywood

There has been a rash of celebrity deaths lately – Art Linkletter, Gary Coleman, Dennis Hopper, and Rue McClanahan (second to last survivor of the Golden Girls) to name a few. As with many celebrities, circumstances surrounding some of these deaths have been quite out of the ordinary.

Dennis Hopper was in the midst of a frantic and nasty divorce when he lost his battle to cancer. His wife is currently battling for her share of the estate – seems the pre-nup stipulated that the couple be married AND living together at the time of his death. She contends that living in the guest house on the same property IS living together...

I listened to the 911 call from Gary Coleman's wife, and it's creepy to say the least. I've never heard a person so cold – “send someone quick because I don't know if he's going to, like, be alive.” And that she can't help him because she “doesn't want to be traumatized right now...” and “I've got blood on myself, I'm gagging, I can't deal.” Me, me, me. So WOW. Does Shannon (aka Mrs. Coleman – well, not really... as it turns out, there was a secret divorce back in '08) have something to hide? My guess is that she is digging herself a deeper hole with every press conference, er, day that goes by... It's especially interesting how she is quick to do press conferences, shooting a video for tmz.com just one day after her ~~husband's~~ er, roommate's death. You can listen to Shannon's refusal to help Gary [here in the sad 911 call](#), and

[here is a link to the video](#) shot a day later when she contradicts herself – in the 911 call, she says she can't help Gary because she has seizures so she can't drive, whereas in the video, she says that Gary has done nice things for her, like buy her a car. So... why would he buy her a car if she can't drive? Oh, and not a tear has fallen from Shannon's eyes publicly since Gary's death. Something's fishy here, and Ms. Price's penchant for being in the spotlight is going to be the catalyst to her unraveling, it seems.

Last night was the first night I was able to spend at home in a long time. I was excited to see that the Cubs had a night game, and I was looking forward to getting to sit and watch my first entire baseball game since opening day... but I had read the schedule wrong – actually I've been a day off all week. My husband being off work on Memorial Day got me a day behind, and then somehow I overcompensated and got a day ahead in the later part of the week. Just the latest on a lengthening list of stupid things I've done lately – where is my brain? So anyway, baseball-gameless, I decided to watch some “junk tv” – whatever I could find in useless reality shows or documentaries. I was looking for “Fantastic Houseboats”, but I couldn't find the Travel Channel (have I mentioned that I never watch tv? I don't even know what our channels are! Well, I know Noggin, PBS, and Nickleodeon by heart, but nothing other than kids' channels...), so I ended up watching something called “Jail” that was really a Cops knock-off and then an interesting show on E! – 20 Most Horrifying Hollywood Murders. Ah, celebrity gossip meets true crime = perfect junk tv! It was quite interesting; though I had already known about most of the cases which included: Nicole Brown Simpson, Bonnie Lee Bakley, Rebecca Shaeffer (an 80s tv star that was murdered by a stalker, how sad), Dominique Dunne, Bob Crane, Sharon Tate, Black Dahlia, Tupac Shakur, Biggie Smalls, and Jose and Kitty Menendez. I did miss a little bit of the show, but I kept waiting for the Phil Hartman case to come on – I thought that would be considered ‘horrifying’ as he was

unexpectedly murdered by his cocaine-addicted wife Brynn who then committed suicide. Perhaps it was one of the 20 on the show and I just missed it? And the show also spotlighted something I'd like to try if I ever find myself in Hollywood again: the [Dearly Departed Tours](#). The name speaks for itself. I have a macabre sense of curiosity that way, which is also why I'd like time someday to delve into Steven Bocho's (famous producer who gave us NYPD Blue, Hill Street Blues, and Doogie Howser, MD) first attempt at a novel – where I got the title of this post. Found Death By Hollywood at the Dollar Store and it looked worth a buck to sit on my shelf for years until I had the time to read it.

So anyway, lots of death in Hollywood lately, and it's sad. Even for those of us with somewhat morbid curiosities; there were still people behind the celebrity facades, and their loved ones left behind are hurting. No matter to what degree of fame they rose, they were all human beings, so how could their deaths be anything but sad?

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## **A Patch Of Blue In A Sea Of Black And White**

We took a fun little excursion to Chicago this past weekend and had a few adventures! More about those later (if I get to them – my time to blog has dwindled A LOT lately!). What I want to write about now is the Chicago Cubs game. Let me begin by escorting the elephant from the room – the Cubs got creamed by the White Sox yesterday. There, I said it. And I'm just stating fact, unfortunately. We were lucky enough to have tickets (happy birthday to me from Hubby – THANK YOU!!!!!!) for Sunday's game – the final game of a 3 game

series between the cross-town MLB rivals the Cubs and the White Sox. This game was to be the "rubber match" – with both teams tied at 1 win apiece for this series, Sunday's outcome would decide the series winner. But the Cubs lost. Miserably. It was almost like they didn't show up to play baseball – which is something I and probably at least a few other Cubs fans lovingly yelled from the stands. We got to watch Carlos Zambrano, the Cubs famously hot-headed starting pitcher, take the mound – and consequently lose his control and get booed off the field. And let me say it wasn't just Sox fans who were booing Zambrano. But I think it was awesome that he was the starting pitcher the day we got to go watch the game live, and he was really fun to watch. It was frustrating to see the empty bullpen across right field though – it seemed empty forever. My husband and I really thought Lou Pinnella should have made the call to the bullpen a little bit sooner and at least get someone throwing balls down there – Zambrano does not recover his game often once he loses it. We were both watching for Lou's call, and finally Zambrano made his trademark nasty move – the guy gets so angry that he beans someone. He throws a 90ish mph baseball AT the batter! So then he stalks off the field, gives the fans a one-finger salute (I don't think it was THAT finger), and goes into the locker room to pout by himself. He didn't throw down any water coolers on the way this time as he's also been known to do, but I can't say that I wouldn't have liked to see that. As lucky as we were to get to see Big Z pitch, he didn't do very well and we were happy to see him go.

But alas, Zambrano was not the only problem yesterday since the Cubs' bats haven't produced much of anything for weeks, and our game day was no exception. Thus we witnessed a shut-out on the Cubs.

But that's enough of that. It 's amazing how much fun we had despite the worst possible scenario for the game! I LOVE live baseball, and MLB almost doesn't compare to the smaller AAA

and AA leagues. Those are fun too, but comparing those atmospheres is really like comparing apples and oranges. It was kind of toasty in the sun, and my knees got burnt to a crisp; I'm dealing with that today. For those of you who want to know the outrageous robbery they're getting away with in MLB stadiums across the country, at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago, it costs \$23 to park, \$6.75 for a 20 oz. beer, \$4 for a bottle of pop or water (let me guess – they took out all the public drinking fountains, I sure didn't see any), and \$4.75 for a hot dog. If you can keep yourself hydrated during the game, you can save yourself \$6 on 2 bottles of water by buying one before and one after the game from the street vendors – they sell them for \$1, which isn't bad at all in that heat! Originally I had planned to eat all day at the stadium, but I just wasn't hungry in the heat. There's nothing like sitting there at a baseball game and cracking peanuts, but I actually passed on those too. I certainly didn't want to leave my seat much, and by the time the peanut vendor arrived, we no longer felt like sitting there calmly cracking peanuts while the Cubs played like you-know-what and gave the game away. That reminds me – we had GREAT seats, upper-level, 3rd base side, right about even with the pitcher. We had a bird's-eye view of Zambrano's animal-like pacing and stomping rituals on the mound. I guess that's enough about the game – interesting how we were ALMOST late...

Sox park (its real name is a tongue and finger-typing twister) is situated on I-90, one of Chicago's expressways. I was anxious to try Jill the GPS's skills in a city environment since she had so failed us in Pittsburgh, but more so in the outskirts, we weren't really in downtown Pittsburgh. Jill did fine in the big city of Chicago, but when we got off the expressway, it was chaos – and it wasn't like Jill was programmed to guide us through the Sox's bizarre parking system; red coupons, green coupons, etc. We THOUGHT we had left in plenty of time for the game and might even see some batting practice, but we hit some traffic on the way down (did



I mention this was also a weekend for the Taste of Chicago?!? Oops – bad planning on our part; we couldn't believe it. The Taste draws *millions!*). Anyway, when we arrived on the south side, we were confused about where to go for cash (\$23!) parking. There were people directing traffic (don't know if they were cops or city workers or Sox park workers, but I might find out so I can file a complaint!), so we asked one of the ladies how to get to cash parking. She said, "I'm going to let you make a U-Turn (we were heading east, toward the stadium), and you make the u-turn and go to 33rd street. So we made the U-turn and headed west when we began to get a not-so-comfortable feeling. Remember, we had seen the stadium, and we were now heading away from it, out of the city. And usually numbered streets in cities are parallel to each other. So if we were looking for 33rd, most likely we should see 31st, 32nd, or 34th streets first – but we weren't. So we turned around, and an hour later, when we finally figured out where to be, we had passed the "helpful" traffic person again and confirmed our suspicions: she had tried to take us out of the city **on purpose**. In fact, when we passed Ms. Directions again, there was a Sox parking pay lot *one block* in front of her. I like to think the best of people, but here it's obvious that earlier, she had us make the U-turn rather than turn around so we wouldn't be able to see that she was taking us the wrong way. Rude isn't even the word for that. As most locals know, Sox park is not known for being nestled in safe neighborhoods – Wrigley Field, home of the Cubs, is known as the "Friendly Confines" – NOT Sox Park. We were fine, the area didn't get too bad, my husband just got really upset that we might be late for the game. Indeed, when we did finally find our lot, there was a big line and we sat in it for a long time. I can't help but wonder if maybe Ms. Helpful had noticed the color of our shirts – Cubbie blue- which isn't exactly welcome on the south side of Chicago. And those Cubbie blue shirts we wore (which ironically said "Cubs win!", sheesh) were probably responsible for other rude behaviors directed our way. For instance, my husband got bumped a

little harder than regular crowd jostling, and some of his popcorn spilled. Sox fans nearby jeered, and there were also the people who would walk by us up the stairs on the way to their seats (we were seated on an aisle) and feel inclined to say "Cubs suck". Yesterday they may have had a point.

The people directly around us were friendly enough, a mix of Chicago fans, both north and south, Cubs and Sox. Some people wore a Sox hat and a Cubs shirt, while there were families of people dressed for both teams, an interesting mix. As I looked around the stadium, I saw mostly white shirts (the black shirts were hard to see) in the sea of people, although the sea was dotted with many patches of Cubbie blue, much like the blue patch the two of us created. As rude as a select few Sox fans were though, I suppose they can't be all bad... on the way in to the stadium, it was extremely windy and we both got our Cubs hats blown right off our heads – maybe it was a sign of things to come... But anyway, it was Sox fans who helped us retrieve the runaway hats.

Overall, a great day for some baseball; definitely something I hope to do again. Except next time, I think we'll park far away and take the train to the stadium and forget trying to park in the city. We hit traffic on the way out too, and an hour after the game had ended, I turned around and I could still see Sox park which was STILL within walking distance!  
TOO MUCH TRAFFIC!