

Dear (Deer) Friends

It's always fun to read about friendship that crosses the boundaries between animal species. I received some cute pictures of a cat and her deer friend via an email forward. What's interesting is that friendships between cats and deer don't seem to be as uncommon as one would think – I was having trouble getting the picture from the email to the blog, so I did a search for cat and deer pictures, and I came up with pictures of at least 5 different cats being friendly with deer! But thanks to Hubby for graciously taking the time (even during football playoffs) to help me get the original pictures from my email. These are cute!



Home and kind of in the dark...

I was scheduled to go to my sister's for a family Christmas dinner/gift exchange. Unfortunately, I am unable to go. I had the unfortunate luck to hit a deer on my way to work. I'm very sorry for the deer I hit, and my poor truck. While it is still drivable, there are some problems.

The inspection by the Highway patrol went fine, the insurance was no problem at all. This was the good part of the day

The passenger side head lights are out. The driver side seems to come and go. So no driving at night. So now I am sitting at home, and not going out.

There was also a game night scheduled at some good friends. After getting home, even with good lights, I found our back county roads very, very dangerous. I was slipping and sliding at 20 miles per hour and less. The rain that fell during the day made the road worse than they were this morning.

So here I am, sitting at home and blogging away...

Sigh...

The REAL Bambi and Thumper

I'll admit I got these super-cute animal pictures from an email forward... they are just too cute... The skeptic in me says, are they real? I looked on snopes.com and didn't see anything, but in this age of photoshop, you never know. If they are photoshopped, the creator did an excellent job... Let's pretend they're real and that these animal buddies have such a wonderful friendship that it spanned at least 2 seasons

as the pictures suggest – they're too cute not to believe it!



I have to clean my truck too.

Yep, I was also at the wild animal park with a couple of other bloggers on [Tangent's](#). Check out their stories [here](#) and [here](#).

I had a lot of fun on my latest trip to the African Safari Park in Port Clinton. This year was a slightly different experience for me. Number 1 it was the first time I ever took my own vehicle into the park. Number 2 was that this year I had back window that could open all the way. My very first experience with this park was back in the 1970's. They still had lions in an area you could drive through. Having lions right outside your vehicle is something else. I'm sure the insurance cost and the safety of the animals brought this practice to an end. As much as I like the big cats, I think this is a better park for not having them there.

Now on to what they did have. Lots of Elk. To have one of these large members of the deer family stick their head in your vehicle is really something. To have 4 of them at once, that is beyond belief. Of course they do want to be fed, and are looking, and smelling for handouts. One even took a whole bag of carrots, but we got them back, I don't think she liked the bag.

Then there were some smaller deer and antelope roaming the area. They were a well behaved when compared to their larger brethren. They seemed a little bit shy this year, compared to last year's visit. Maybe they were just well fed and had no need to come up to the cars and trucks.

On to the American Bison, and very large cattle. I had the "pleasure" of going face to face with an American Bison on the ride through the park. This does tend to make me a bit leery, since I know someone who has a bison ranch, and I've seen first hand what one of those animals can do to a truck when they want to. These bison seem very friendly, but they do have

terrible breath. They really seemed to like walking with the vehicles as they drive through. We had one that was only interested in the carrots, and would not take the other dried pellets the park sells. The cattle were something else. I saw two types, both had very large horns, but one had very long hair. My youngest called him Ludo last year, because he reminded her of the Large creature from the movie [Labyrinth](#). We did manage to save a carrot for him. The other two long horned cattle had horns about 4 to 5 feet long each and the base was at least 12 in circumference. Big horns. That did stop these fellows from sticking their head too far into the truck, but they had very long tongues to make up for that.

Then on the the area where the other animals were enclosed away from the vehicles. Among these were Giraffes, Zebras and a Giant Eland. Even they got close to the fences looking for handouts.

Everything about the early part of the day was great fun. Everybody got to get as much of the animal experience as they wanted, and I think we went away happy. A little damp, from drool, but happy.

And I got a photo of me with a rather large snake. Not that I really think these would make a good pet for me, but I am strangely drawn to these fascinating creatures.

I'm trying to find out the names of the large cattle, hopefully they are on the brochure. They don't appear to be on the [website](#)

Saturday Slobber

Well, school starts on Tuesday, so for one last summery hurrah, we ventured over to the coastal cities in Ohio on Lake Erie for some fun. First stop was the African Safari Park in Port Clinton, which is really more of a drive-thru zoo than anything having to do with Africa. They do have zebras, giraffes, and camels, but most of their animals hail from North America. It's always an extremely fun experience, and we try to go every year. Since this summer was very busy with the new baby and all, it didn't occur to me that we hadn't gone yet until I struck up a conversation with a really nice elderly couple at a restaurant the other day. When I asked where they were from, they replied, "west of Cleveland", so that got me thinking about the Safari Park in Port Clinton. On the way home from the restaurant that night, I said to my husband, you know, we haven't been to the safari park this year... An idea was hatched, and there we were on Saturday with 6 of our closest friends.

Saturday morning was almost like a one-act play with all of us standing there on our front porch, trying to figure out who was going to ride with whom; we were trying to find the best way to do things to be as economically (and environmentally) friendly as possible... We ended up taking just 2 cars for the 12 of us, and then once we got to Port Clinton, it was like musical chairs (cars) once again while we tried to figure out how to position everyone to get the most bang for our buck, so to speak, since the safari place charges by carload *and* by individual...

So anyway, after a stop at Cheese Haven In Port Clinton – and now I have to go off on yet another tangent because Cheese Haven is \$000 good and totally worth a stop if you're in the area. And what I mean by "in the area" is anywhere up to 100 or even 1000 miles, depending on how much you like cheese. They have so many varieties, along with fresh jerkies and beef

sticks and other yummy treats. We stopped there to get our lunch of corned beef sandwiches – and they have the **best** corned beef sandwiches, yum. Unfortunately, I was not willing to take 4 kids into the cheese store to run around, so I was stuck in the car with the kids, but my oh-so-thoughtful hubby talked the worker into making me a sample bag (which they're not supposed to do, you only get the free samples if you go into the store, but hey, I was stuck in the car), AND he made my sandwich for me – how sweet ☐

Ok, tangent aside... now we've arrived at the Safari Park, and it is SO crowded... Makes me think twice about going there again next summer unless it's near their last weekend of operation like it was when we went last year... I mean, I just can't stand waiting in line to go to the bathroom, of all things... Waiting in line is not much fun at all, but when you're waiting in line to do something as necessary and as unrewarding as going to the bathroom, it's really annoying. So, because it was so crowded, it took us forever to get through the drive-through zoo part; although not as long as it took the other vehicle in our caravan because they were stuck behind an obscenely slow white van the whole time... So while we got out of the drive-through section, they had barely just begun... But the whole park is a really cool place; even more so if you don't care about the vanity nor cleanliness of your car since there are some rather huge creatures (including deer, elk, elands, buffalo, zebras, giraffe and longhorns) who drool, head-butt, lick, slobber, and basically invade your car as you drive through *their* habitat. I think you must truly be an animal lover to appreciate the place since you come out filthy... This was the first time we had been there in our new car, but I'm happy to report no major damage, that I know about, at least; but what's this about driving our car through a pond, jamiahsh?!?

We'll get to the bottom of that later... when you come out of the drive-through part, it's time for the walk-through zoo

section, and there they have monkeys, macaws (military, not green-winged as the sign said), ocelots, warthogs, alpacas, and tortoises; not to mention rides for the kiddes: ponies and camels. I noticed that they had 2 camels for riding; one was resting while the other gave the rides. But interestingly, one was a Dromedary and the other a Bactrian camel, the difference between the two species being mainly in how many humps they had... My daughters rode the Dromedary (1 hump), and they really seemed to enjoy themselves – I wonder if riding the Bactrian (2 humps) would have been any different? I was envious because I'm no where near the 125 lb. weight limit, so I'll probably never get to ride a camel... After that, we got to check out an animal show, ironically titled "Laugh With the Animals". It was ironic because our host for the show was so dry – she had the audience doing everything *but* laughing... It was a fun show, though, and something that we hadn't yet done at the park in our previous visits. Overall, an interesting day... as it is anytime you have 12 people on an outing together!

If you liked reading my synopsis of the day, check out my fellow tangents.org blogger and get Jamiahsh's take on the whole thing. I'm going to take a lesson from him and blog this in 2 installments... got to leave the readers craving more, so they say! Check out my next post for a full summary of our visit to a year-round haunted house – Ghostly Manor in Sandusky, Ohio! Until then...

Crazy Busy

In the past few days, I've been able to catch up a little, but I haven't written much before today and yesterday because we have been too busy having fun!

It started last Friday when we took the kids out to the [Fun Spot](#) in Angola Indiana. We had a great time, but I think I learned a lesson about taking 3 kids out for a full day of fun in the sun while I'm trying to nurse a full-term pregnancy. It was over 80°, and we ran out of water and I got sick. I think what pushed me over the edge was trying to watch my 20-month-old as she sat at the edge of a pool while my other children and husband went on the water slide. It's hard to explain to someone who doesn't know, but being this hugely pregnant is basically like being incapacitated – if my toddler had fallen into the water, it would have taken me way too long to get over to her. There was a lifeguard present, but still I was a nervous wreck and the stress of the situation was too much, so I picked her up and took her away from the pool. This of course made her cry, and so the exhaustion came from trying to redirect her and do something else in the heat... it was all just too much for me when all I wanted was a seat in the air conditioned arcade. And for his part, my husband only got to go down the waterslide once which also made me feel badly because he had so much fun, but I just couldn't handle our toddler any longer in the heat alone.

After the water slide fiasco, we made our way to the animal area – they have a macaw parrot and a few baby deer and some big cats. They are rescue cats; lions and tigers and a cougar, and I'm not sure where they were rescued from. I was a little disenchanted with how small the animals' enclosures were, but since they are large cats and spend roughly 20 hours a day sleeping, I think it's a good thing that they've been rescued at all and get food and shelter every day.

Then it was time for more rides, and this place is built for kids my daughters' ages! They have about 10 kiddie rides which all 3 of them could ride, and my 8-year-old still really enjoys these since she's not ready for big rides yet. Her little sister, on the other hand, cannot wait until she is a little taller and gets to ride the 4 roller coasters the Fun

Spot also has. Then they have several middle-of-the-road rides for everyone, like flying boats, a scrambler, a tilt-a-whirl, and even more I'm not mentioning. Compared to the carnival that just left our town, admission into the Fun Spot is a steal – it was \$4 for me, a non-rider who just wanted to visit the zoo. Our little toddler cost only \$4, and she was able to ride about 10 rides. Our 4-year-old was \$8, and my husband and our oldest were \$16 each. So for a grand total of \$48, it was a full day of family fun and much cheaper than the traveling carnival or even the county fair, based on what you get for your money. And I have to add that in June – too bad it's over now – but in June they had a special promotion where if you bring in a report card with A's and B's on it, the kid that earned them gets in free! So subtract \$16 from our \$48, and our day of fun was only \$32 – we were really pleased. The only problem with the place is that they are at the mercy of the weather always, and with all the rain and storms we've been getting, our day of fun was no exception and was cut short when a sudden storm moved in. But it was only an hour and a half away from closing anyway. Also, we had been about to leave as it was, and the staff handed out half-price admission coupons, so we will definitely be back when I can enjoy some of the rides myself after the baby is born. And I will be able to give hubby another few rounds on the water slide! We were so pleased with the place that we tried to go back Sunday since we wanted to take advantage of the report card promotion one more time before June was over, but alas, the weather foiled our plans and we ended up at [Crazy Pinz](#) in Fort Wayne, Indiana instead. Still a fun day, but no where near the value of Fun Spot. Crazy Pinz is an indoor entertainment place, and they have an arcade, mini-golf, bowling, and a 3-story play area for the kids. We've been there before and really liked it, but this time, everything had changed and was MUCH more expensive. But, we had 4 little kids (brought a friend along) who really thought we were doing something really fun that day, so what could we do but spend the day at Crazy Pinz regardless. I have to mention that

somehow, on the way to Fun Spot on Sunday, my husband and I got to talking I guess and somehow missed the exit and overshot the place by about 20 miles. (Sorry for not using you, Mr. GPS, I thought I knew where we were going!) Then Fun Spot was closed for rain, so we had to head down to Fort Wayne, and overall we ended up spending an extra \$20-30 on gas... Kind of a big oopsie with gas prices being so high in this day and age. It was a bad luck kind of day, but we did end up salvaging it, and overall, it was an AWESOME weekend.

Saturday we went with friends to see the movie [Wall-E](#) and then visited a friend who is recovering from heart surgery. He is doing well thankfully, and we all enjoyed our visit together – even the kids, who played with cats and bugs and other creatures found around their house in the country. We ran up to their church which was having an ice cream social and enjoyed delicious food and homeade ice cream – a dream for a pregnant lady – YUM! Wall-E was pretty good and as it turns out, the Pixar people had a brainstorming meeting years ago, and this is the last film to be made from ideas presented at that meeting. Others are [A Bug's Life](#), [Monster's Inc.](#), and [Finding Nemo](#), so needless to say, that brainstorming lunch should go down in history! I have to say I was a little taken aback by the lack of human dialogue in Wall-E. Even after seeing the previews, I wasn't prepared for it. I think this is what may have finished off my 4-year-old since she had to leave the movie theater with dad before the movie was even half over. She's been able to make it through the last 5-10 movies we've been to in a theater, so that's why I think it was the lack of dialogue in this one that did her in. It was a cute movie though, but not on par with Pixar's latest features like Monsters Inc. or especially Finding Nemo, at least in my opinion. Then again, it was SO different, mostly because it was so futuristic that I suppose it's hard to compare to the others.

So yeah, fun extended weekend, even though piles of laundry

await my folding. If you're anywhere nearby, head out to Angola, Indiana and visit the Fun Spot, it's well worth it especially if you have really little ones – it totally trumps a place like Six Flags with their high admission prices and long lines.