

Rides Jamiahsh Broke

This is the long-awaited post (by some anyway) that details the uncanny coincidences of ride break-downs we encountered while in Orlando, Florida. Here is a list of the following rides that stalled or broke down while fellow blogger jamiahsh was along. Not to blame him, but... ☐

Epcot: Spaceship Earth, the boat ride in Mexico, the boat ride in Norway – not only did the boat stall during the ride, but also, after we exited the boat, the doors at the end of the ride failed to open, trapping us and the 4-5 boat-fulls after us!

Universal Studios – The Mummy – got stuck where the ride gets “hot”, the Simpsons ride, Cat in the Hat ride

Magic Kingdom – Carousel of Progress glitched, Peter Pan’s Flight, Haunted Mansion, Pirates of the Caribbean (multiple times), Snow White

We’ve been to Disney World lots of times, and although we’ve been involved in rides stalling and getting backed up, it’s never happened with the frequency of this year when jamiahsh was with us. Therefore, the phenomenon of him “breaking the rides” is a running joke of sorts, and that’s why I had to make a post of it. Break-downs aside, a fun trip was had by all, and the uncanny ride luck jamiahsh had is now merely blog fodder – and that’s always fun.

Vacation Diary – Chapter Two

Monday, October 20 (Disney's 2nd birthday!!) – Started off bright and early in Orlando with a time share presentation – yuck. We've been to a few of these, and we try to schedule at least one every time we're in the Orlando area because they pay well. This time, we got \$100 cash. It took over 3 hours, but hey, that's over \$30/hour – well worth it in my opinion. I could go on and on about time share presentations because there are always certain things they do to get you to buy one – there must be a formula to the presentations. And let's face it, they're one of the biggest rip-offs that exist. The last few we've gone to, we've played a little game where I think of a random word my husband has to say to the time share people. This time it was "gondola". Unfortunately, we didn't get the word in because the presentation took much longer than they said it would (big surprise) and we had our friend jamiahsh waiting for us. This also saw us getting to Epcot later than we would have liked, but we still got to do most of everything we wanted at Epcot. If you've been to a time share presentation (or 2 or 3 or more), then you should check out the South Park episode about it. I'm not a huge fan of the show, but the time share episode is hilarious. It was actually recommended to us by a time share salesman once!

The manatees are my favorite thing at Epcot. My husband makes fun because we have manatees right here at the Columbus Zoo in Ohio, but that's 3 hours away and I've only been there once. Besides, I've been to Epcot a bunch and I'm starting to get to know their manatees. Last time I was lucky enough to see them hugging! A peaceful feeling comes over me as I watch them swim. We did miss the Crush (from Finding Nemo) show, and we meant to go back for it but forget – oh well. And for those of you who've been to Disney World before, you should know that they've updated the Spaceship Earth ride – that's the one in the big huge golfball that is Epcot's signature. I don't

like the new version nearly as much as the old one. The ride needed updating. It takes riders through the history of human communication, and one of the scenes had become outdated as time passed because people don't communicate in the ways that they visualized we would when the ride was built. Soarin' is my favorite ride at Epcot, but it always has HUGE lines. This time we were able to get a fastpass, but we could only ride once and my husband wasn't able to ride because our 2 year old was in a Daddy-clingy kind of mood. We ended the night at Epcot by running all over the park in a desperate search for a soft pretzel. Our 4-year-old was being so uncharacteristically well-behaved that I was willing to get her anything she wanted, especially since she was asking about it nicely.

Vacation Diary – Chapter One

Because Disney World and the Orlando area in Florida are our favorite places to vacation, we make it a point to go as often as we possibly can. The last few trips we've made, I've been careful to keep a trip diary – a notebook log of things we do as well as hints that might help us make the next journey. Each trip to FL sees me taking a notebook for our trip diary, and I write about various things in it, depending how much downtime I have to write while the kids are sleeping. Here is an excerpt from the diary for this trip:

FRIDAY OCT 17, 2008 – Left town about 5:30pm. Unfortunately, our local Burger King we decided to get for dinner took about 30 minutes! Kids were rambunctious, so we stopped at a McDonald's Playland in downstate Ohio, wondering how we were ever going to make it the remaining 1,000 miles and back again (at least I was!). The good news is, the Playland seemed to

tire out the kids and they fell asleep. They woke around midnight, but a trip into the gas station seemed to comfort Disney (almost 2 year old) and the kids slept until about 8 am Sat morning.

SAT OCT 18, 2008 – We stopped at another McD's Playland to blow off some steam, but it was raining, so their outdoor playplace was closed. The kids handled it well. This was north of coastal Brunswick, GA, so we made pretty good time the night before – thanks to sleepless driver Chris! Since the weather was nice, when we saw a sign around Jacksonville, FL that the beach was only 4 miles away, we decided to stop. We had a great time, and the kids had lots of fun wading in the ocean and collecting seashells. After that, it was on to Orlando, and we stopped and picked up the key for our condo rental when we got there. We then made it to the condo – which was over 10 miles away, much to our surprise – where our faithful driver promptly crashed leaving me to facilitate the activities of 4 well-rested kids. But no problem, I was glad to do it. After all, I had been afforded a nice nap in the car on the way down, a luxury my husband didn't get. Of course, I'm a person who does best with 8-10 hours of sleep, not that I ever get close to that, but still... So I'm doing my best to summon all the patience I have so I can watch the kids who would not let me nap, and I ended up taking the younger two to Walgreens with me to get some supplies. The place we stayed in was very nice, but it didn't come with anything – no soap, shampoo, paper towels, beverages... for a family of 6 staying for a week, these were necessities I would need at the local Walgreens. I killed some time there, got lost on the way back, and by the time I had unloaded kids and groceries, my husband was rested and ready for some fun. We went to Golden Corral for dinner... delicious. Reminder for those of you who live in urban areas – we're not used to a variety when it comes to eating out. So, when we eat out, even at major chain restaurants, we appreciate them in a way we never did when they were available constantly.

SUN OCT 19 – slept in, had lunch at Golden Corral. Read my post about the previous night's activities if you don't understand why we had two meals in a row with Golden Corral. I would say the lunch is even better than the dinner. So then we went to Old Town, which is a row of shops fashioned like an old fashioned Main Street – there's even a general store where they sell little glass bottles of Pepsi for 50¢. When we first started going to Old Town 10 years ago, those little bottles were a quarter, but I'm not complaining – there's something about the glass bottle that makes that Pepsi taste extra good. Maybe it's the thirst quenching relief it provides after walking around in the Florida heat, or maybe it's the always much needed caffeine boost – whatever the reason, that little bottle always hits the spot. The Main St. part of Old Town is about 4-5 blocks long, and at each end, there are carnival rides. The roller coaster is jerky but fun, and I went on the swinging boat ride which was scarier than it looked! My fearless daughter, who always wants to try the big rides but isn't tall enough yet, was shaken enough on the swinging boat ride that she cried. We sat on the end, which I knew would be more thrilling than the middle, but I didn't realize how much more mild the middle would be until I rode there with our friend Jamiahsh. We had lots of fun at Old Town and kinda lost track of time. We wouldn't have been late for the dinner show Arabian Nights if we hadn't left the tickets back at the condo... oops. We had to walk around in the dark and missed the first few minutes of the show. At least they let my husband in, who let us out at the door and had to park the car. The worker in the parking lot told him to give all the tickets to me, but when my husband tried to get in, they gave him a hard time without a ticket! Thank goodness he was able to get in and also find us in the dark. [Arabian Nights](#) is a great show. Think Medieval Times (if you've been there) without the chivalrous games. Well, there is a chariot race, but there are more acrobatics and horse dancing – the horses are gorgeous. My husband calls it Medieval Times for girls, and all us girls in the family love

it. My husband was able to get a good deal on tickets online, so the show cost less than a regular dinner! And their food is really good. It's served with all-you-can-drink pop, which backfired a little bit because in the dark with the show going on, it was difficult to notice that our 2-year-old Disney was drinking A LOT of pop. So next thing I know, she's walking around, and she starts going up the stairs and tells me she'll be right back. I said, no, Disney let's stay in our seats, and then she YELLED at me – "I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!". It wasn't a really angry outburst, but if you know sweet little Disney, it was so out of character for her that it was hilarious. She was all hepped up on sugar and pop. So there's our first 2 days in Florida. We started Monday off with a time share presentation – ugh – so I'll take that as my cue to stop posting for now. This post is long enough, wouldn't you say?

Fall Back

It's been over a week since we've been in NW Ohio, and really, not much has changed. There are many less leaves on the trees than there were when we left for Disney World last Friday, but other than that... We haven't yet had a chance to check in with friends, so hopefully all is well everywhere. I have to admit that I was a bit scarred from our last vacation – we returned to the horrible news that my beloved kitty had passed away. So this time, I was nervous about coming home. I told our pet-sitter that if anyone dies this time to not tell us while we were in Florida, thinking, what good would that do... but that decision ended up backfiring majorly because then the whole time I was worried that something had happened and I didn't know about it because I had left the instructions not to call us... But nothing catastrophic occurred, at least not to us or any of our pets, and we had a wonderful time. Now

more than ever I know what people mean when they say that they need a vacation from their vacation. After taking 4 little kids on a 1,000+ mile road trip each way and returning with the trashed car and the dirty laundry and housekeeping catch-up for a family of 6, I could really use a vacaion!

Oh well... we had a great time and I wouldn't trade our experiences for the world – or all the laundry in the world. More to come about the trip after I unpack some and get used to the fact that I did not gain an extra hour this weekend like Jill my GPS friend told me I had – guess she (along with my alarm clock – glad I noticed that before tomorrow morning) is pre-programmed for the “fall back” switch for daylight savings time. The only problem is that Jill and my alarm clock were programmed before the daylight savings hours were adjusted thanks to President Bush. So they are now an hour behind... but no matter, they can stay that way for another week or two, whenever we change the clocks... and then, I will get my extra hour of sleep – always fun!

DOA Disposal

Sunday I had some dishes full of dip to clean that had been left sitting out from our game night Saturday night. I began to rinse them out in the sink, flipped the switch for the garbage disposal, and – nothing. Not a peep. My husband looked at it and found there's a little switch underneath the sink that turns it on, so he flipped that, and it now makes a little bit of noise at least, but it still doesn't work. A call to the plumber found that they charge \$300 to put in a new disposal. That's not really an option right now since we're trying to save money to be able to take the kids to Disney World before baby Christopher is old enough to add to

the trouble in our already crowded car. So if anyone reading this knows anything about disposals or how to fix them, please, please tell me how and hurry – the dishes of dip are starting to smell!

Random Celebrity Death And The Sunshine State

We are very fortunate to be able to visit the Orlando area in Florida (read: Disney World!) yearly, but during our past two visits, CNN has been overrun with news of unexpected and shocking celebrity deaths. In February 2007 during our visit, the breaking news was of model/actress Anna Nicole Smith's early demise. It was widely speculated that she was on drugs, but her death was still very surprising especially considering her 20-year-old son, Daniel Smith's shocking death just 3 months earlier.

During our latest outing to the Sunshine State in late January of this year, it was Heath Ledger's accidental overdose that ruled the news. At the time, I have to admit that I didn't know exactly who he was or what movies he was in, but I did recognize what a big name he had in show business. His death took everyone by surprise; so much so, that the event completely dominated the news while we were in Florida. With gas prices the way they are, I don't know if we'll make it back to Orlando this October as planned; we might have to push it off until early next year in January or February or even wait until the kids are older altogether... But if we do decide to go, I'll put out the word to watch out for a random celebrity's unexpected passing...

Name Origins

With the revelation that we will be parents of a baby boy for the first time ever, I guess this puts the great 'Frances' debate to rest – at least for now. Since we already have 3 lovely girls and have gotten to name them all of our favorite names, I thought I'd like to name our fourth girl after my deceased grandmother Frances, even though neither me nor my husband really like the name itself. But, since we're now having a boy and I got my husband to let us name the baby after him and his father, we don't have to worry about the Frances issue anymore – but I wonder if getting to name the baby Christopher has me losing leverage if we were to need any baby girl names for the future? While thinking about all this name business, I searched through my email for our arrival announcement of our third daughter who has quite an unusual name, and if you're wondering, here is the email we sent out when she was born about how we came up with it:

How did she get the name Disney?

Well... We took our honeymoon (back in 1999) at Disney World in Florida and

a few weeks after we returned we discovered we were pregnant with our first-born Taylor!

The next time we would go to Disney World in 2003 we would return home to

learn that there was again some "Disney magic" and baby Samantha was on her

way! In late 2004 we decided we wanted another baby but we were

disappointed month after month; it seemed we were having trouble getting

pregnant for the third time... But wouldn't you know it – we

took a trip

to Disney World in early 2006 and guess what? MAGIC – AGAIN!
So in October of 2006, we welcomed Disney Alyssa!

As I've said to people many times, her name seems to have worked, because it truly fits the child. Disney is our most mild-mannered, sweet, and happy child so far. But it makes me wonder, since little Christopher is the only one who was conceived without Disney World magic, could this be the secret to us finally having a boy?!?

Walking With Dinosaurs

In case you haven't heard of it, [Walking With Dinosaurs](#) is a traveling show that is based on the BBC documentary of the same name. It is in Fort Wayne, Indiana this week, which isn't too far from us. They've been advertising it heavily, and I've been meaning to check out ticket info, but I kept forgetting. Thanks to our local paper who ran a story about it the other day, I was reminded about it just in time! Seems the tickets are QUITE costly! However, my computer-savvy husband went online and found a discount that saved us 50 much money on tickets, but only if we went opening night... So, we dragged all the kids to Fort Wayne to see some dinosaurs on a school night. Let me say, it was 5000 worth it!

It's been a really long time since I was really excited about something that actually ended up measuring up to my expectations. I was really excited about this show; I thought it would be a good show, but I will say that it *EXCEEDED* my expectations! Not only was it visually stunning, It was a perfect show for the whole family. There were lifelike

dinosaurs engaging in battles, flying, and scavenging... what's not to like?!? We have kids of all ages and bravery levels, and they were all entertained. Our 8-year-old and our 4-year-old did get a little nervous in the beginning, but their fear quickly turned to excitement and awe once the dinosaurs started appearing. Our 19-month-old LOVED everything about the show. She is getting to the age where it's hard for her to sit still, especially now that she can walk, but she watched every moment of this show, and clapped and laughed so hard that I was even distracted from the dinosaurs at times by my daughter's cuteness. I wasn't distracted too much though, cuz the dinosaurs were totally AWESOME! They were life-size and SO realistic looking, it was amazing. Our seats were great too – best in the house, front row center. These dinosaurs were even better looking than the ones in the movie [Jurassic Park](#)! Walking With Dinosaurs operates on a \$20 million dollar budget, and it shows!

I would venture to say that this is probably the best professional live show I have ever seen, and that includes musicals from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, The Phantom of the Opera, Camelot, and Les Miserables to other shows like Monsters Inc. on Ice, Dragon Tales Live, and dinner shows like Medieval Times, Arabian Nights, and Pirates Dinner Adventure in Orlando, Florida. This was fun for the whole family; probably even most fun for my husband and I! If the tickets weren't so pricey, I would definitely go back and see the show again – even with the \$20-30 it cost in gas money alone. My 4-year-old suffered from what I call “fundown” after the show – a feeling of disappointment when an event is over that is so intense for kids, they usually cry or throw tantrums. But I can't say I blame her. When I realized the show was ending, I had my own “fundown” when I realized there weren't going to be any more dinosaurs!

Totally awesome show – wait, that's not even the right word. It was more of an experience than a show. Even better than

the dinosaur-themed rides at Disney World and Universal Studios. As we were leaving the coliseum, the rest of the audience seemed very pleased as well. Everyone was smiling and jabbering about the dinosaurs a mile a minute. They also had one actor – who was upstaged by the dinosaurs, of course! – and some other props and effects in the show that made it totally awesome. Also pretty impressive were the rows upon rows of trailers parked outside that carry the dinosaurs from venue to venue. I knew it would take a few semis to cart around all those dinosaurs, but there were probably at least 25 semis parked out there! It is understandable that all these lifesize dinosaurs would create such an entourage, since the Brachiosaurus alone was 36 feet tall and 56 feet from nose to tail.

If this live show experience is going to be anywhere near your hometown, I highly recommend that you do your best to get tickets. It is a perfect show for the young and old, dinosaur fans, skeptics, or even those who are indifferent to the world's history; I don't see how anyone could NOT enjoy Walking With Dinosaurs!

Zip-a-dee-doo-dah

It is very hard to imagine but one of the most controversial movies of all time is a Disney film. Released in 1946, *Song of the South* has never been released on video nor DVD in the U.S. It won an Oscar for Best Song and has been re-released in theatres several times (most recently in 1986). However, the powers that be at Disney feel that the movie has a strong racial tone. As recently as 2007, the issue has been raised with the same result: no release. However, the movie has been released on video in foreign markets.

It also seems peculiar that there is an attraction based upon the film at Disney World. Splash Mountain takes riders on a journey through the Briar Patch which is populated by Br'er Rabbit, Br'er Bear, Br'er Fox, and other characters from the stories of Uncle Remus.

As explained in the following [article](#), it seems highly unlikely that *Song of the South* will be released in this country in the near future. However, outlets such as ebay.com may have access to copies.