

Memorial Day Weekend

In honor of fallen US soldiers on

MEMORIAL DAY 2009



The dead soldier's silence sings
our national anthem. **-Rev. Aaron Kilbourn**

Despite the seriousness of Memorial Day and what it signifies, it is a day that is also known for kicking off the summer season in much of the United States – the season of swimming pools, backyard BBQ's, and days of school-less freedom for kids accompanied by the school-less dread cast upon many parents.

We had an action-packed but great Memorial Day weekend, beginning with a fun game night Friday night, and we stayed up too late. Saturday I slept late (though I still only got about 4 hours of sleep!), and while I was sleeping, the kids set up a garage sale and got quite a few customers – I wrote about this in a previous blog post. Saturday night we decided we would take the kids to experience the drive-in movie theater – best before the mosquitoes got too bad for the year (yeah right) and before it gets too hot out. We arrived at the drive-in early (I wrote about [this place](#) in another post as well; it's a drive-in movie theater that was built on a family's farm in the middle of the country), and we gave

Ladderball (amazing what a dangerous weapon two balls on a string can be when in the hands of children) and Cornhole a try, but the kids had way more fun rolling on the huge area of open grass. They delighted in petting the roaming farm dogs, and likewise – the dogs loved it too. Before the movie started, we spilled 2 of the 3 cans of pop we had brought for the kids, and then disaster really struck – the mosquitoes came out in full force. My oldest daughter, who has a propensity for attracting mosquitoes anyway, started getting eaten alive and screaming about it. Now the movie was starting – Oh, and it was Night at the Museum 2, something we really wanted to see. So we had to pack up our little “camp” and quickly pile into the van to escape the carnivorous mosquitoes. Once inside, it was hot and cramped. Luckily my son was asleep, but the rest of us were all in the back of the van with the seats down trying to stake a claim on a piece of steamless window so we could see the movie. More pop was spilled, and some blankies became unusable for the night, which of course caused more tantrums. There was about 20 minutes left in the movie when everyone settled down, and our 2-year-old fell asleep – 2 down, 2 to go! During the intermission between the movies, we found out that many of the mosquitos went away, and my husband and I moved outside while the girls laid in the back of the van. They did not see very much of Wolverine – our oldest didn’t make it past the opening credits. While we weren’t really interested in seeing Wolverine a second time, we did so anyway since we had already paid for it and we were now kid-free. It was such a nice night to sit under the stars and watch a movie, and it became perfect when a silent farm dog came over for some more petting, honestly, what could be better? From what I saw of it, Night at the Museum 2 is really funny. I definitely have to see it again, but from what I was able to hear, Hank Azaria is just hilarious! And I guess I need to back up so I can tell everyone about my husband’s extremely embarrassing moment. We had pulled into our spot at the drive-in facing the screen, and then we noticed everyone else was backing in

and lifting their hatches so they could sit in the back of their vehicles. Thinking this would be a good idea, my husband went to turn the car around while I stood in our parking spot. I looked over to see when he was coming, and that's when I saw our van backing over one of those posts they have at the drive-in – OH NO. Worse yet, I heard the sound of laughter as people laughed at my husband – I felt so badly for him! The good news is, he was embarrassed, but mostly he was relieved because at first he thought he had hit a person! So no harm done, even the pole was ok. But this explains why turning the car around again was NOT an option when we got chased into the vehicle by mosquitoes!

Sunday we went to church of course, and we continued the Fearless series by hearing the story of Joshua, all of which was fitting for Memorial Day weekend. After church, we decided to do something fun and met friends at the new great restaurant and shared Saganaki, which gained some new fans, I think. Then we ventured up to Michigan, where they have a little fun park place with go-karts and bumper boats. We had a blast! Then the kids fell apart a little bit and presented a perfect example of my husband's patented "trickle-down crab-onomics" theory. Even so, we had lots of fun, despite the invasion of frogs at the fun park – you heard me, FROGS!

I am afraid of frogs, and I don't know why. It's not really something I fear in my head rationally, but rather a "physical" fear. When I see frogs, my body reacts in any one or more of the following ways: shaking, screaming, crying, "heebie-jeebies" where I'll just get this creeped out feeling like something is behind me or going to crawl up my back or something. So anyway, on the way over to the bumper cars, there was a grate over a deep manhole that had a BIG green frog in it. That guy was creepy, but I actually felt bad for him – I hope they can get him out. They said next time it rains, the well should fill up and he'll swim out, but I don't know... I wanted to throw some bugs down there for him. And

then while we were bumper boating, there was actually a FROG IN the bumper boat pool! Luckily for me, this one wasn't too big, but it really freaked me out – looked like a shark or an alligator floating like that with its head above the water. Once I got over the initial frog freak-out, I was worried it would get smashed by a bumper boat. But it didn't, and the workers said they get frogs all the time. On the way home, we decided to stop by a large lake where we looked for more frogs, snakes, turtles, and birds, of which, we saw lots. But, we got home late AGAIN and didn't even stay awake through our rented movie, oh well.

Monday we decided to take it easy and stay home, especially since we had lots of stuff to put away from the busy weekend. And we also had to get all of our garbage out since we get one garbage day per month where we can put out anything we want, no matter how large it is. We had tons of garbage from when we cleaned out and re-did the spare room, but when I woke up, all the garbage was already out there and the house was picked up! What a nice surprise; hubby is the BEST! We decided to go out and get a grill to add to our backyard Eden since we got our fence and our patio set the other day. We went to Walmart and got the grill and some food, and had a cookout, which went pretty well – it was easier and cheaper than taking the kids to a restaurant, and they were better behaved outside than they usually are inside. Overall, another GREAT weekend – I am thankful for the beautiful weather we had all weekend too! Tomorrow it's supposed to rain, but hey, maybe the frog will be freed. A good thing, as long as he doesn't hop down to Ohio!

Here's hoping that your Memorial Day weekend was safe and fun, and hopefully you paused to reflect upon the entire reason we celebrate this time of year – to remember, honor, and be thankful to those American citizens who lost their lives fighting for our country.

Happy Mother's Day!

Another weekend has come and gone – and quickly too, it was a busy one! And this post title is already outdated because I've been so busy I haven't had a chance to write until 2 days after Mother's Day!

Friday night saw me doing some volunteer work for a local theater board. It wasn't really work; basically it consisted of me making sure the audition process for our summer show (Joseph – my favorite!) was flowing smoothly. It was fun, though I'd be lying if I didn't express my concerns about my hubby giving his audition his best shot. More about THAT later, based upon whether he makes the show or not...

Saturday was my daughter's 5th birthday party. As usual, none of the 18 kids from her class called to RSVP, but I was tired of worrying about it – been there, done that, ever since our oldest started inviting friends to *her* birthday parties. I don't know why parents can't figure out how to RSVP. The day before the party, when we hadn't heard from anyone, I did make sure we called one friend of the birthday girl's who always attends her classmates' birthday parties, and luckily she showed up. We allowed our older daughter to invite one of her friends, just so we could be sure we'd have at least some kids joining the lame birthday party crowd of Mom, Dad, Grandma, and Uncle Bud. Thank goodness we did that, otherwise my daughter would have had NONE of her own friends show up at her own birthday party! Luckily, she was fixated on the slumber party that would take place at Grandma's hotel later that night, so she didn't really seem to mind the one-kid turnout. Of course, the one kid that could come was a very high-maintenance kid, and she also had an accident minutes after arriving at our house. AND, in order for her to be able to

come at all, she had to be dropped off at noon – 3 hours before the party was to start! But like I said, it was all worth it for our daughter to be able to have a friend at her party.

Saturday night my mom was very generous with her offer to take *all 4 kids* in her hotel room! Hubby and I ran like the wind, seizing an opportunity to go to a drive-in movie theater kid-less, even though neither of the movies sounded very intriguing. But we had never been to a drive-in together, and we found a place 45 minutes away. It was so cool; it was out in the country; basically a farm that people converted into a drive-in. A very far cry from the crowded drive-in I used to visit as a teenager in a suburb called West Chicago – not a very good area now, and even back then, there was always a squad car patrolling inside. Not the case here – we were in the middle of the country, and this place even had a little snack truck and games you could rent for free while waiting for the movie to start (cornhole – a regional favorite and some mini-golf holes). The movies – Wolverine and 12 Rounds – were not very thrilling, and the peaceful night air and late hour did us in and we both fell asleep. Well, it had been huge day and they can't even start the first movie until almost 9:30 when it gets dark enough, so no wonder. And, Jill the GPS routed us into some construction on the way back so it took us an hour to get home at 1:30 in the morning! Construction in the pitch black middle of nowhere late at night when you're SO tired can be very disorienting! We didn't have any kids all night thanks to my mom, but we had to get up early the next morning to get breakfast before church so by Sunday night, we were dragging! I should have really taken a nap, but I was having such a great Mother's Day...

We went out to breakfast Sunday morning, and then my mom and uncle stayed to check out our church. It was a lot of fun for the kids to show them around, and I loved Sunday's message about motherhood. It was punctuated by a few wonderful

videos, and the pastor took a break from our 'Fearless' series to focus on mothers and our special day – I really enjoyed it. Especially the surprise Willie Nelson song they played at the beginning of service! The pastor made sure to mention how difficult Mother's Day must be for those who have lost children or for those who can't have children, and I couldn't help but wonder about the people whose mothers have passed on – must be an extremely difficult day for them too. I have a few friends in that position; including one who lost her mother not more than a few months ago. So as much as I was enjoying my Mother's Day, my thoughts and prayers were also with those who didn't find the day a cause for celebration. Here's hoping you had a great Mother's Day in 2009 with many more to come!