

# Harvey, You Were Awesome

I was thinking that I should get in one more blog post before the New Year. I was going to write a general update about my beautiful family, but before I got to writing it, I found myself thinking of Harvey.

Let's begin at December 26, 2011. My husband and the kids surprised me with a wonderful Christmas gift: they had **all** saved and planned for months to buy us a zoo membership. Our family loves zoos and has had a membership to the local zoo (whichever zoo happened to be local at the time) for as long as Hubby and I have been married. I remember that our most recent zoo membership expired on April 1st of last year – I remember this because I made sure to visit on April 1st for what would be our last visit to the zoo for many months. For budget reasons, it didn't make a lot of sense for us to renew the membership because I was expecting our 5th child in October – what pregnant lady wants to take her 4 kids to the zoo in the summer? Not this one. So we let the membership lapse. I missed our visits to the zoo, but at the same time, plagued by pregnancy related nausea and fatigue, followed by post-cesarean surgery recovery and the joys (and trials) of caring for a new baby brother to 4 other kids, I didn't *really* miss our visits to the zoo...

But then my family surprised me with that membership. Now that I'm healed from the surgery. Now that the baby has stayed with the babysitter a few times and actually liked it. Now that I can take my home-schooled kids to the zoo any time I feel like taking a field trip!

This past week was a great one! Hubby was able to flex his work schedule to spend a lot of time with the family, and we all enjoyed the break, which included visiting the Toledo Zoo. In our travels to zoos over the years, we saw many amazing things and learned many amazing things. Among them:

zoos are GREAT to visit in the winter! Many animals are so much more active in the cold weather, and there are many less people, allowing visiting families opportunities not normally offered (Example: my kids made bird feeders as a craft at the zoo and *loved* it!!).

Being winter, some of the exhibits were closed. Other animal environments were rearranged from the last time we had been there, so we couldn't quite keep tabs on our familiar favorites. We did notice that the Great Apes area was rearranged. There was a sign saying that the Great Apes area was going to be closed for the Lights Before Christmas event, but we saw the gorillas and orangutans, so we didn't think much of it. Until we didn't see Harvey the Chimp. When I got home, I looked in the Toledo Zoo's newsroom online and saw that Harvey had passed away in August. It was sad for me; Harvey's exhibit was one of my favorite stops at the zoo. He was an elderly chimp who loved little kids, and here is a video I have of him playing with my kids. I can't be too sad though; Harvey died in his sleep, at the healthy chimp age of 52 – DOUBLE the average life expectancy of a chimp in captivity.

My other favorite exhibit at the zoo, the orangutan family, was also rearranged – during our visit we saw only the mom and daughter – what happened to Boomer (my favorite zoo animal until Harvey stole the title), the patriarch of the oranges? Such things are commonplace in zoos, and I'm thankful that I once again have a membership that gives me insight to studying the wonderful creatures inhabiting the zoo. As much as I mourn my old favorites, I will be looking forward to watching the new additions as well: baby Lucas the elephant, the new baby tigers soon to be exhibited, and the new addition soon to be announced to the public due any day! Yes, I have inside info! One thing I love doing while visiting the zoo is talking to the volunteers, and one was beside herself with the awesome news of an impending birth! So much so that she

couldn't keep it to herself, even if she was supposed to!  
Would I do the same if I was a zoo volunteer? Dunno... but in  
the meantime, a HUGE THANK YOU GOES OUT TO HUBBY AND THE  
KIDS!!! I've already enjoyed my zoo membership more than you  
would have ever hoped for when you planned and saved!! LOVE  
YOU GUYS!!!

I wish everyone reading this a very happy and safe New Year!

Here are tribute videos to Harvey the chimp – watch how he  
played with my kids! We will miss him!



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# Monkey, Er, Ape See – Ape Do

To take a break from the vacation unpacking, I took the little ones to the zoo a few weeks ago. We had a great time – oh how I love winter zoo visits! There aren't many people around, and the animals can act like the animals they are instead of worrying about the hoards of visiting humans. Well, most of the time it's cool to see the animals acting like animals, unless they are doing disgusting things like the gorillas last week – don't watch this if you are squeamish, but I have to publish it because of how embarrassed the gorilla seems about her behavior. I felt so badly for filming her after she tried to hide that I turned off the camera, and that's when she got up and went and sat behind a post – out of my view. Why would she do something so gross if she is embarrassed by it?

**WARNING: it's VERY gross!!!**

The chimp was another story! His name is Harvey, and he is a senior citizen chimp – he just had his 52nd birthday, which is quite a milestone for a chimpanzee. Despite his age, Harvey is quite playful and has a penchant for young kids. When we walked over in front of Harvey's window, he was sitting in the corner wearing a sparkly lei, presumably from his birthday party which had just taken place days before.



When he saw us, he pulled off his lei and came over to his window to see the kids and play:







These videos were taken almost a month ago, and I've been trying to get back to the zoo, but my oldest child has decided that the zoo is "boring" – her words, *NEVER* mine. In fact, I'm wondering if I need a DNA test – how could someone with my DNA find the zoo boring???

During the week, I'm so tired and have so much to do that just writing this blog post is quite a challenge – I'm having a towel thrown over my head by my 2-year-old as I write! I think I fell in love with Harvey that January day, and I miss him!

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## New York Trip Diary Volume 1

When my family travels, I like to take notes and make a diary of our activities. I figure it will be fun to read later when the kids are grown up and will also bring back many memories that might otherwise be forgotten. Now that I'm keeping a blog, I decided to just keep the trip diaries in my blog; that way I don't have to write them twice and they're automatically saved for us in cyberspace. Last weekend, my husband had to go to New York on business, so we decided to make it a family trip and take the kids along. Here is a log of our activities:

**NEW YORK TRIP – MARCH 20-23, 2009 – TAYLOR: 9 yrs, SAMMIE: 4 yrs, DISNEY: 2½ yrs, CHRISTOPHER: 8 mos**

***Friday, March 20*** – We left the house bright and early, only twenty minutes past our goal of 8 am. Disney and Christopher had kept us up until 2:30 in the morning the night before, so we were dragging a little, but they slept in so at least we could tie up loose ends without them. Sammie and Taylor were big helps in the morning! The kids were very good in the car

even though Christopher got a little crabby toward the end of the first leg.

We arrived at the Cleveland Zoo 11ish – not my favorite zoo. I'm not one to complain about any zoo, but Cleveland had lots of walking to see a small amount of animals. I think part of the problem was that they were undergoing a lot of construction, so that made for more walking around the construction areas and also to some animals being off exhibit. They have koalas, but one was sick and the other was sleeping. I'm glad I got to see it anyway though since seeing koalas is a rare experience at zoos, but now I know why many zoos don't have them – they sleep 20 hours per day! Cleveland Zoo also has lots of steep hills, which was a "bear" (pun intended, wink wink) when pushing a double stroller, but luckily for me, that was my husband's problem. As we were walking past the zoo's hospital, an employee told us to come inside because a baboon was about to have a physical. This is a really cool feature of this zoo – they have glass walls in their examination rooms so that zoo visitors can watch animals' procedures. Unfortunately, the baboon was not cooperative, and they couldn't get it sedated so we didn't get to see it. We waited for about an hour, but we really wanted to fit in Akron Zoo in the same day as well, so we decided not to wait any longer. Here are my girls waiting for the baboon's physical:



Cleveland Zoo also has a cool rainforest exhibit which

normally costs extra admission, but our Toledo Zoo membership got us into ALL THREE zoos we visited on this trip for FREE!!! What a bargain AND an extra special Valentine's Day gift from my husband that keeps on giving! The rainforest exhibit had a cool 2-story monkey/squirrel exhibit, and a really nice view of a swimming gharial (a crocodillian with a long slender snout). But overall, the animal habitats were lacking. Thank goodness they are building new ones, but I wish they were building one for the giraffes. There were probably more than 10 giraffes confined to a tiny indoor room – at least it was only their winter quarters, so once it gets warm, they can go back outside and have room to roam. Hmm... maybe when I'm done with this trip diary, I'll have to develop a zoo rating system – that would be fun. Then I'd have an excuse to visit even more zoos, and re-visit some of the old ones!



Here are the kids in front of the lion exhibit at Cleveland – then it was on to the Akron Zoo.

“Just Akron, cold beer, and poor poor thing for 2 weeks?” you ask? Well, not for two weeks, we were only there for about 2 hours, but I wanted to throw in that line from the stage play Harvey (and later, the movie starring James Stewart) that was running through my head for the two hours. Stay tuned for Akron!

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# Comic books

The comic book. When people today think of comic books, usually superheroes come to mind. With the introduction of Superman in 1938, this trend grew through the golden years and later with dozens of superheroes created. Big names like Stan Lee come to mind, who has become so big he was given his own reality show, [Who Wants to be a Superhero?](#) which lasted for two seasons. Many comic-book heroes have made their way to the TV screen in the form of cartoons and live-action shows, and have been making it big in movies as well. Within the last few months we have had Iron Man, The Incredible Hulk, and the much-anticipated soon-to-be-released Dark Knight (Batman).

However, superheroes are just one of many genres of comic books. Among the years westerns, war, sci-fi and fantasy, detective, horror, and many others have had some big hits and long-running series over the years. While I have read several different genres as a kid, one really stuck with me, or maybe they are a couple different ones. Harvey comics, which brought us the likes of Casper the Friendly Ghost and Richie Rich are of a genre which you might call funny comics. I don't know the true genre name for these but they were close to my heart growing up. Another series I have always enjoyed was kind of a genre unto itself, though others have tried to duplicate its success. Like many superhero comics, this series has been going strong since the golden age of comics. It has spawned some cartoons, at least one live TV series (plus a pilot that never got off the ground), and even a movie. The series I'm talking about is the Archie comic book series. Since 1941, readers have been able to follow the high-school antics of Archie and his gang, which has periodically changed to fit the times. The most recent

incarnation made the characters more anime-like.

Recently, while at the library I encountered two DVD collections of the old cartoon series. One set was for [Sabrina the Teenage Witch](#) from the early 70s, which unlike the later cartoons and TV series actually resembled the Sabrina I know from the comic books. It was actually not shown on its own originally, but part of [The Archie Comedy Hour](#). I also found a DVD collection for the original cartoon, [The Archie Show](#). The latter was apparently a smash hit 40 years ago in 1968, before I was born. Each cartoon contained a new dance move and a new song from The Archies, a band that was put together for the show not unlike The Monkees, but instead of becoming a band unto themselves they hid behind the cartoon faces of Archie and friends. This one show apparently cornered a whopping 55% of the viewership when it was on. In any event, I wound up checking both of them out and just finished watching the Archie DVDs (and not too soon, as it is on reserve and not able to be renewed- it's due today) and two of the three Sabrina DVDs. As typical for cartoon series of the time they were done on the cheap with static backgrounds that when made to move like when a character is walking or running will repeat, and a few voice actors doing all of the voices. Okay, these sort of things are *still* done, even with the voice actors in hits like The Simpsons, but they are still done to keep the costs down. Some of the voices the actors came up with left something to be desired in my opinion. I really didn't like Jughead's or Veronica's voices. A couple others, like Archie and Mr. Weatherbee grew on me as I watched, and still others I had no problem with at all.

Now that I am nearly finished with these two collections I look forward to being able to watch other series, except maybe the recent Sabrina cartoons which were actually a spinoff of the 90s TV series, which in turn was a modern remake. I haven't read the recent anime-style comics for the same reason I didn't enjoy the TV series, and for that matter don't enjoy

the modern Battlestar Galactica- nostalgia. They are simply not the same characters I grew up with. The ones I do want to watch range from Archie's TV Funnies, US of Archie, and Archie's Fun House from the same company that brought us the two I watched (Filmation); to later incarnations like the New Archies and Archie's Weird Mysteries which may or may not be relevant to my nostalgia. I also would like to pick up any Richie Rich cartoons I might find, and any other Harveytoons which are like the comics I read, and any comic collections that are released on computer similar to MAD's CD set from about ten years ago. I understand there is one for Archie now that can be had at [archiecomics.com](http://archiecomics.com). When I have some income again I will have to pick it up.

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## Suspension Of Disbelief

Continuing with AFI's list, I will now comment on the fantasy world. This genre is by far the one in which most people have to leave their logic and knowledge of the ordinary world at the doorstep and embrace their inner child. This was perhaps my favorite segment (as they did not include the 10 best musicals). But here goes:

- [Big](#) (I believe that this Tom Hanks film re-started the whole kid-transforming-into-an-adult-overnight craze)
- *The Thief of Baghdad* (silent movie that I cannot comment on)
- [Groundhog Day](#) (? 0000KKKKKK... Why?)
- [Harvey](#) (classic Jimmy Stewart film... near and dear to one of my frequent readers)
- [Field of Dreams](#) (they built it and they did come again a bit of a ?)
- *Miracle on 34th Street* (the original in glorious black

and white which I have commented on before)

- [King Kong](#) (1933 big scary monkey climbs Empire State Building and go boom)
- [It's a Wonderful Life](#) (another Jimmy Stewart favorite at Christmas time... once in your life did you not want to know the world would be like if you were never born?)
- [The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring](#) (one of the most faithful book to screen adaptations ever conceived)
- *The Wizard of Oz*

In my humble opinion, the classic Oz deserves to be at the top. I dare say that this movie has lived on for over seventy years and I do not know of anyone who has never seen it. If there is they must live under a rock. Speaking of rocks, there is at least one film that should have been in there somewhere. [The Neverending Story](#) is a fun fantasy (featuring Rock Biter) for children of all ages full of wonder and far away worlds. Also, where is [The Princess Bride](#)? The inclusion of *Groundhog Day* just made me scratch my head. How does one get on to vote on this A.F.I. list anyhow?

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