

Baby Diary

The first year of life for children is full of constant development and changes – babies do new things every single day. Realizing this, I decided to make a diary for each of my kids about their first year. I would write in it from time to time to summarize all of their many changes, hoping some day they'll enjoy reading them. I was writing in my son's Baby Diary the other day when it occurred to me that I should share it on my blog; especially since he's been very crabby lately and it's been really difficult for me to write blog posts with him in my arms. He was born on July 11, 2008.

Christopher's Diary:

7/16/08 – went to dr. checkup for your slight jaundice. dr. said everything looked good and you weigh 7 lbs. 11 oz.

7/17/08 – Actually, since it was the 12:01 showing, it's actually the 18th... but your first movie in the theater was the Dark Knight. You barely stirred and did drink a bottle during the movie. You didn't make a peep.

7/19/08 – You attended your first stage play, the Music Man. You were very good, except you pooped early in the show and were crabby and had to be taken out, but only for a few mins. so you could get your diaper changed

7/20/08 – umbilical cord stump falls off – you are 9 days old.

8/11/08 – You had your one month check-up today! Everything looks good; you weigh 9 lbs. 14 oz. and are 22 in. long. Your head circumference is 38.3 cm. You didn't cry at all while getting weighed and measured.

8/13/08 – You smiled at Mommy!

9/3/08 – In the past week, you've started "talking" back to me! You smile really big when I smile at you and give you a big HI, and you smile at me every time you see me when you wake up. When you were born, you could hardly see any lashes, but now your eyelashes are getting long and beautiful! Your eyes are still a bright beautiful blue!

9/5/08 – You laughed for the first time – long and loud. And it was during Daddy's funny play, The Nerd. You laughed at the part where they're playing the 'I'm going on a trip' game. I don't know if you heard the other people laughing or it was just a coincidence, but it was SO cute!

9/12/08 – Today you had your 2 month dr appt. You are 12 lbs 9 oz and 23.25 inches long. Your head circumference is 44.5 cm. You fussed a little as they were examining you, but you didn't cry. The dr said you have dry skin and we have to watch your ears to make sure formula isn't going in there.

9/22/08 – For about a week now, you seem to recognize your bottle. You'll get extra excited when you see it and open your mouth. Your big sister Disney calls you "Beeber". Your big sister Sammie loves to hold you and is always asking questions about newborn babies. She calls them "born" babies.

10/16/08 – You are 3 months old, and you are starting to play with toys. The other day I saw you "discovering" your hands, and ever since you've been grabbing things. You know how to put your fist in your mouth. You're still spitting up a lot. Not as much at a time as Disney did when she was a baby, but many times throughout the day.

11/5/08 – You've been playing with toys for awhile now; you can grab things and you try to draw them into your mouth. You love making g sounds – ga, goo, ggg. You are still a very happy little guy and smile at everyone, making their days!

12/4/08 – Time flies and you are almost 5 months old! Disney used to call you Beeber, and the name stuck, so we call you that sometimes. Disney now calls you Kipper. You've had some crabby days, but most of the time, you're still very smiley. You've been experimenting with vocalizations and you LOVE to stand! You do not bend at the waist! We tried the tot wheels (walker) for the first time the other day, and you like it for short periods of time since you just hang in there – your feet don't touch the floor yet. Most of the time, you're pretty good about sleeping at night, usually waking up only once. But you also have bad nights where you won't let Daddy sleep! You like baths, and you're really starting to like toys. You

play with the busybox on your crib, and try to eat EVERYTHING! You might be teething because you try to know on everything. You've been trying cereal and if your gums seem really sore, Mommy and Daddy have been giving you a treat – a dab of peanut butter on your pacifier. You LOVE it! You found your feet a few weeks ago, and you were trying to get your toes in your mouth. We are excited to take you to see Santa pretty soon!

Here We Go Again!

Everyone who has been reading my blog since I started it in the beginning of 2008 knows my disdain for the 2-hour delay so frequently used at my daughter's school. Well, it's that time of year again – Tuesday was our first 2-hour delay of the school year. It's not like I want the buses to go out on the slippery country roads and endanger kids and drivers; it's just that the delay throws off the entire family for the whole day! If there was some way to effectively implement the delay for those who would have trouble getting to the school in poor weather conditions, I think that would be a good solution. However, it's obvious that would lead to kids falling behind other kids and such, so it's obvious why they don't do that. But 2-hour delays frustrate me nonetheless.

My 2-year-old gets frightened or crabby if we do things differently from our normal routine. So when there's a 2-hour-delay, she sleeps in until after 10 and wakes up disoriented, hungry and crabby. I guess I could wake her, but I figure if she's sleeping in then she needs the sleep – and it will pay off for me later in the day because her daily pre-naptime intensity won't be quite as demanding as usual. So Tuesday's delay was caused by snow, which meant that my 4-

year-old wanted to play in it all day (no preschool today). But of course she wants someone to play with, and I'm not comfortable letting my 2 and 4-year-olds play outside by themselves of course. And on Tuesday it was too cold to take the baby out with us... So we were all stuck inside and my middle two have a rivalry going on, which means that they fight over everything and constantly; Tuesday being no exception because why would it be? Hopefully the salt shortage there is for the roads this winter won't lead to more school delays – our first one did not go smoothly!

Call of Cthulu, The Post-Script

Since it's something I had never before tried, I've been dabbling in role playing games for a few months. We've met with a small group twice to play "Call of Cthulu", and it was a fun experience. [Here is a link to my blog post](#) about the game – it reads like a novel, but keep in mind that all the action took place during two afternoons. You begin a game by deciding characteristics you will attribute to your character, and rolling the dice to determine others. There was a host, and he guided us through the game; telling us when to roll what dice and what events were occurring as a result of our decisions. We are going to meet another time this Saturday for another scenario in this same game – hopefully we'll get to keep our same characters since I got a lot of lucky rolls – so my character had lots of strong areas. Here is the post-game wrap-up for the two sessions we already played. My character is named Grace O'Conner, and she is a zookeeper at The Franklin Park Zoo in Boston. The year is 1925.

(Wrap up from the original Call of C'thulhu scenario "Haunter in the Hills.")

Within days of returning to Boston, Jason Carthage and Grace O'Conner had contacted each other and Ms. Dorothy Morgan and borrowed the diary they'd found in the Adams place. Each of the two had read it and both later wished they hadn't.

The very meticulous diary had very little written in it towards the beginning and the earliest dates were from 1910. Most were about mundane things such as Dr. Adams' move to the home in the Vermont Mountains and dealing with the folk in the area, including Dr. Haylett. There were some entries about Dr. Adams' research but little until 1919, when he noted that he had suddenly found more and more proof that there are things in the hills that simply *SHOULD NOT BE*.

He made some notes about the research he was doing, including mentioning a certain book in the Moretown Memorial Library called "Legends of New England" by Eli Davenport and noting "some of the answers are there." The journal alleged that he kept the main bulk of his research elsewhere.

Entries continued to get more disturbing and weird until May of 1922 when they took a change for the macabre. Without going into detail, Adams noted that he purchased several large dogs and hastily had a kennel constructed for them. He wrote "The dogs seem to hate the things. I hope they can warn me of their approach. I fear that they will not be able to protect me."

He wrote more and more that the "things" were watching all the time and he feared he may have unintentionally gotten their notice with his investigations. He noted that they could easily conquer the earth but had not tried so far because he felt they had not needed to. They didn't want to bother and could get what they wanted without it.

He also wrote that the town of Moretown was within the things' grip and noted that he learned that some of the people in the

town, and even elsewhere in Washington County, worked with these things, these "fungi," either willfully or against their will.

By June, he noted that the house was now constantly watched and the that things were growing more bold, though they seemed to prefer the darkest of nights: those that were overcast or without a large moon. By the end of that month, he wrote that he saw the things' prints around the house nightly and that he must often replace the dogs that were killed fighting them.

In July, he wrote that an attempt to stop him on his way to Moretown almost worked. A sign on Moretown Mountain Road detoured him to a dead end and the barking of the large dogs he had with him alerted him to the presence of the things. He noted on the 10th of July that the dogs again alerted him to something near the road as he drove.

In August, others seemed to have joined the mix. Adams noted continually getting new dogs and wrote that on Aug. 3, a bullet crashed through a window of his house, narrowly missing him.

The following week, there were more shots outside of the house on darkened nights and he found several of the dogs dead the following morning. He noted that he found more of the claw prints in the road as well as the footprints of men. He wrote that the phone lines had been cut and were dead.

The following day, he reported going to Montpelier and purchasing several more large dogs and a large-caliber rifle as well as supplies.

The next several entries noted the numerous cloudy nights and the exchange of gunfire that happened nightly. He wrote that there were at least three men in the group against him along with the numerous claw prints. He feared that he was trapped in the house and wrote that he is loathe to leave his home to the things.

On Aug. 20, he noted that the things called to him the night before in horrible buzzing voices, telling him things he dared not put down and making promises he feared they would keep. He mentions that the things want to take him to Yuggoth and beyond, something he dreaded. He wrote that he recognized one of the men that who was with the things: Erik Bartlett was among them.

The entries continued with the horrors of the night, of buzzing noises that made him feel lethargic, and sparks of light that burst against the house when he looked out the windows and left blackened burned marks.

The last entry, dated Sept. 6, noted:

"I will try to leave this place tomorrow. With the full moon, perhaps I can get as far as Northfield or even Montpelier, where I might take a train east to Boston or even Dover though I wish to leave these haunted hills. I only hope they let me go. I will leave this journal hidden here in the event of my demise. I fear that if the fungi do not get me, their human servants will.

"The things' lair must be on the west face of Chase Mountain. There is a large cave there, covered with a great boulder too heavy for anyone to move. However, erosion has left a place where a man might wiggle though. That must be where they are."

Both of them remembered the Montpelier newspaper article from the next day. Dr. Adams had attacked a man in Montpelier but had been stopped by police and returned home.

My Thanksgiving Curse :)

I think I was somehow cursed last Thanksgiving. I fell ill the day after Thanksgiving, and just as I was starting to feel better a few days later, I felt another virus coming on. This cycle continued until just before Christmas, and because I was pregnant and exhausted, I tried to rest a lot and get well during that time, but it was stressful because I had a 1½-year-old to chase after. And while I was sick, I was unable to eat any Thanksgiving leftovers. So then all during the year, foods like turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and even creamed onions (which I used to love) just haven't seemed very appealing to me. I think I subconsciously associate the Thanksgiving fare with being sick, but I thought I'd be over it by now – wrong. Thanksgiving dinner was great and everything, but I'm just not as enthused about those leftovers as I want to be. On Thanksgiving day, the turkey was delicious. That leftover sandwich I had on Friday was pretty good. The cold turkey snack on Friday night was ok. I didn't finish the turkey snack on Saturday night, and today for dinner, I will have *anything* but turkey or Thanksgiving leftovers. And I am blue in the face from reassuring my husband that it was ***absolutely nothing*** he did wrong with the cooking or the fault of any of the guests who brought delicious side dishes. It's just my Thanksgiving curse, and I hope it's gone by next year. But even if it's not, no biggie because my Thanksgiving will be made more special than food by the wonderful people in my life. Maybe I should "train" my body to accept the Thanksgiving food by making turkey and creamed onions more often...

At any rate, the helpers in the kitchen on Thanksgiving day were adorable – check them out:



And below are my two oldest daughters waving to Santa at the Welcome Santa Parade from the day after Thanksgiving:



And if their names were numbers that ordered them by birth, below is a cute picture of #2 and #4:



Sleep With The Angels

The title of this blog post is based on a book called *To Sleep With the Angels*, which details the horrible tragedy of the Our Lady of Angels school fire in Chicago, Illinois. Ninety-two children and three nuns perished on December 1, 1958 – 50 years ago tomorrow. The incident became the precedent and the inspiration for sweeping changes in laws and regulations regarding fire safety; such as the installment of sprinkler systems in public buildings, automatic fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire drills, and the end of grandfather clauses which eliminated older buildings from having to comply to fire regulations. Our Lady of the Angels had undergone a fire inspection just a few weeks before the fire, but because it was an older building, it did not have to comply to all the fire codes because of grandfather clauses. I came across [this website](#) about the tragedy, and it's full of fascinating info related to the inferno – photos, news articles, maps, models, survivor lists and stories, and more. Here is a little excerpt from the website [olafire.com](#) about the cause of the fire:

Was It Arson?

Although the cause has never been *officially* determined, all indications point to arson. A boy (age 10 at the time, and a fifth grader in room 206) later confessed to setting the blaze, but subsequently recanted his confession. He was more afraid of confessing to his mother and step-father than to the police. The boy confessed to setting numerous other fires in the neighborhood, mostly in apartment buildings. In his confession, he related details of the fire's origin that had not been made public and that he should therefore not have known. While there was strong evidence that he was indeed the culprit, neither he nor anyone else was ever prosecuted, at least in part because the catholic judge in the case felt he should protect the Church. Officially, the cause of the fire remains unknown.

I'm curious if the boy who confessed is listed in the survivor lists. Somewhere else I read that another reason the judge didn't convict the boy is because it would have meant a sure

death sentence for him. One thing remains true – this was a tragedy of great proportion, and the damage is still being felt by those who witnessed the atrocity and those who survived and their families. This is evident when you read some of the survivors' stories on the website listed above. Many of them have not spoken much about that day, and it seems that almost all of them remember it like it was yesterday. My husband and I both grew up in the Chicago area, and we agree that most people we knew were associated with the tragedy in one way or another – whether they witnessed it, survived it, or watched it unfold on television. It's been 50 long years, and there are still raw wounds. It was agreed upon by all those that knew Michele McBride, a survivor of the Our Lady of Angels fire, that she died of her wounds sustained in the fire, and that was as recent as 2001. From olafire.com:

Michele was burned over 60% of her body and hospitalized for four and a half months. She underwent numerous operations which continued for years afterwards. The fire that ravaged her body left her in continuous, lifelong pain. Her pain finally ended in July 2001 when she died of multiple organ failure, no doubt a result of damage inflicted by fire so many years before. In 1979 Michele wrote a book ("The Fire That Will Not Die") about her experience the day of the fire, and her life thereafter. Michele's sister, Dae Hanna: "Michele died on July 4th 2001, from long term physical problems suffered from the fire many years ago. May she rest in peace. She never had a day without pain in her legs and joints. May she rest in peace. She disagreed vehemently with many of the theories in the 'To sleep with the angels book'. Her book THE FIRE THAT WILL NOT DIE was certainly well titled, and the only first hand account of that day. May she rest in peace."

I was reminded of the 50th anniversary of the Our Lady of Angels school fire by an article in the dailyherald.com, prompting me to do some research into the tragedy and to share

with others the olafire.com website which contains so much helpful information. My thoughts and prayers are with all of the families involved in this horrible chapter of Chicago's history.



Walmart Saves The Day

What?!? Believe it or not, the title of my post does not have the slightest hint of sarcasm! Walmart really DID save the day for us yesterday! It almost makes me sorry for my many rants against Walmart and their shady practices designed to put small companies out of business... almost sorry, but not quite there.

It all started when we decided to take the kids over to Fort Wayne, Indiana, which is about an hour away. We pulled into a stall at the Sonic drive-thru for a light lunch and some slushies (Sonic has awesome slushies and drinks), when we realized we had forgotten my husband's wallet, which left us without money or credit cards. Luckily, we had picked up the mail before we left the house and brought it in the car with us. And luckily², we had gotten a commission check in the mail. So we braved the 'big city' Walmart customer service line on the Saturday after Thanksgiving to see if they would take pity on us and cash the check even without my husband's ID. We were gifted with even more luck when they accepted my driver's license to cash my husband's check, and we were able to eat lunch. Except now it had gotten really late and we were all really hungry, so we decided to skip Sonic and go to the Golden Corral that was in the Walmart outlot instead. If you braved my posts about our vacation diary, then you know how much we like Golden Corral. And I'd say that the one in Fort Wayne is of the best quality out of any of the others we've been to. After lunch, we took the kids to a McDonald's Playland, but it had only one little tunnel and one small slide; prompting our 4-year-old to proclaim, "Dad, this is *boring*!" But our 2-year-old loved it, and soon there were more kids to play with and everybody had lots of fun – including mom and dad since there was also a foosball table. When we left the McDonald's, we noticed there was a Burger King across the street (when isn't there?), and that Burger King had a 3-story play area! Oh, well, we had fun where we went and we can remember the BK for next time. We quenched our thirst with drinks from Sonic, and there was a cool looking car wash next door, so we treated the kids to a car wash also -they love watching the soap, brushes, and water cascading off the car. The second we pulled out of the wash –*ding ding* – our low fuel bell rang – uhoh. My husband and I just looked at each other because it wasn't like we had unlimited money with us. In fact, we had spent the last of the check money at the car wash. Thank goodness gas prices

are decent these days because with the change we were able to scrape together from my wallet and the car, we had enough to get us gas to get home... whew! Perhaps it can even be considered a blessing in disguise. When you compare the variety of shopping Fort Wayne offers to our hometown choice of Super Walmart and... well, just the Super Walmart, unleashing us in a larger city with all those shopping varieties could have been disastrous to our bank account!

And by the way, the Walmart customer service line wasn't too bad, all things considered. Most of the line consisted of a family who had 6 kids and one on the way -wow. And I thought I had a lot of kids!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Another Thanksgiving weekend is upon us, and so far it's been wonderful for us. Thanksgiving dinner was deliciously cooked by my husband and our guests who were kind enough to bring yummy dishes to share. We played some games afterwards and watched the movie "21" -not very Thanksgiving-y, but a good movie nonetheless. The night before Thanksgiving, my husband and I watched some Thanksgiving episodes of Friends – I think I had forgotten how funny that show was. It's strange because now when we watch Friends episodes, we are older than the Friends, whereas when the show was still running new in prime time, the friends were older than us... oh well, yet another example of how time flies. Over the turkey last night, we also did our tradition where we go around the table and say what we're thankful for – and my ever-generic answer was the same as some of my friends, "I am most thankful for my family and friends." It may be a generic response, but it's very

true, and I am very blessed to have such a wonderful family (my husband and kids and our relatives who live far away – we hope everyone had a wonderful day) and such great friends.

So now, Black Friday is upon us, and I was able to convince my husband to not go shopping. Every year, he wants to get up at the crack of dawn, if not before, and go wait in the lines to see the best sales stores have to offer. But I'm never very enthused, mostly because we have 4 children under the age of 9. I keep telling him to put it on his "when our kids aren't so little" list, although I have one that's lengthy enough for the both of us. It'd be nice if one year we could get a babysitter for Black Friday so we wouldn't have to wake all the kids up, but until that happens, I'm not willing to lose the sleep myself or have the kids lose it either. So today for Black Friday, I've already had my first turkey-and-leftover sandwich, and we're going to take the kids to see Bolt (our two oldest girls are excited to hear the voicework of Miley Cyrus) at the movie theater with a friend and her grandkids. We haven't been to a movie in forever. I just hope our 2-year-old can behave. After the movie, we'll walk across the street for dinner, and then we'll go see if Santa's reindeer have arrived on the square before we get our spots to watch the parade. Every year on the day after Thanksgiving, our town has a parade celebrating Santa's arrival. They bring real reindeer to the square, and everyone lines the streets in anticipation of seeing Santa Claus come to town. His sleigh is pulled by huge beautiful horses, and last year, Santa called out hello to us and knew us by name! When Santa reaches the town square, a few lucky children get to push the big button that turns on the Christmas lights on the square, and everyone cheers as they sip their complimentary cups of hot chocolate. It's like something out of a cheesy holiday movie, and I relish every minute of it. I don't know who is more excited today -me or the kids! I love small town life! And right now, as I'm writing this, I just saw Santa's sleigh (covered of course) get pulled down our street with a golf

cart! I excitedly yelled out, but thank goodness the kids didn't come down here in time to see it – I think it'd be better for them to see it for the first time in the parade. It was exciting for me to see though!

I'm not sure what the rest of the weekend holds, but I do know that I get twice as much time with my husband and kids as a normal weekend, and for that I'm also very thankful. I hope everyone else had a wonderful holiday!

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 phenomonon 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.

Seinfeld And The Man Of Steel

Here’s a fun game for the holidays, providing you like Superman and the show Seinfeld, for that matter. I read an interesting little blurb in the paper the other day about how Jerry Seinfeld is a huge fan of Superman. So much so that there is a reference or an image of the “Man of Steel” in every episode of Seinfeld. So this holiday season, while your turkey is cooking, digesting, or being cleaned up for you by your guests (how do you think I found the time to write this post on Thanksgiving Day?), pop in a few old episodes of Seinfeld and try to pinpoint the Superman allusion.

Vacation Diary – Chapter Six

NOTE: This is the final part of a 6 part series about a family vacation to Florida

Friday, October 24, 2008 – We slept in (at least I did – my husband got up with the kids) and packed up and decided to depart early. We were toying with the idea of renting an air boat to take into the swamp, but it was overcast again, and we weren’t sure how the kids would fare in the swamp. So we

headed out of the Orlando area, and we stopped at two beaches. The first one was not memorable, and I don't remember where it was – somewhere south of Flagler beach because we stopped there next after heading north up the coast. The first beach had crushed shells for sand and it was still overcast and windy which made it a little chilly. It was really cool to see two different moods of the ocean this trip; especially since we're used to landlocked Ohio. Well, we have Lake Erie, but that's not the same as the ocean. On the way there, it was a beautiful blue/green with soft, rolling waves. On the way home, it was gray, and the waves had white caps and sometimes a large one would sneak up and catch us off guard and soak us. At Flagler Beach, we found a coconut and a log, which we took with us – only after asking the park ranger on duty, of course. He was friendly, and he said that coconut must have come a long way – and now it calls Ohio home! Flagler Beach is a Florida State Park, and it was very nice. There was a ramp leading down to the beach for the wheelchair-bound or strollers. And the bathrooms were very nice for being outdoor state park bathrooms – they should have been a step away from port-a-potties, but these were really nice and clean too.

Since we were ahead of schedule, we decided to spend the night in a hotel, so we stopped outside of Savannah, Georgia at a Comfort Suites in Pooler. It was a nice place, and we went swimming in the morning. I think their chlorine content in the pool was way high because my husband's eyes were burning and for weeks my girls and I had problems with our hair. It was getting tangled really easily, and it wasn't smooth or soft anymore. My husband held my ponytail up to the hair closer to my head and there was a huge color difference – the ends of my hair were shades lighter than the top! I have long hair, so I think the bottom part of my hair which was in the pool the longest got bleached by the chlorine. I actually haven't had the time to go and get it chopped off, but it seems to be getting back to normal now, thank goodness.

Saturday, October 25, 2008 – The hotel had a breakfast, which was actually kind of crowded, but we enjoyed bagels and cereal before our morning swim. Got on the road about noon, stopped around 1:30 for lunch in the car. I had an avocado sandwich (good!) from Atlanta Bread, and the kids had Bojangles Chicken, which has really good fries. Chicken is pretty good too. Stopped at a Shell gas station around Spartanburg, South Carolina, where we were approached by a man who had “run out of gas”. Luckily, he had plenty of jewelry on display inside his coat to sell, so hopefully he wouldn’t be stuck at the gas station for long. Traffic got a little backed up near Asheville, and it was bumper-to-bumper, but for only about 10 or 15 mins. We decided to get off of I-40 to enjoy the mountainous scenery since we’re not usually in the mountains when there’s daylight on our trips down south. In the peak of autumn color-changing season at sunset, the mountains were nothing short of gorgeous, and we pulled over at a few scenic overlooks for observation and picture-taking. We stopped at a wonderful little restaurant in the mountains of Eastern Tennessee called “BBQ Garden Cafe”, and I can’t say enough great things about the place. The ribs and corn were the best of each that both my husband and I have **ever had**. And that’s really saying a lot because we are tough critics when it comes to food at restaurants. Unfortunately, as we chatted with the owner we learned that they were days away from closing – just not enough business in the mountains. It’s a real shame too – best food I’ve had in a long time. And it was a family owned place, so the owner got your order and went to grill it himself, and he even had his kids helping – a really nice family, and a really nice family atmosphere also. I really hope that by some miracle the place doesn’t close – I was going to make sure we go back there every time we’re in Tennessee. Here is the address, just in case you’re in the area; I can’t say enough how much I recommend the place. You might want to call first though, since they did say they were closing down! It’s located at: 3323 Cosby Hwy, Cosby, TN 37722

After the delicious dinner, we headed for home in Ohio, and we arrived at about 5 in the morning, a little early compared to usual. But that's ok, we needed the day for catch-up on sleep, laundry, unpacking, etc. As you can see, I've been busy ever since which is why it took me a month to finish the trip diary. But now I have, and all I have to do is cut and paste all 6 parts into one diary for our family to read for years to come. Thanks for letting me share it with you; here is a picture of the autumn Smokies at sunset:

