

A Not-So-Perfect End To A Perfect Day

WHEW! I have to admit that we totally overdid it on Halloween, but in a good way – at one point in the evening, my 5-year-old said “how many parties are we going to?!? We threw a Halloween-themed game night on Friday, complete with things like spider venom, truth serum, and rat vomit for drinks and snacks. Most guests wore costumes, and there was a wide collection of characters, from witches to fishes to Star Wars characters and a vampire – we even had a gay construction worker! Fun was had, but as usual, we stayed up too late and failed to rest up for our huge day ahead – HALLOWEEN!

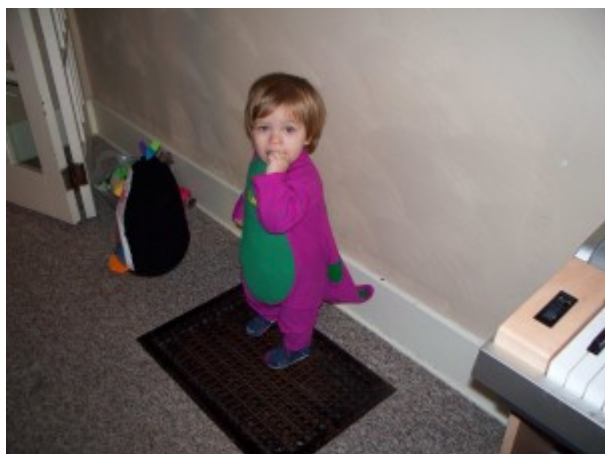
We began Saturday by making the rats costumes and taking them to the pet store for a costume contest. No word yet how they placed in the contest, but Bobby Jack dressed as a zebra while Oreo was a Pink Lady from Grease – the kids had a blast! We took the rats home and headed out to the ice rink for the annual community Halloween party – one of my favorite things about living here. We get there right when it opens and head straight for the hayride, where we are driven around the huge park. Occasionally, creepy creatures run from hideouts among the trees and chase the wagon! Not as many people were in line this year, so we got to ride the hayride twice, and then the kids tried some of the games, the maze, and the bouncy castles, while Mom and Dad chatted with long-lost friends and sipped slushies and hot chocolate (everything at this party is free and donated by local businesses and organizations!) We got our hot dogs to go this year, and they told us to take a huge pumpkin home – we still have to carve our pumpkins, so we were more than happy to get one more!

We were able to rest for about an hour, then it was time for trick-or-treating. We moved into our neighborhood 3 years ago, and we learned the first year that it's not good for

trick-or-treating. We love where we live, but come Halloween, it seems like many neighbors aren't home, so we'd have to make the kids walk blocks for only a few houses with porch lights on. So we drive across town and trick-or-treat in a friendly neighborhood where some friends live, and we started with their house. Our little guy dressed as Barney, Disney was Dora the Explorer, Sammie was a princess, and Taylor was a bloody prom girl.



Oh wait, you need to see Barney with his tail ☐



I absolutely love Halloween – of course I think my own kids were the cutest, but I love seeing all the kids dressed up. An honorable mention goes to the 4 teenage boys who were dressed as the Teletubbies – my 3-year-old daughter was asking where the Teletubbies were all night, but we never did catch up to them...



We took in quite a haul with the 4 kids, and after the second house, our 15½-month-old had the hang of taking candy from strangers. Ok, that sounds really bad, but Halloween is a unique event, he was allowed, and it was really cute! We got in the car after we were done trick-or-treating and headed over to a party at our friends' church. The kids had a blast there as always, and we made out like bandits in the raffle! Years of not winning anything we entered apparently caught up with us on Halloween night because a few bucks in raffle tickets won us 2 value meals at Burger King and 3 really cool brand new toys for the kids!

But here is where things start to change from perfect to overwhelming – at the church we ran into my Kindergartner's friend Hannah from preschool. This child has many medical issues, and she's been in and out of the hospital her entire life for brain surgeries. Her mother was telling us how she doesn't like her preschool anymore and how she's been depressed because she doesn't have any friends. So who could possibly tell this little girl "no" when she asked if she could come sleep over again? Certainly not us, no matter how exhausted we were from the weekend's activities...

After the church, we headed over to the community theater where they were having a Wizard of Oz party. I was completely exhausted, and we had to hurry home to meet up with my daughter's little friend, but I really enjoyed the Wizard of Oz party during the short time we were there. They did an

AWESOME job with the decorations, and there were so many neat Oz-themed games and activities – even a yellow brick road! - that I will forgive the inclusion of some things from Wicked. I guess I should say for any readers who don't know – I'm a huge Wizard of Oz fan, but it's the movie that I really enjoy. I don't remember the book much, and what I've seen of Wicked did not impress me, to say the least, but that's another blog post altogether...

So FINALLY we get home, and Hannah is waiting for us. At this point, I was SO incredibly tired, not to mention my car full of garbage, pieces of costume, and spilled candy. All I wanted to do was end Halloween my favorite way – watching a scary movie with Hubby. So we got the kids (all SIX of them, since two daughters had friends over) as settled as was humanly possible after I-don't-even-want-to-think-about how much candy and were about to start our movie when Hannah comes down the stairs. We sent her back up, and checked email and basically killed some time until we felt confident we could start a movie without any kids coming downstairs or calling for us. Well, that never happened. Somehow, we had forgotten that Hannah is a friend who is very needy and also one who outright REFUSES to go to bed. We started the movie anyway, and we only had to interrupt it like 5 times (a late 80's thriller called [I, Madman](#) – both hubby and I recommend it!). But Hannah began one of her many descents down the stairs right during a climatic moment in the movie, which made my husband jump a mile high, which in turn made my heart stop and stomach drop. And that was when I knew I wouldn't be falling asleep for hours. Hannah finally fell asleep when there was only 15 minutes left in the movie, but she outlasted every one of the other kids, and by then, it was 2 am! I guess you could say I put my extra daylight savings hour to good use; I think it's the only hour of sleep I got! I had trouble falling asleep, then I had terrible nightmares all night and kept waking up – one was about Hannah; I'm not even kidding! I woke up early to the sounds of kids playing and

couldn't fall back asleep. So here we are, the Sunday after Halloween, dead tired with a messy Halloween-themed house and a trashed car. But at least our house once again contains only the 4 kids who live here, and the main trouble-maker has been sacked out all day – told you we overdid it!

Hope you had a GREAT Halloween!!!

The Halloween Haunting Of Munger Road

Ok, so who had a haunted house in their neighborhood when they were a kid? For us, it was a haunted road located in a Chicago suburb about 15 minutes away from ours. Actually, my group of friends were from a few different area high schools, and we had all heard of Munger Road from kids at our schools. Back in the '90's when such haunted tales were spun that made us actually want to visit, the road was a deceptively secluded partial dirt side street that ran through a forest preserve and connected two main thoroughfares. At night, the road was dark, isolated, and spooky. There were many rumors about the incidents that took place on Munger, but here is the basic story: There was a little house right next to the railroad tracks. The ghost story said that the man who lived in the house was mowing his lawn when he was hit by a train. I can't remember if the train supposedly derailed or if the man got too close or what happened, but his ghost was said to haunt this area, along with ghost trains.

It was a fun place for our group to check out while we were in high school, and we did note some strange happenings. We would see mysterious headlights that would disappear (there

was no place for a car to turn off the road!). My friends had a police scanner in their car, aka, a fuzzbuster, and the thing would go berserk down Munger. Because it was a dirt road, our cars would come out very dusty, but once there were distinct handprints on the trunk. Now as an adult, I can think of scientific explanations for this, but at the time, it was scary! There was also the time a cop came out of nowhere (we had been up and down the road several times and didn't see him), pulled us over, but he was really nice about it and sent us on our way. I found it odd at the time because we had about seven teenagers stuffed into my friend's teeny little hatchback car, and the police officer didn't even say anything about it, much less write us seatbelt tickets. For months afterward, we would tell the story and call him 'the Scooby Doo cop'.

In recent years, I've heard that the house has been torn down, and I wonder if kids still go there. Unfortunately, there has been at least [one homicide](#) around the area of Munger Road, which adds a whole new element to the fright. During our haunted house tour in Illinois the other weekend, we drove within yards of Munger, but we didn't stop – we wanted to see haunted house attractions! Besides, I don't even know if the area has the same sort of spooky appeal it had over a decade ago now...

I've found a little bit about Munger on the internet, including [these stories](#), but I have yet to add my own. Maybe next time we're in town we'll drive by, just to see how the area has changed and what has become of Munger...

So it's finally Halloween, time to share your own ghost story, or tales of rumored haunts near where you grew up. Add them to the comments section below, and have a HAPPY HALLOWEEN!!!

Halloween Whosits

Well, Halloween is just around the corner, and I have yet to pick out a costume. Err, costumes... um, for the kids, of course... Ok, I'm caught – I dress up for Halloween. However, I don't go all out. I take pride in wearing cool costumes that I can obtain on a shoestring budget. For example, I've wanted to reprise my Kindergarten Halloween costume for years ("Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz"), but I have yet to find the dress for free in my size (I'm not about to spend money on my own Halloween costume when I have 4 kids I'd rather see dressed however crazily they wish). I'm not too worried about my costume though; I always have a back-up Halloween costume plan. I have a witch's hat, complete with orange hair. And I can wear almost anything clothes-wise, which will ensure that I'm warm and comfortable, no matter what the Halloween weather up here in Bufu Ohio. Being a witch also means that my kids can do my makeup, however madly they would like to do it – all the more fun to add to one of my favorite holidays. So, my Halloween bases are covered... now I just have 4 little kids to deck out...

My oldest (going on 10) wants to be a 'bloody prom girl' (her words). I say, go for it. It may not be the most innocent of costumes, but it could certainly be worse (have you seen Mean Girls? Remember the quote that begins, "Halloween is the one night a year when girls can dress..." This is not the type of blog where I would want to continue the quote, but let's just say that I both celebrate and am thankful for my daughter's kid-inspired creativity.

Our second-born, who is 5, wants to be a princess. Being a family with 3 little girls who love to play dress-up, that should be a cinch. We have a couple of tiaras to choose from,

as well as princess dresses. The key will be to find one that she will agree to wear **over** her other clothes so she doesn't freeze!

And our youngest daughter, who will be newly 3 by the time Trick-or-Treat rolls around, wants to be "Dora, and Boots, and Diego, and the Marshmallow Monkey." I don't think she remembers what it's like to dress-up for Halloween – I don't have the heart to tell her that she can only be one character. For now, we have a Dora costume ready and waiting, and we also have a back-up princess dress in case she decides she wants to be like her sisters.

The little dude will wear whichever costume I can find in the basement that is in his size – I'm thinking it's a lion. I know I also have a size 18-months Minnie Mouse costume, but I am **not** going to dress my little man as a female character – poor guy has 3 older sisters and is already concernedly obsessed with headbands and necklaces. But that's another blog altogether...

Happy Halloween!

I'm Still Alive!

Don't count me out! I know I haven't been blogging as much as I used to; it's because I've been all over the place this summer! I am just swamped, but in a great way! The girls were with their Grandma for the past week, so I used the opportunity to finish up some old blog drafts and post them. I haven't really had the chance to sit down and write up my many recent adventures, so hopefully time will allow for that in the next few weeks – it's been totally awesome, and I can't wait to share everything with you! But until I have time for

more blogging, please bear with me and check back often for updates! I hope everyone had an awesome 4th of July weekend – happy birthday America! THANKS FOR READING!

Happy New Year!

Happy New Year! Holy cow, 2009 already! I hope you had a good New Year's. Ours was wonderful. We hosted a bash, which is always great so that we don't have to pack up the kids and all their luggage just to haul them out somewhere to stay until the wee hours of the morning. We played charades and other games and ate lots of yummy treats. Our kids – #2 and #4 in birth order – fell asleep way early. The older one stayed asleep all night, but wouldn't you know it – the baby woke right as we crawled into bed at 4 in the morning. I was able to sleep for a few hours, but that's more than I can say for my husband who woke with the baby. But then he got a short nap while I ambled downstairs to do some much needed cleanup from the party. After that, we were ready to drag ourselves over to a friend's house for a New Year's Day chili feast – I'm told the beans bring good luck in the new year. More food, more fun, and we didn't plan on staying long but ended up getting home about 7 in the evening. I did miss the hockey game at Wrigley Field, but the Red Wings beat the Blackhawks anyway. I'm not a big hockey fan; I just thought it would be cool to see Wrigley all decked out for hockey. I wonder what they would have done if they had gotten some of that freak 60 degree weather again – how to maintain an ice rink in those conditions? Oh well, that's a tangent, good thing this site is called tangents.org

So the chili and rest of the food at our friends house was great, but I wish I could have enjoyed it more – seems I

partied a little too hard the night before and felt a little tired and queasy come chili feast time. But it's my own fault – I should know that I'm getting older and can't handle the late nights (or early mornings for that matter) like I used to. But oh well – my friend did give me some delicious chili to take home, so hopefully it will be more enjoyable now that I was able to rest last night. Now I'll just have to get used to writing 2009 instead of 2008 all over the place...

Last Post of 2008!

Because I barely have time to fit in the writing of this current blog post, I can safely say that with 4 kids running around (Christmas break = parental nightmare) this will be my last blog post of 2008! What better way to go out then but to experiment with the new polling feature of tangents.org and make a New Year's themed poll? Enjoy, and have a very happy and safe New Year's celebration! Here's wishing you the best of luck in 2009! Check all that apply:

[poll id="3"]

It WAS A Very Merry Christmas, Thank You!

Our Christmas was wonderful, thanks for asking! Our 8 & 9 year old and our 2 year old were awake first on Christmas morning, and they crept downstairs to see if Santa came. He did, and

surprisingly, they waited very patiently until Mom and Dad were ready to roll out of bed to open their presents. Christmas Eve was a late night, and because we weren't really being pestered, we stayed in bed until about 9:45 Christmas morning. After that, it took A LOT of prodding to wake our middle daughter who is 4. Believe it or not, even telling her to check if Santa came didn't do the trick... she was apparently tired! Like I said, late night last night.

Finally she was awake and excited, so then the kids opened their gifts, and they were really happy with what Santa had picked out. So happy, in fact, that they were really good during the day, and we had few fights amongst the natives – a rarity in our house. Their favorite toys seem to be these large inflatable balls with handles that they sit on and bounce. I guess Santa didn't realize how annoying it would be to have 3 little girls bouncing all around the house ☹

So what did I get? My husband got me a game based upon our favorite tv show, The Office. A good friend had gotten us another board game (with a dvd as a big part of the game) based upon the show, and so now we have both games – the complete set. I love it. I was looking forward to playing it all day, and it's easy to see that the game is REALLY cool. It's different than your average trivia game; lots of added elements, making it a stand-out favorite board game. But then again, we feel the show is a stand-out favorite. My husband also got me a Snuggie – ever heard of them? Snuggies are big blankets with sleeves, essentially. That way you can do many a chore (or even fun things, like changing channels on the remote or blogging) while still being covered by a blanket. We're waiting for mine to arrive, and once they do, they will be an especially appreciated gift since our electric bill *doubled* between last month and this month – must be all those space heaters we were using to supplement our giant furnace because we thought our gas bill was too high. Just wait til we get that bill in the mail this month... ugh. At least it

didn't come on Christmas Eve like I was sure it would.

So what did I get for my wonderful hubby? It's lame I know, but months ago while I was still pregnant with our son, I found a picture frame that says "I get my good looks from my Daddy". I liked it immediately and bought it, and it's ironic that at that time, I thought we were going to have a baby girl instead of a boy which would make more sense when it comes to the photo frame. But then we found out we were indeed having a boy, and so I was able to give my husband the picture frame with a picture of our son inside. A good gift, but I had wanted to get him something else.

I almost asked a friend to get something for him from me. My husband usually wants-for-nothing, but this year, he did spy a few gadgets for his wish list. Since he's usually with me when we're shopping at the stores that carry the items, I was going to ask a favor of someone to pick them up. But alas, my plan was foiled when I told my husband (and the captain of our family finances) I need some money for Christmas shopping. He basically vetoed the idea of me getting him anything, and I was under the impression it was mutual, that we were going to focus on the kids this year and not get each other anything. But he sneakily got me some really good gifts, and I'm not going to let this happen again – I'll be squirreling away some money here and there until I have enough to buy him a birthday present in June – HA!

Hope you and yours had a very Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas!



Merry Christmas!



We hope this Christmas Blogcard finds you and yours happy, safe, and healthy. We want to thank all of you who thought of our family this year and sent us the wonderful Christmas cards. I was going to send out Christmas e-cards with pictures of the kids this year, but somehow time got away from me (somehow? I have 4 kids!) and wouldn't you know it – it's already Christmas and we never even got our family Christmas picture taken! So I gathered the kids, put them in front of the Christmas tree, and viola! Our family's 2008 version of Christmas cards, and this is the fastest way to make sure we sent our Christmas wishes before the holiday is over.

As for our family, 2008 was busy but great. The kids are doing wonderfully! Taylor just turned 9 and really likes 3rd grade. She loves to read and is a very talented artist. Sammie is 4 and in preschool. She is learning to write her name and loves Barbies. Disney is 2 and still very sweet. She loves to play with baby dolls and play-doh. Baby

Christopher has learned to jump in his bouncy seat, and he loves to use his hands, especially to grab his toes. God Bless everyone and we wish you and your family a truly happy holiday season, as well as the rest of the year, of course! We are so lucky to have such wonderful friends and family! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Love,

Chris, Lisa, Taylor, Sammie, Disney, and Christopher

Walking in a Winter Wonderland

I have been hoping and wishing for snow ever since it has gotten cold, but each and every time it has snowed, it has always melted shortly after it stopped snowing. Or, it fell but never stuck to the ground to begin with! I was working today and it was snowing, and it was beautiful! I was so happy, but refused to let the hope that wanted to bubble up and fill me, since it didn't seem to be sticking. As I was walking home from work, I noticed that the snow was sticking and I might be able to start to hope that it will stay around for awhile. I would love snow for my birthday and of course, Christmas. But I also don't want to hope to find it gone tomorrow morning! I just want snow so badly, but every time I feel like we will have snow, it never stays. So, hopefully it will be with us for awhile this time!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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:

