

At Least I Have No Regrets

Spring break is over, and for me it flew by- and it was wonderful. I had my concerns about being so tired and keeping 4 kids from getting bored and restless, and those fears mounted last week when I saw the weather forecast – 40s all week, scarce sunshine, and maybe even a little snow. I was especially concerned that spring break would be my own personal forecast to what summer break will be like because hard as I try not to, I have times where I dread the summer a little bit.

For one thing, there is a wonderful Christian camp that we've been hearing about from a friend, and we've been trying to let our kids go for years now, but it hasn't worked out for one reason or another. This year, it seems that the dates will work, but the fees are a little steep, and the 45-minute trip to the camp x4 (there-back-there-back for two kids) might hurt the wallet a little bit with the price of gas the way it is. Add to that a trip to Nashville Indiana with extended family – SO fun, but 8 more hours of driving, plus groceries and supplies to buy, plus 4 round-trips to South Bend Indiana, and I calculated my mileage from July 4-23 at 1388 – That's one thousand eighty-eight miles in 20 days. Factor in our van's crummy gas mileage and all the pregnant lady bathroom stops, and OUCH. But then I got to thinking about it, and I think I'd rather spend my July driving around the tri-state area than locked away in my air-conditioning with 4 rambunctious kiddos. As I said, the trip to Nashville will be lots of fun, and most expenses have been paid thanks to a generous Christmas gift. So what if I have to miss the 4th of July fireworks for one year (next year we do have to pick a different date though guys if you are reading this ☐ 4th of July is one of my favorite holidays!). And the trips to South Bend mean that Grandma is taking the kids – so that means fun for them, and a break for us. So what if it's not all 4 kids

gone at the same time anymore – that’s just one of the small trade-offs for having such a large (wonderful) family. And I’m STOKED that the kids finally get to go to this camp – they are so excited too! So what if we have to leave Nashville at 5am just to drive the 4 hours to get Sammie there on time? But the main reason for optimism for summer vacation was spring break – it was awesome, and it flew by.

For me, the month of March dragged on and on, and I think much of it had to do with my prenatal dr. appointment on the 31st. I just could not wait. Part of it was excitement – this stage of pregnancy is tough in a different way than the rest of it because many of the changes are internal, and you have nothing to show for it. I spend my time looking up sketches of what my baby might look like these days, but unless you count fatigue, nausea, moodiness, or tears, there aren’t any outward signs to get excited about – and no, leftover baggage from previous kids does not count as a “baby bump”. Also, I’ve been extra worried about this pregnancy – I can’t put my finger on it, maybe it’s that stupid stat I heard somewhere that keeps sticking in my brain – “1 out of 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage”. This is my 5th pregnancy, so that panics me. I wish I didn’t read the news so much. Maybe the worry is because of how incredibly difficult this pregnancy has been on me (and my family) compared to the others. Whatever it is, I’ve been especially panicked, but I’ve been building a great relationship with my new doctor – she is very understanding and so much more of a problem solver than my previous doctor. But either way, spring break saw me at my prenatal, and everything looks great! Baby is measuring at exactly 12 weeks, right where s(he) should be. AND... I got to see her (him) dance!! The baby keeps sneaking us ultrasounds – I wasn’t scheduled for one, but the heartbeat couldn’t be detected (my understanding doctor warned me of this ahead of time, or I would have panicked. Again.), so she took me into the ultrasound room. There, we saw baby on the screen, and my little 2-inch miracle was *dancing* – I saw her legs moving and

everything! I keep thinking and saying “she” and “her”, but don’t place any bets – I’ve been known to be wrong about my children’s genders in the past – *before* they’re born, of course, sheesh.

So I took the kids to the zoo on Monday of this spring break, and last night I’m still on cloud nine from seeing my baby dance, and the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I could not resist going back to the zoo on the last day of our season’s pass. We aren’t going to renew because as much as I love the zoo, it feels like a waste to renew right before summer, especially when I’m pregnant and (probably?) won’t feel like going as much. And I know I won’t be able to go after my surgery for a month or so... So I took the kids to the zoo not once, but twice this spring break, and I didn’t even feel like I was going to keel over by the end of today, which means that my first trimester fatigue *might* be fading (afraid to get too excited). I even took an extra kid with me to the zoo both days, a gamble that paid off both times since we all had a blast – even if I was late getting Ellyn home today (that’s why I didn’t stop to chat Justj – I’ve been kicking myself ever since. I really wanted to see your daughters! But I was late, and you just don’t expect to run into a friend 60 miles from home so I was caught off-guard).

So yes, I missed the Chicago Cubs opening day game taking my kids to the zoo, and I’m proud of it! Nevermind that I was looking forward to that game for months. Hubby recorded it for me, and I watched it as soon as I got home anyway. And I’m telling you what, the Cubs did not play badly (except for Dempster – if I still cussed he would be on my you-know-what-list), but they lost. But as I said, they did not play badly, so there is MUCH hope for the season – you can’t tell anything decisive on opening day. Well, except for last year but we’ll leave that out of it. But the best part is, I have no regrets. I can’t imagine how I would have felt had I missed my last chance to take my kids to the zoo in order to watch a

game where the Cubs lost.

Super decision on my part, and if this spring break was any kind of predictor for summer vacation, BRING IT ON!

I Want To Be A Glass Is Half-Full Kind Of Person

...so I'll start with the Cubs. Because goodness knows in my own life, being an optimist is too exhausting. I wake up feeling crummy, determined to make the best of my day, only to have had to step in to referee not less than 10 fights before I even make it to lunch. And I'm not talking about MY lunch – that comes much later (if I'm lucky) after I've served up umpteen helpings, cleaned up infinite messes, and responded to various other distress calls. But the point is that at a time where I could really use my time and energy to focus on me and growing a healthy baby, much of said time and energy is wasted on what feels like mundane, pointless referring and the like.

But with the Chicago Cubs opening day mere HOURS away (ok, dozens of hours, but still countable by hours!), I came across the following article which did indeed fill me with cautious optimism – not for my own summer, no, for there is no doubt I'm going to feel like a huge pregnant balloon, warm beyond reason, lazy beyond doubt. I know that I will have 4 little kids to chase around, and I will have to pry myself out of my chair a little earlier in the chase if I'm going to have any hope of catching them to stop the trouble or keep them out of danger. The optimism isn't for me – it's for the Chicago Cubs. If you're a Cubs fan, read the following, and tell me

if you agree. I especially like the line that says, "...allow me to put on the ol' rose-colored glasses and search out reasons to be hopeful that 2011 will be a better year than 2010 for us Cubs fans. For one, it can't be much worse."

Excellent point, that. After all, I had to write off my Cubbies after watching what was the debacle they called opening day last year. Not that I ever tend to give up on the team, I am a Cubs fan after all, but well, if you saw them play, er um, "play" baseball on opening day of 2010, then you would agree. Check out the rest of the reasons for optimism here as written by Bob Warja for the Bleacher Report @ bleacherreport.com:

[10 Reasons for Cautious Optimism for the Chicago Cubs in 2011](#)

And GO CUBS!!!



It Was The Rat Poison

Last night, I FINALLY was up to attending a great game night with marvelous friends and one newcomer (a newcomer to me although, he had been to at least the Super Bowl extravaganza, I believe. My first game night in three months was full of laughs and great times. I got to see dear friends I have not

seen since New Years or before and this also helped my continued progress. Laughter and wonderful times with some of my closest compadres is indeed the best medicine... better than rat poison, that is for sure.

I also got to see the four kids (plus two tagalongs which one of our regular game nighters brought along). Poor Beebs definitely was NOT feeling up to his normal self. The other little ones played on the Kinect system... something which I think looks interesting in the near future.

After the merriment of the evening wound down (about 12:30), I set out to make the 12 mile trek home. Before I even left town, I was traveling along and all of a sudden, a raccoon jumped out in front of me. Instinctively, I swerved and crossed the yellow line. Unbeknownst to me, one of B-town's finest was right behind me and turned on his red and blue lights.

"Did you see the raccoon I had sicced on you?"

Indeed I had! Apparently, the town has gained quite a surplus of the critters... living in the sewers until they plot their take over. Sounds like a bad B-movie to me. The friendly officer and I engaged in a conversation about any future theatrical endeavors I have coming up which led to the tale of my 3 month journey. After my identity was confirmed and I was not deemed a known terrorist, I was sent on my way. Good thing I did not indulge in the wine that was brought to our night of fun! I don't think it would be good to mix with the rat poison, anyway. ☐

THEN, I got back home and learned that the Buckeyes were defeated by two points by Kentucky with a buzzer beating shot. So much for my bracket... and I was doing so well for my first time ☐

And thoughts turn to spring

This past weekend was the start of actual baseball Spring training games. As a moderately avid fan, I take a bit of interest in these early games. It makes no difference as to the win or the lose portion at this point in time. I just like to see if it looks like my favorite teams will have a good year or not.

Too early to tell yet. Starting pitchers are still stretching out. First the 2 inning games, then maybe 3 innings, ect. Starters from the year before will get a couple of at bats before they are taken out to see the younger 'talent'. It is at this time of the year, when you can see possible future hall of famers work out with the big league squads. You also see the veterans trying for one more shot at making a big league team.

I've been told, but have yet to experience, that spring training is a fan's wonderland. The players are accessible, and tickets to games are inexpensive. Some camps even have open training sessions.

Someday I will make that journey. I will head south in the later parts of February to March. Maybe I will watch a game or two, or just spend a day walking around a ball field. A day in the sun, visiting a bit of spring in the fading days of winter.

Goodbye To Ron Santo

People who don't pay much attention to baseball and the MLB, particularly the Chicago Cubs, might not realize who Ron Santo is or that he is gone.



Ron Santo, legendary Chicago Cubs supporter, has passed away at the age of 70. Gaining popularity first as a player then as an outspoken sportscaster, Ron Santo became the voice and face of the Chicago Cubs in recent years. Always saying what was on his mind, Santo's gravelly voice was the easiest way to find that Cubs game on WGN radio 720 in a hurry. As a Cubs fan, I will miss it.

Sadly, Ron Santo did not live to see himself inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, nor did he see his beloved Cubbies win the World Series. If you'd like to read more about Ron Santo or about his crusade against juvenile diabetes, [here is an article](#) in the suburban Chicago newspaper, The Daily Herald.

Condolences and prayers to the Santo family.

Definitely NOT Feeling Blue

Please, someone remind me to ask for this weekend OFF next year. It may not have been a very exciting game for non-Buckeye fans, but I must say (from what I heard from the radio) it was OUTSTANDING! Running back a kickoff following a Michigan TD. An interception. Hearing that Nick Swisher was honored. Wonder if his fellow Yankee, Captain Jeter (a Michigander... nobody's perfect) was at the 'shoe. And the FINAL SCORE: OSU 37... UofM 7. WOO H0000!!!! It sounds like a tie for 1st place in the Big Ten which I believe gives Wisconsin the Rose Bowl berth... correct me if I am mistaken.

Next year will see the Big Ten decided playoff style; however, the tradition will continue for the Buckeyes and the team from the North. GO BUCKS!

I must agree with several of my family members and co-conspirators! Michigan should KEEP RICH RODRIGUEZ as head coach! 7 in a row for Coach Tressel and his men and 9-1 since the man in the sweater vest came to the helm.

O-H

Unsportsmanlike Conduct.. 15 Yard Penalty

After Saturday's OSU/OU football game, I saw on a friend's fb account that the OSUMB's halftime performance was less than outstanding... full of Looney Tunes, Flintstones, and other cartoon themes. However, I wonder if the Bobcat alumnus thought the following was so extraordinary:

Apparently, the heinous display by Rufus Bobcat upon the unsuspecting Brutus was premeditated. The no-goodnick tried out for the role of mascot a year ago with the ultimate goal of tackling the Buckeye. He has since been summarily banned from all Ohio University affiliated athletic functions. The funny thing is, the miscreant no longer attends the Athens, Ohio college. He now attends nearby Hocking College. OU has issued an apology to the Buckeyes.

In every way but personally, the shenanigans were for naught as the Bucks handed the Bobcats a 43-7 thrashing. They should have tackled the player with the ball instead of the mascot. Kind of funny especially after the games outcome. A streaker running across the field was even more shocking and hilarious.

Farewell to the Boss

Praise him or curse him, [George Steinbrenner](#) accomplished what he set out to do when he purchased the New York Yankees the year I was born. His fiery, hands on approach helped lead the Bombers to 11 pennants and 7 World Championships during his tenure. He holds the record for the most years as owner of a franchise. Early this morning, The Boss succumbed to a massive heart attack.

Mr. Steinbrenner was, for better or worse, responsible for turning the team around after it was struggling under the ownership of CBS. During his 37 year ownership, it has been well publicized about the revolving door of managers. He changed 20 times in his first 23 years including the five time dismissings of Billy Martin.

Also memorable is the grooming policy for the team. Hair length and facial hair were closely monitored. Goose

Gossage's beard which turned into his trademark thick moustache; Don Mattingly's mullet (which was lampooned on the classic Simpsons' episode, "Homer at the Bat"). When Johnny Damon was acquired from the Red Sox, I often wondered the price the outfielder was payed to clean up.

In 2006, George turned the day to day operations over to his son who seems to have inherited the same fire and approach. So, it would appear that the Steinbrenner Empire will continue.

Take me out to the Ballgame

and so I did. Back before the beginning of Baseball season [I made a promise to myself](#) to go to at least 1 Major League game. That promise has been kept. The Tigers played the Mariners and won 7-1. There were fireworks after the game. Not a bad way to start the 4th of July weekend.

Comerica Park is a gem, a great place to watch a ballgame. The food was expensive, but very good, of course nothing else tastes like a hotdog at the ballpark. Wide selection of vendors, and most had TVs so you wouldn't miss much game action.

Then there was the game. I've said before that I don't usually care for blowouts, even when my team is winning. That is still the case, but the game seemed close until the later innings. It was 4-1 until the 5th, and then 7-1 after 7 innings. Even with that, the best play of the game came in the 9th inning with a double play off a fly ball deep to left center. Little Bits and I had a fun time at the 'old ball game'.

A couple of pictures from the Ballpark will be added soon.

From T-Ball To The MLB

Ok, so it's doubtful that our 6-year-old daughter Sammie is headed for the MLB after having had her first day of T-Ball today. If sports skills and hand-eye coordination are hereditary, my kids are definitely not inheriting those traits from their mother's side. I wouldn't mind having a kid in the MLB, but it's not going to be something I'm pushing for or aiming toward, especially given my lack of athleticism. But Sammie has been very excited about starting T-Ball for weeks, and we like to let our kids try as many activities as we can afford to take them to (time AND money-wise) so they can see what they like and where their strengths lie. Sammie brought home the T-Ball flier a few months ago and said she wanted to join. Of course, this is coming from the same kid who said the same thing about wrestling in the winter, but we knew she had no idea what that was about, and she was talked into doing Brownies instead. So I was worried that she would get to T-Ball today and decide it wasn't for her and want to quit on the first day. But luckily, she seemed to have liked her first day of T-Ball. We try to keep by the guideline in this family that once you sign up for something, you stick with it for the duration of your commitment. You don't have to sign up again, but you should fulfill your original obligation.

When we arrived at the ball field today, the head coach (and coincidentally also a fellow small group leader for our church youth group) gave a spiel about how the 20th pick in the MLB draft last night was from our town and began in our same T-Ball program, hence my blog post title. Our local guy was picked by the Boston Red Sox, a funny twist of irony for his father, the lifelong Yankees fan. While immediate relation is enough to convert some lifelong Yankees fans to

Red Sox fans overnight, whether the small town / county connection is enough for others remains to be seen. ☐

From what I saw, Sammie did a good job today in T-Ball. She didn't catch every one (any?) of the ground balls that were hit her way, but it was her first time ever trying anything of the sort, and she gave it her best shot. She tried everything that was suggested by the coach, and didn't sit out any of the activities. She had fun, and as long as she sticks with it, I think T-Ball will serve the purpose for which we intended: a fun activity that gets Sammie out of the house for a few hours a week this month so the kids don't kill each other – and she learns the fundamentals of baseball at the same time!

And our pastor thought of our family when our church had extra tickets for an upcoming Toledo Mud Hens game (minor league baseball), so I think this will enhance Sammie's appreciation of that as well – looking forward to it!!

Here's a video – I apologize if it's hard to see, but the team went way out into the field, and I could barely see them let alone tape them when I had an almost 2-year-old and a 3-year-old to chase at the same time. At one point, the camera dips down to catch my almost 2-year-old as he ran crazy – thought I'd tape him since I couldn't seem to film Sammie playing any baseball. She's the one in the yellow shirt, and if you watch until the end, she does throw a ball.