

# And People Wonder Why We Left...

## America's Most Stressful Cities

Few enjoy their commute. Just ask Stephen Dinwiddie, M.D., a psychiatrist at the University of Chicago.

"I think anybody who, like I do, commutes on the Kennedy on a daily basis knows exactly what stress is," he says, of his daily home-to-work commute on Chicago's expressway that extends from the Chicago Loop to O'Hare International Airport. "It takes anywhere from 30 minutes to several centuries—at least subjectively."

Article Controls

**But more pressing factors make Chicago for the second year in a row the country's most stressful city.** Crowding, poor air quality, a high 11% unemployment rate and free-falling home values have created a cocktail of constant worry affecting many in the Windy City.

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## VIPs For A Day (part one of

## more parts)

On Thursday, my husband's brilliant ability to find awesome entertainment deals on the internet paid off once again. He booked us a VIP tour at [King's Island \(click for a view of the rides and attractions!\)](#) near Cincinnati Ohio, and we spent the entire day at this awesome amusement park! The VIP tour included our own personal guide; a park employee who followed us around all day leading us up the exits of every ride so that we got to bypass the line and ride without waiting – *in the seat of our own choosing*. We also got to wear lanyards with VIP passes on them (think of the movie Wayne's World when Wayne and Garth get backstage passes to see Alice Cooper. They wear them around their necks and proudly display their lanyards, flashing them into the faces of nearly everyone they encounter, hilarious!) – and tempting to reenact, but there were some people in line who were upset that we got to board without waiting in line; I wouldn't want to rub it in. But I would recommend the VIP tour to anyone who wants to go to King's Island – it includes a guide (you can even make him do things, like hold your stuff and go on rides, haha!), no lines (sometimes a minimal 5 minute wait at the gate while the ride operators find a place to stick you in, not really an issue at all – there is plenty to watch for those 5 minutes), an all-you-can-eat buffet for lunch, unlimited fountain drinks throughout the day, ice cream, a backstage tour of The Beast (the longest wooden roller coaster in the world!), and 2 ride pictures. A great deal, especially if you want to sit through my following narrative to see if it's a place you'd want to visit:

The lady on the phone told us to get to the park at 8:30 am, so we were actually early and had to wait in a car line to get in. When we got to the park, we got shuffled around and had to wait a bit more – it seems that this part of the tour could be tweaked a little bit. We didn't get our guide and get on

rides until about 9:45. Still early (park opens to the general public at 10), but we had about an extra hour of doing nothing at the park (could have slept an hour longer!), so perhaps they should tweak this part of the tour to make it run more smoothly for the guest – everything else about the tour is really great though! So anyway, our guide comes to meet us, and we gave him our list of rides and follow him around the park. Actually, since it was before 10, only the park's brand new showcase ride and The Beast were open. So we began with the Diamondback – which I had named as the ride that scared me the most on the way over. But I loved it! It was so smooth and all those fast drops were so fun in the cool open air. The Beast was another story. I liked it, but it was very rattly and jerky. Going back on The Beast later in the day and sitting in the front row changed the experience for me, however, and we ended up riding it a lot! Once we discovered the front car of The Beast and I switched sides of the train with hubby, I enjoyed the ride immensely. It's a **4 minute, 50 second** ride through the forest on a wooden roller coaster at speeds of over 60 mph. The subtle sound of chirping birds accompanied by the naturalistic scents of the surrounding forest and the wooden tunnels where the coaster whizzes is indescribable. A comment on themeparkinsider.com says about The Beast, *"Running through the thick forest at 65 mph on an intense wooden coaster...about as close to riding a real beast as you can get. Classic ride that always delivers."* – I have to agree. They built another wooden coaster at King's Island called Son of the Beast, but it closed in June when people complained it was too rough. From the printed King's Island info, I learned that Son of the Beast was a *looping* wooden coaster – interesting. Oh well, maybe it'll open some day for me to try. But back to the backstage tour of The Beast – very cool. We watched some trains descend the first large drop which actually leads directly underground into a tunnel. We walked further into the forest (noticed some long-gone riders' possessions along the way: broken sunglasses, coins, hats, etc. Didn't see any cell phones, but

then again, we saw the lost cell phone display they have in the Diamondback area – a big clear box FULL of cell phones, ipods, Blackberries, PDAs, etc. ), and we learned some interesting facts while watching riders fly past us – and boy, were they surprised to see us walking around back there in the forest!! As for the facts – the entire coaster was built from scratch on site; unlike many of today’s coasters which are shipped into the parks in segments. The Beast was built around and including the existing rolling terrain of the Miami River valley in lower Ohio, and as I mentioned, it goes underground. It has speed monitors built into parts of the track, so if a train is going to fast, it will automatically break to slow itself down. I gratefully noticed this while riding, and it helped calm my concerns of flying off the track. This coaster goes so fast into those tunnels – WOW! For all these reasons and more, it’s a coaster like NO other! Here’s a pic – looks like something I’ll have to try in the fall; the forest looks beautiful during peak season for color-changing leaves:



Ironically, the exact opposite thing happened with the Diamondback – I loved it the first time, and then I tried the front row which was absolutely terrifying! I won’t be riding the front of the Diamondback again. Careening down that first 74° drop (!) practically face-down at over 80 mph with only a red thing between my legs to keep me from plummeting to the earth made me feel like I was going to die for sure.



And not in a good way, which is ironically enough sometimes the reason why lots of crazy people like to ride coasters. Being in the front seat on Diamondback makes it look like the track disappears beneath you, then before you know it, you're flying in the air getting lift out of your seat and you have nothing on either side nor in front of you – yikes! I've grown too old to feel invincible, so I put a cap on my thrill-seeking. I enjoy a good coaster, but I also have my limits. If you are a thrill-seeker roller coaster enthusiast who just can't get enough, try the front car on Diamondback! And a side note, the guy who gave us the behind the scenes tour of The Beast is the guy who thought of the name for Diamondback; it was an interesting experience to have something like that come up during a conversation.

I think I'll stop there for now... it was a big day, and I'd like to write up more and get more pictures up – and yes, I do have those free ride pictures we got of Chris and I on The Beast and Diamondback. Am I willing to post them on the internet? Maybe you'll have to read my other King's Island posts to find out!

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# Car Problems and lots of fun

I was going to take my car in today to see exactly what was wrong with it. It started up fine after charging the battery, but this morning the battery was dead again. Hmm, didn't seem to want to hold a charge. I tried the jumper box and it was no go. I hooked up the charger again, but the battery would not charge up. I took the cover off of the battery and found out the problem. The four year old batter was leaking acid and the sides were bulging. After 4 years, I guess the battery gave up.

Now it was off to town to get a battery. First to Wally World, no battery for my truck. First Car Part store, no go. They could order it for tomorrow... How do I get around? I'll try the dealer. Dealer was a no go too, they could get it tomorrow too. So I stopped at the next Car Part store. Yes, they had one (maybe). The guy knew there was one there this morning, but he thought it may have been sold. They went to check and it was still there. Yeah.

I got home and installed the battery and the truck started right up. So for now I will keep an eye on the truck to make sure the battery isn't getting drained by something. But with the looks of the old one, and a strange smell that was no missing, I'm sure it was just the battery. So for now, the truck is up and running.

Special thanks in this to my newlywed daughter and her husband for driving this old man around town looking for a battery. Also thanks to the Admin for the use of his battery jumper. It only worked once, but that wasn't the fault of the device.

I do have a question. Why do new cars and truck enclose the battery in a box? You can no longer see the battery and lose visual clues as to its condition. I think I would have looked for a battery sooner if I had seen a side bulging.

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# SAVE OHIO LIBRARIES!

It's a catch-22. In this horrible economy, people are using the free resources provided by their local libraries **more than ever**. However, in this horrible economy, governments are having trouble funding the free resources provided by local libraries. Here in Ohio, Governor Strickland is contemplating a new state budget cut that would reduce our libraries' funding by an additional 52%, and that's on top of the 20% cut they've already seen in 2009. With this kind of reduction in funding, obviously the libraries would not be able to function on the same level on which they are currently functioning, nor with the same hours. If you live in Ohio, you can help the governor and congressmen know how harmful library funding cuts would be to each and every community in the state. Here is some contact info to help you do your part in saving the libraries:

[Click here to Contact the Governor's Office](#)

Contact the Governor's Office by phone @ (614)466-3555

Fax the Governor @ (614)466-9354

State Senator Steve Buehrer

Phone: (614) 466-8150

Fax: (614) 466-4250 ATTENTION STEVE BUEHRER

Email: SD01@senate.state.oh.us

For more information, click here:

[www.saveohiolibraries.com](http://www.saveohiolibraries.com)

Thank you for your help! Closing library branches is harmful to communities in many ways and would affect everyone, even those who don't use the libraries themselves.

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# Can you dance.

I think I will have to admit this video shows someone who can dance better than I do. It doesn't really take a lot.

[Dancing Parrot](#)

I thought I knew how to embed a video, but I can't seem to make it work. Oh well, it is worth the time to click on it.

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# YAY

I was called by the manager at Goodwill this morning. Starting Friday, I will be working two to three days a week at Goodwill!!!!!! I know this is not going to be a very long blog, but I really do not care at the moment. I am just so happy about getting some money to go into my bank account (to come back out, of course, for the wedding) and maybe this way, I will be able to keep a \$1,000 in my account by the time I am done paying for things. If not, I will certainly be close to it. I cannot believe that this is happening. I still haven't recieved a call from Movie Gallery, but with me having some money coming in with Goodwill, I am not as upset about it. Plus, with Sonic opening in June or sometime around there, I can always apply there if I need to or feel that I want to. But, YAY!!!!!!!!!!!!

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# **Come See Me Read Minds**

This saturday night I will be “reading minds” at the little theatre.

<https://www.mywcct.com>

Come see it – AND BRING PEOPLE. Many audience participation. It will be LAME if not enough people are there!

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# **Calling Dr. Bombay Emergency Please Come Right Away**

I don't like to complain about ANYONE, but sometimes the need presents itself. At my fpoe (former place of employment) one of my fellow associates seemed to get more than his fair share of personal phone calls during the day. One day while at the service desk, I counted at least 10 unnecessary pages to call him to the phone. Ironically, one of which was his wife calling him to compare the price of an item to another stores price of a similar product. Needless to say, this genius did not last as long as I. No, I did not get him in trouble.

I understand the need for a periodic phone call while on the job for important things, but as many as 10 IN ONE EIGHT HOUR SHIFT?! But it seems to be happening again. Its as if I can answer the phone and know precisely who it is for even when that person is not working that day. Of course, I have been known to make a phone call while at the store. One incident

included calling a friend while being alone and not having had a customer for 30 minutes right before closing.

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## **Lisa – Look at what I can do!**

Tuesday night is date night – where Lisa and I go out together. This week's night started a bit early with a trip to the medical center where I found out that my nasty Oscar-Night fall left me with no broken bone... But with a bleeding kidney. I will get an ultrasound on Thursday and hopefully all will be fine.

But something else happened tonight at our local dollar store. There was a song playing, I now cannot remember what it was (maybe Lisa will in a comment)... The “groove” got to me and as I rounded the corner of an isle I said to Lisa “Hey Lisa, look at this!” and I proceeded to do a silly dance. When I turned around, there was Lisa – staring at me. But it was not my Lisa. It was another Lisa. Yes, stranger than fiction there was an unknown lady behind me with a name tag around her neck that read “Lisa”. She looked in stunned silence as apparently some strange man just told her to watch him do a little dance.

I quickly made a b-line for my Lisa and she began to wonder why I was in such a hurry to leave the store. Boy, was that embarrassing.

Somewhere on the web there is probably a blog post, by Lisa, about a strange event where some freaky lookin dude told her to “look at this” and then did a little dance for her. So, (other) Lisa, if you are reading this – now you know. You got an insider's look at the kind of stupid nonsense my Lisa has to put up with daily! Ohhh. Poor Lisa.

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# **Where the heck is John!?**

That all I have to say... That's it! WHERE THE HECK IS JOHN!?!?