

Family Update

I haven't been posting as much as I used to lately. This is because of the surge of activity in our lives... It's also led to me making less phone calls to catch up with people, so let me fill you in this way about what's been going on with us...

Taylor has been needing lots of dental work in Toledo. It's been treacherous, but we have only ONE appointment left, and her teeth look (and now that the pain is gone today – feel) great! She's been handling it all SO well that she is the dentists' and dental assistants' favorite patient. I think they will really miss her. After she leaves the office though, she has a really hard time with the bleeding, and today was especially bad for her, and she also had some pain. But she came out of it all ok, and if she takes good care of her teeth from now on, we shouldn't have to go through anything like this again!

Despite all the bleeding, pain, and the \$30 price tag for gas (!), our trips to Toledo have been kind of a fun time for just the 3 of us – Mom, Dad, and biggest sister – to hang out. We've been going out to eat, and stopping at the zoo a lot. That zoo membership they got me for my birthday last year has REALLY paid off! We've been watching the family of orangutans they have at the Toledo Zoo – there's a mom, dad, a 4-year-old, and an almost 2-year-old. Seeing them week-to-week, I've gotten to know their personalities and have grown a little attached to them – when our trips to Toledo stop, I will miss them! The patriarch of the family, a VERY large orang named Boomer, is a gentle giant. His hands alone are about the size of my 8-year-old's leg from hip to knee! While most males of his species are solitary creatures, Boomer enjoys being with his family, and he even assists with the rearing of the young, something almost unheard of for male orangs! Today, Kutai, the mother, carried her youngest baby with her and sat on the window of her exhibit that positions her directly above the

guests. People were looking up at her, and when they took their camera out, she smiled, teeth and all! I of course did not have my camera with me today to capture this awesome zoo moment ☐ The keeper was saying that Kutai enjoys looking at books, and she can recognize pictures of herself vs. pics of other oranges, so is it possible that she understands what a camera is?!? I think the oranges have taken over the gorillas as my favorite zoo animals to watch. They are just so intelligent and their actions are so individual... Last week when we were there, we heard the zookeeper talking about how they escaped from their exhibit after it was first built. Seems they watched the contractors build their new exhibit from an adjacent one, and apparently noticed when they missed caulk in one little spot. As soon as they were let into their new exhibit, they went right over to the spot, pulled the fence from the wall, and out they climbed, leaving the zookeepers to fetch them from the roof! Sounds like something that would have happened to Jack Hanna ☐ The oranges were inside on such a nice day today because the keepers were hooking up their water toy – when they push a button, it soaks guests who walk by on the outside of the exhibit! That should be lots of fun; I really hope I can make it there at least once this summer to see them activate it, but with the new baby and all, it's doubtful... But anyway, it was a great day at the zoo, and we even saw a wild woodpecker, pecking away high in a tree!

Monday night, the girls had their “sibling class” at the hospital. It was really fun and informative. They saw the room where mom and baby will be staying, then they diapered and swaddled “babies” (fake of course!) and made little t-shirts for their new sister. The one thing I would recommend for the class that they didn't include however, is an emphasis on how older siblings can even help mom way BEFORE the baby comes by being well behaved, picking up some extra chores, or just doing the chores they are asked to do. We've had some difficulties in these areas lately, and they are lucky their

wonderful father has picked up all their slack around the house! But other than that, the sibling class was great and they loved it.

Zoo trips aside, just the same business around here as usual... Taylor is still taking her piano lessons, her school will be over for the summer in June (5 or 6 weather days to make up; I've lost count!), Sammie really likes her school, especially now that they go outside every day they are able, and Disney is growing by leaps and bounds, totally walking, totally talking, making her way towards two... help us all ☺ Seriously, though, Sammie's terrible two's had already started by the time she was the age Dis is now, and I wouldn't say they are over yet! So I am optimistic that Disney's will seem like a piece of cake comparatively... and hopefully ☺